

# THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT PROPERTY ADMINISTRATOR: *Resident vs Itinerant – Which One is Right for You?*

BY ELLEN K. ADINTORI

**Imagine this scenario:** You're a Resident Property Administrator, and your boss calls you into his office and says, "I want to give you the opportunity to gain some knowledge of the other half of the property world. So next week, you'll be assigned to work as an Itinerant Property Administrator."

**Or,** perhaps you may be nearing retirement; and after many years as a Resident Property Administrator, you don't see a need to learn what the rest of the property world is like.

You know what is really wrong with this picture? There are Resident Property Administrators and Itinerant Property Administrators who are not familiar with each other's jobs, and they are as different as night and day. As a result of being stuck in the same position for many years, biases are formed and it affects all property personnel.

Here's what a few Itinerant and Resident Property Administrators had to say about each of their respective roles in the Property Control System:

**Itinerant:** Itinerant Property Administrators believed their work is more diverse than Resident Property Administrators and required them to roll up their sleeves and get more involved. The workload is much smaller in terms of line items and dollar amounts, and more creativity is needed when scheduling 15 functions in a short time-frame ranging from a few days to a few weeks. There are more contractors to audit; and the contractors could be within 90 minutes driving distance or as far away as five hours, which requires them to be on the go. It is possible to receive calls from a contractor that you haven't visited all year. At a smaller contractor facility, the atmosphere is more transient and it is necessary to locate the personnel with the knowledge to correct a problem who may be out performing "other assigned duties."

**Resident:** Resident Property Administrators audit one large contractor, and there are more line items to track and greater dollar value. By being in one place, Resident Property Administrators are more "hands-on" and accessible. Resident Property Administrators also interface with the same people on a regular basis and this strengthens the contractor/government relationship. At a larger facility there are more people to correct problems and deficiencies can usually be resolved faster.

All agreed that it is good to have a working knowledge of both Resident and Itinerant Property Administration in case of vacancies occurring through personnel retiring or transferring. By opening up the lines of communication, Property Administrators can gain a new perspective, discuss challenges that each other faces, and solve problems that another Property Administrator has already encountered. This is already being accomplished through National Property Management Association (NPMA) seminars and could be expanded utilizing Regional Property Management Conferences, Knowledge Management on the

DCMA website and distribution of a property newsletter. Some Property Administrators are already actively involved in one or more of these activities. However, for newcomers in the property field, it is vital that they know where to go to interact with the more seasoned Property Administrators before their expertise walks out the door.

So, let's get back to your response regarding the opportunity to learn the other half of the property world. Now that you're armed with a new viewpoint, perhaps you are more open to change. It is possible to switch roles and walk in someone else's shoes, and the unknown doesn't seem as intimidating. While we may not always have our say as to which type of Property Administrator job we are working in, there are different personalities better suited for Itinerant and Resident Property positions. Some people prefer to work alone and others need more interaction. Which one is right for you? □

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