

RECORDS MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

All
Federal and Contractor
Personnel

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Office of Technology &
Information Management,
Records and Information
Management Program



Public Information

RECORDS MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES FOR FEDERAL AND CONTRACTOR EMPLOYEES

INTRODUCTION

FHFA must have good and complete records to operate. As an FHFA employee, you are responsible for making and keeping good records of your work. FHFA's records management staff has prepared this brochure to help you keep records in accordance with FHFA's records management program.

WHY SHOULD I CARE ABOUT RECORDS MANAGEMENT?

The work you do is important. The retention of records will help you and those who follow you. Records are used for decision-making. If the quality of the records is consistent and accurate, thoughtful and good decisions are more likely to result. Records also preserve the history of an organization.

WHAT ARE FEDERAL RECORDS?

By law, federal records are all documentary materials, regardless of physical form, that are:

- Made or received by an agency; and
- Preserved or are appropriate for preservation as evidence of agency activities (44 USC 3301).

Determining whether a particular document is a record does not necessarily depend on whether it is an original or a copy. Multiple copies of the same document may each have record status, if they serve a separate administrative purpose and are controlled under different files or filing systems.

WHAT ARE NOT FEDERAL RECORDS?

Documents that lack administrative, legal, or financial value, are not considered federal records. Examples of non federal records include:

- Working files that consist of rough notes, drafts, or calculations *not needed* to support the decision trail. In other words, papers that lose all value after the work is finalized;
- Extra copies of records kept only for convenience;
- Personal papers unrelated to FHFA business and documents that have no effect upon the conduct of agency business;
- Library materials intended only for reference;
- Supply of blank forms and publications.

Personal papers, nonrecord materials, and federal records should not be filed in the same folder. When both private matters and agency business appear in the same document, extract or copy the part relating to agency business and treat that extracted as a federal record. Personal files should always be maintained in a separate location.

WHAT ABOUT EMAILS?

You must send to the official file any emails that contain information that would meet the definition of a “record.” A good general rule: If you would have sent the information in a letter or memorandum prior to email technology, you should send a copy of the email to the official file. The email must include transmission data: sender, addressee(s), date, and time sent. If determined necessary, receipt data should also be preserved as part of the record.

WHAT ARE MY BASIC OBLIGATIONS REGARDING FEDERAL RECORDS?

As a government employee, you have three basic obligations regarding federal records. They are to:

1. Create records necessary to document adequately the activities for which you are responsible;
2. Make sure that the records are filed properly so they may be safely stored and efficiently retrieved; and
3. Dispose of records in accordance with the FHFA Records Retention Schedule approved by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA).

DOES MY OFFICE HAVE A FILE PLAN?

Yes. Each office’s annual file plan makes it easier to file and retrieve records. In addition, you can identify the correct disposition instructions for your records and determine when they should be moved off-site to inactive storage at the Federal Records Center (FRC). Obtain a copy of the file plan for your office from your records liaison.

WHAT HAPPENS TO RECORDS ONCE WE NO LONGER NEED THEM ON-SITE?

How long records are kept on-site depends on their value, importance, and use. Some records are never sent to off-site storage and are destroyed on-site after a short time. Others are moved to the FRC for temporary, low-cost, short and long-term storage. The most important records will eventually be transferred into the National Archives.

The FHFA Comprehensive Records Retention Schedule provides instructions for how long agency program and administrative records must be retained and managed.

WHAT IS UNLAWFUL REMOVAL, ALIENATION OR DESTRUCTION OF RECORDS?

All information received, created, or compiled by federal government officials and employees for use in conducting government business is the property of the U.S. government.

No federal officials or employees have, by virtue of their position, any personal or property rights to official records, even though they may have helped develop or compile them.

The unlawful destruction, alteration, removal from files, and concealment of official records is criminal and prohibited by Title 18 U.S.C. 2071. U.S. criminal law also prohibits the unauthorized disclosure of trade secrets by Title 18 U.S.C. 1905.

The unlawful disclosure of certain information pertaining to national security, confidential, and personal information is prohibited by the Freedom of Information Act, as amended, Title 5 U.S.C. 552 and provisions of the Privacy Act of 1974, as amended, Title 5 U.S.C. 552a (b).

FURTHER ASSISTANCE

If you need further assistance with your records management responsibilities or the agency’s records management exit procedures, please contact one of the following staff members:

- Records Officer, Susan Sallaway, 202-649-3674
- Records and Information Management Specialist, Karen Rogers, 202-649-3673
- Records and Information Management Specialist, Angela Flottemesch, 202-649-3676

