

FORM REGULATORY MODERNIZATION HIGHLIGHTS

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As we enter the final year of the Administration, Virginia agencies are hard at work updating their regulations and guidance documents to hit the 25% reduction target in [Executive Order 19](#). As of today, Commonwealth agencies have streamlined over 21% of the requirements in their regulations and eliminated over 41% of the words in their guidance documents. About half of agencies have already achieved the 25% regulatory requirement reduction goal, and over two-thirds of agencies have hit the 25% guidance document length reduction goal.

This week, two agencies have made enormous strides towards hitting their respective reduction targets.



The Virginia Department of Transportation cuts over 9,000 requirements from its regulations.

Agencies often incorporate private standards by reference in their regulations. This is an efficient way of drawing on industry best practices and avoiding unnecessary verbiage in the regulatory code itself.

But it is important that the agency clearly specify which parts of its incorporated documents regulated parties must comply with. Otherwise, regulated parties may get confused or overwhelmed by overly lengthy incorporated documents.

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) recently introduced a [proposed action](#) that will eliminate hundreds of pages of incorporated documents from its regulations. The agency will instead specify precisely what requirements apply in issued permits, saving permittees significant time in identifying their obligations. This change removes 9,353 regulatory requirements, which represents 12.7% of the agency's total requirements and 2.8% of all requirements in the state regulatory code.

Virginia Department of Social Services cuts hundreds of pages from its guidance documents.

Guidance documents can help regulated parties identify precisely what they need to do to achieve regulatory compliance. But overly long or disorganized guidance documents can be very challenging to navigate. This is why agencies' efforts to streamline their guidance documents are so important.

The Virginia Department of Social Services recently undertook [substantial revisions](#) that massively simplified its Child & Family Services Manual. It consolidated 5 legacy documents down to a single document. And it cut 556,935 words in the new version. For fans of world literature, that is just a tad shorter than Leo Tolstoy's famously thick novel *War and Peace* (587,287 words)!



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF
SOCIAL SERVICES