



Records Management Series: EPA Records Management Tool Kit

Moving Your Records



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Introduction

Moving your office from one place to another is a fairly common, and sometimes traumatic, experience. It can be difficult to continue your day-to-day work and make a move into new quarters. We still have assignments and projects to complete, requests to fulfill, and bosses and clients to keep happy while we're in the process of moving.

Just like the three most important things when you buy a house are "location, location, location," the three most important things when you move your office is "planning, planning, planning." Too often, little thought goes into moving the records in the office. In fact, moving your records will probably require the most planning.

The items included in this tool kit will give you the tools necessary to plan and implement a successful move of your office records. It will help you:

- Determine what needs to be moved;
- Decide what to do with what shouldn't be moved;
- Plan for the effective use of space and equipment.

1 - MOVING YOUR RECORDS...

...A Short Checklist For Managers

Moving your records is an essential part of your successful move to new space. This checklist is designed to help you plan for your next move by outlining the records management issues that need to be considered. The key to a successful move is moving only those records that need to be moved.

Attention to your records before the move will:

- Lower your moving costs;
- Improve control over your information assets;
- Boost morale and lower stress.

Waiting until after the move can result in:

- Wasted dollars and time;
- Lost, misplaced, and abandoned records;
- Less productive staff.

On the next page you will find a list of the steps to consider as you make your plans, and contacts for additional information.

Here is a list of the steps you need to take:

- Assign a lead person. (Records management knowledge is a plus!)
- Devise a timetable.
- Identify records on hand.
- Sort the records and nonrecords.
- Purge outdated materials.
- Plan the new space.
- Retire inactive records to the Federal Records Center.
- Determine placement of records and nonrecords.

Work stations

Centralized active files (if applicable)

Centralized inactive files (if applicable)

Nonrecords, including any technical reference materials (if applicable)

- Pack into boxes.

After the move...

- Unpack and organize.

For more information, contact the Records Help Desk, 202-566-1494.

2 - GUIDELINES FOR PLANNING A MOVE

Planning a successful move requires a tremendous amount of planning and coordination. You can't start the planning process too early. Whether you are planning a move for five people or several hundred, the sooner you can start, the better.

Here is a sample of the activities you need to include.

As soon as you know about the move:

- Assign a lead person to coordinate meetings and assign responsibilities.
- Start planning meetings with affected staff.
- Meet with space planners (probably someone in your Facilities office) about move dates, space allocations and what's happening with existing equipment.
- Discuss any special records management requirements such as reinforced floors for certain types of filing equipment, electrical outlets for PCs, etc.
- Develop a timeline - Who does What and When.

Other activities to include are:

- Ordering new equipment, furniture and supplies.
- Identifying and inventorying existing records.
- Coordinating records clean-ups.
- Retiring eligible records to the Federal Records Center.
- Planning placement of equipment and records in the new space.
- Labeling and packing.

After the move...

- Unpacking and organizing.

TIMING ISSUES

When developing your timeline for the move, remember that there can be lots of variables, and you may need to revise your timeline frequently. Here are some of the issues to consider:

- Some activities can be done concurrently. For instance, your inventories and clean-ups may be done at the same time.
- The time required to obtain new equipment and furniture may vary by location. If ordered too early, it may need to be stored. If ordered too late, you may have to store your records until it arrives.
- The time needed to complete your inventory, records retirements, and packing will depend on who is available to do it and how much time they can devote to it.
- Individuals will probably be responsible for packing their own materials. Who will be responsible for packing centralized file stations or records centers?
- If your office is reorganizing at the same time, you may need to schedule additional time to reorganize the records too.

As you can see, there are lots of issues to be considered as you make your plans. The move planning guidelines on the next few pages are adapted from a document developed by the headquarters Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response (OSWER). This will give you an idea of the steps they took. Remember, this is only a sample - You will need to develop your own plan.

We've also included a sample timeline form you can adapt for your use.

Other items included in this tool kit will help you through the various steps in the process.

MOVE PLANNING (Adapted from an OSWER document)

1. Meet with management to discuss move preparation needs.
2. Meet with the groups or representatives of the groups who are moving to look at what will need to be considered and why.

General issues to consider:

- Reducing the volume of their records prior to the move 1) so that there is less to move and 2) so that the new space will be used effectively. Reduction can be accomplished by practicing records disposition; i.e., disposing of records past their life and retiring records to the Federal Records Center (FRC).
- Planning what records will be housed in central filing areas and what will be held in the work stations. Plans will need to include the allocation of central filing space, so as records are moved, the boxes can be assigned to and placed in the appropriate shelving areas.

The program offices may want to take this as an opportunity to look at starting on the development of new or improving existing filing systems or file plans. If they do not feel they need to develop a file plan, then they will minimally need to develop some method for shelf identification and for monitoring the use of the central files for retrieving files and refiling.

- Identifying what information and assistance they would like for the records support staff to provide in terms of guidance, training, etc.
3. Find out more specifics about the move and the new facilities.
 - The exact dates of the moves and which groups will be moved to what floors.
 - The number of work spaces assigned each group.
 - The type of filing equipment that will be in the designated "filing" rooms.
 - The number and location of any other non-workstation filing equipment.
 - The numbering scheme that is being used for the movement of boxes and equipment from the old location to the new location.
 4. Go into office areas and get a general picture of what does exist in comparison to the information collected by Facilities staff on existing number of file cabinets.

For example: According to information the following offices have the following amount of file material. This needs to be verified:

Policy Management	615 ft
Emergency Response	3150 ft
Investigation	1125 ft
Education	630 ft

5. Find out the name and volume for each group.

- What records do they have? Name them according to existing schedules and record the volume of each record group.
- What records are kept in the work spaces?
- What records are kept in central files?
- What records are kept in binders or any other odd-sized folders?
- What records are due for destruction (past their useful life in the office)?
- What records can be retired or closed out and are eligible for FRC storage?
- What records will be moved (active, non-closed out records)?

6. Implement actions for records that can be destroyed.

- Organize a "Clean-Up Campaign."
- Designate a person to oversee the clean-up operation.
- Set a date(s).
- Coordinate this date with "Operation Clean-up" so your office will be included in clean-up stats.
- Contact Recycling Support Supervisor for recycling barrels to be placed and moved as filled.
- Prepare a list of records identified as eligible for destruction to pass out to programs prior to clean-up date(s).

[This may take some education to staff as to what makes something eligible for destruction.]

- Have records contact person available on day of clean-ups to answer questions concerning what records are eligible for destruction.

7. Implement actions for records that can be retired.

- Designate a person to oversee disposition operation.
- Obtain a copy of the National Records Management Program (NRMP) publication *Using the Federal Records Center: A Guide for Headquarters Staff* [<http://www.epa.gov/records/tools/toolkits/usingfrc/index.htm>]. This publication will guide the program staff through the disposition process.
- Order boxes for records retirement. Base the order on estimates.

[To estimate the number of boxes each program will need to retire records to the FRC, use the following formula:

$$\frac{\text{No. lft of current files} \times 10\%}{1.25}$$

If a program plans to retire more material, which they probably can since 40% is the average number of records eligible for off-site storage, they will need to substitute the 10% in the formula with whatever percentage of reduction is planned. The 10% is based on reasonable reduction expectations.]

- Set a "last date" for having records moved to FRC. (Should be 2 weeks prior to move date, at the latest.)
- Prepare records for retiring.

Review records for file breaks (file cut-off or closure).

Prepare records for boxing by separating by record groups and closure date.

Estimate the number of boxes required for each group and closure date.

- Obtain supplies.

FRC Boxes

2 inch strapping (filament) tape

SF 135 Records Transmittal and Receipt forms

Black felt-tip markers

- Contact the Headquarters Records Officer or your Regional, Laboratory, or Field Office Records Officer to obtain accession numbers for filling out the SF 135 Records Transmittal Form. You will need to communicate:

The name of the records to be retired.

The number of boxes for each group and each closure period for the records to be retired.

- Place files into boxes and write a box inventory for the contents of each box.
- Fill out the SF 135 form and submit to the Records Officer. This **must** be done at least 4 weeks (and no later than 3 weeks) prior to move. It takes two weeks or 10 working days for FRC approval.

[Some FRCs have restrictions on the number of boxes which may be retired at one time, so be sure to factor this into your plan.]

- Once approval is given, write the accession number in the upper left hand corner of each box in the accession and the box number in the upper right hand corner. This should be written in block letters with a black felt-tip marker. Close top of boxes by interlocking flaps; do not tape the top of the box.
- Fill out EPA 5100-3 Facilities Services Request form (headquarters only) to have boxes moved from work area for shipment to the FRC. This must be done so that all boxes are planned for removal from work area and shipment at least 2 weeks prior to the actual move to the new building.
- Once the records have been shipped to the FRC, keep an office record copy of each SF 135 and Box Inventory. These records will be vital for future records retrieval from the FRC.

8. Implement actions for the records to be moved to the new facility.

- Designate a person to be in charge of moving records to new facility.
- Determine the number of linear file feet of active records to be moved. The number of file feet will be:

No. of current lft of files - (No. of cft of records destroyed + the No. of cft [no. of boxes] shipped to the FRC x 1.25)

- Determine if library carts can be used for the move instead of boxes. Using carts will make it easier to find records if they are requested and less likely to “lose” boxes during the move. Carts can be shrink wrapped to keep the folders in place during the move.
- If boxes are to be used, order FRC boxes. To estimate the number of boxes needed for moving, use the following formula:

$$\frac{\text{No. of lft of active records}}{1.25}$$

- Prepare files for packing.

Identify and separate files according to record groups.

Place files in correct order that they should be arranged on the shelves. When assigning files to shelves, estimate that approximately 2 boxes or 2-1/2 linear feet of files will go into the 3-foot shelves.

Most shelves are 3 feet; some are less. This needs to be figured into file placement.

- Pack files in order in the boxes or on the carts. Do not overstuff the boxes since they will not close properly and may come open during the move. Leave boxes open for active file use during the packing process.

If using boxes, consider renting carts to place the boxes on so they can be accessed during the packing process.

- Fill out the Box/Cart Identification Form (see sample) and place inside each box or tape to each cart.

This form will identify:

Name of the record group being packed.

Box or cart number of records in this group. If there are 10 boxes in this group, the first box would be 1/10, then 2/10, and so forth to 10/10.

Office and work space number from where the files are being moved and if applicable, employee name.

Office number, location number, and placement number for where the files are being moved.

[Discuss this numbering system with the move committee to see what they have devised and what, if any, additional identification would be necessary.]

- Write new location number and placement order number in the upper right hand corner of each box or cart in black felt-tip marker.

For records going from one individual workstation to another, what will be written on each box or cart will be:

Employee name, new office number, and placement order number

For records going into central files what will be written on each box or cart will be:

Central File Location Number, Central File Section Number, Central File Shelf Number, and Box Number (i.e., 1/10, 2/10, etc.)

- Fill out a Records Moving Inventory Sheet (see sample) for each office moving. This sheet identifies:

Name of the Office;

Name of each group of records and number of boxes or carts in each group;

Location number from where the boxes or carts are being moved from;

Location number to where the boxes or carts are being moved.

- On the day before the move, seal the tops of all boxes with one pull of tape (2 inch strapping tape) across the top seam. Place shrink wrap on the carts.
- Prominently place the location numbers of central file stations in each file station area designating the station number, section number, and shelf numbers in the new facility.
- Designate individuals to be present in each area of the new facility (especially at each central file station) to oversee and coordinate the placement of the boxes or carts into the correct area.
- As files are removed from the boxes or carts and placed on the shelves, the Box/Cart Identification Forms should be used to check off the boxes or carts from the inventory sheet. If this is done then the office will be secure in the knowledge that all records have arrived.

SAMPLE BOX IDENTIFICATION FORM

<u>Box/Cart Identification Form</u>	
Records (name of records) _____	
Box/cart ____ of ____ (number of boxes in group)	
<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>
Office/Work Space Number	Office/Location/Placement Number
_____	_____

Fill out the Box/Cart Identification Form and place inside each box or tape on each cart.

This form will identify:

- Name of the records being packed;
- Box or cart number (If there are 10 boxes in this group, the first box would be 1/10, then 2/10, and so forth to 10/10.);
- Office and work space number from where the files are being moved and if applicable, employee name;
- Office number, location number, and placement number for where the files are being moved.

SAMPLE RECORDS MOVE INVENTORY SHEET

Office: _____

Name of Records	From (Location number)	To (Location number)

Fill out a Records Moving Inventory Sheet for each office that is moving. This sheet will identify:

- Name of the office;
- Name of the records and number of boxes or carts in each set;
- Location number from where the boxes are being moved;
- Location number to where the boxes or carts are being moved.

SAMPLE MOVE TIMELINE FORM

Office: _____

Steps	Responsible Person	Start Date	Completion Date	Notes
Assign lead				
Meet with _____ office				
Meet with space planner				
Develop timeline				
Order equipment, supplies and furniture				
Records inventory				
Records clean-up				
Retire records to FRC				
Plan new space				
Move				
Unpack and organize				

3 - CHECKLIST #1: RECORDS INVENTORY

A records inventory is an important part of your move plan. An inventory will help you identify:

- What needs to be moved;
- What can be retired;
- What can be recycled or destroyed.

Moving only what needs to be moved will save time and money -- and make it easier to find what you need once you've moved.

The purpose of this checklist is to give you a listing of the minimum information you need to collect for a successful move.

A sample inventory form is included in this tool kit; others are available from the National Records Management Program (NRMP).

If at all possible, complete as much of the inventory form as possible even though you may not need all the information for your move. The information will assist you with future records management projects, such as developing new records schedules or file plans.

- Identify the custodian and location of all materials. (Don't forget closets, storage areas, and empty offices).

Assign codes to rooms, cabinets, and drawers.

Use coded stickers to attach to each drawer during the survey.

Reference the codes on the inventory form.

- Identify the records by (choose one):

Title (e.g., Budget - 1995)

File code (e.g., ADMI 110)

Type (e.g., budget files)

- Indicate the status of the materials:

Record

Nonrecord

- Determine restrictions (e.g., confidential business information).
- Indicate the approved records schedule: EPA no. _____ Unknown _____
- Describe the records.

Purpose (e.g., why the records are created)
 Type of documentation (e.g., correspondence, forms, agreements)
 Type of storage (e.g., room shelf, desk drawer)
 Arrangement (e.g., alphabetic, chronological)
 Format (e.g., diskette, paper, photographs)
 Dates of records (e.g., 1992 - present)
 File break (e.g., end of fiscal year)
 File controls (e.g., controlled access, locks)
 Related files (e.g., CBI in locked cabinet)

- Compute volume by using the following values:

File drawer (vertical) - letter	1.5 cu. ft.
File drawer (vertical) - legal	2.0 cu. ft.
Desk file drawer	1.0 cu. ft. for every 15 inches
15 linear inches - letter	1.0 cu. ft.
12 linear inches - legal	1.0 cu. ft.
FRC box	1.0 cu. ft.
90-100 16 mm reels (100 ft.) microfilm	1.0 cu. ft.
10,000 microfiche	1.0 cu. ft.

- Estimate annual growth rate (e.g., 1 cu. ft per year).

4 - CHECKLIST #2: RECORDS CLEANUP

Once you have completed your records inventory, you can analyze the results and begin to sort the materials in your offices and file rooms. Using your inventory worksheets, you will be able to identify:

- Records that need to be kept and moved to the new space;
- Inactive materials that can be retired to the FRC;
- What can be recycled or destroyed.

The purpose of this checklist is to give you a listing of the steps to follow as you sort and prepare your materials for the move.

- Separate records and nonrecords.

Personal papers, duplicate copies of publications and forms, and technical reference material should be separated and kept apart from official records.

- Identify:

Duplicate records
Related records
Missing files
Fragmented records

- Determine which records are inactive and due for disposal.

Do not discard records without making sure they are scheduled for disposal according to approved EPA records schedules.

- Determine which records are inactive and due for retirement to the FRC.

- Determine which records are active and need to be moved to the new location.

- If your office is reorganizing, determine which records need to be sent to which unit.

- Organize a clean-up day (or days).

Obtain copies of the appropriate records schedules.

Order supplies:

FRC boxes
Recycling barrels
2-inch strapping (filament) tape

Black felt-tip markers

- Weed superseded or obsolete items from your technical reference material.
- Arrange for witnessed destruction of records containing sensitive information (e.g., confidential business information (CBI), Privacy Act information, or enforcement sensitive information).
- Recycle or destroy records as authorized by the records schedules.
- Prepare inactive records for retirement to FRC. See “Checklist 3: Retiring Records to the FRC” included in this tool kit.
- Pack materials to be moved to the new space and assign location numbers to the boxes or carts and the space plans. Include:

Active and inactive records to be moved to centralized records storage;
Active records to be moved to work stations;
Nonrecord material, including technical reference material and duplicate copies of publications and forms.
- Arrange for boxes or carts to be moved.

After the move...

- Unpack and organize materials in the new space per the predetermined plan.

5 - CHECKLIST #3: RETIRING RECORDS TO THE FRC

RECORDS SCHEDULES

Before you can retire any of your records to FRC, you need to be sure they are covered by an approved records schedule.

- Check the records against the records schedules.
[<http://www.epa.gov/records/policy/schedule/index.htm>]
- If you can't find the appropriate schedule(s), contact your Records Liaison Officer (RLO) or the NRMP.

A **records schedule** is the document which provides mandatory instructions for what to do with records (and nonrecord materials) no longer needed for current business. It details how long records are to be kept in the office, if and when they are to be retired to the FRC, and if and when they are to be transferred to the National Archives.

A listing of some of the most common Agency-wide records schedules is included in this checklist. Some of the retention instructions have been abbreviated (e.g., records that are microfilmed). **Check the official schedules for more detail.**

LIST OF COMMONLY USED SCHEDULES*

Description	Retention	EPA Number	Agency File Code	NARA Number
Calendars, Schedules & Logs of Daily Activities a. Higher level officials b. Other officials c. Routine materials	a. Break file when official leaves office. Keep current plus 1 additional year, then retire to FRC. Transfer to NARA 20 years after file break. b. Break at end of year. Keep in office 2 years, then delete or destroy. c. Break at end of year. Destroy when no longer needed.	111	ADMI	N1 -41 2-94-2/1 7
Congressional Correspondence	Break file at end of Congressional session; bring forward active materials. Keep in office at least 1 year after file break, then retire to FRC. Destroy when 5 years old.	132	CORR	N1 -41 2-94-2/1 9

Description	Retention	EPA Number	Agency File Code	NARA Number
<p>Correspondence - Controlled & Major</p> <p>a(1). Higher level offices - Record copy</p> <p>a(2). Higher level offices - All other copies</p> <p>b. Division Directors & other personnel</p>	<p>Break file at end of year, bring forward active materials.</p> <p>a(1). Keep 1 year after file break, then retire to FRC. Transfer to NARA in 5 year blocks when most recent record is 20 years old.</p> <p>a(2). Keep until no longer needed, then destroy.</p> <p>b. Keep in office 1 year, then retire to FRC. Destroy when 10 years old.</p>	141	CORR	NI-412-94-2/22
Correspondence - General	Break file at end of year. Keep in office at least 1 year, then retire to FRC. Destroy when 5 years old.	127	CORR	NI-412-94-2/18

Description	Retention	EPA Number	Agency File Code	NARA Number
<p>Directives & Policy Guidance Documents Issued by Specific Programs & Regions</p> <p>a(1). Published - Record set</p> <p>a(2). Published - Reference set</p> <p>a(3). Published - Background materials and drafts</p> <p>b. Unpublished</p>	<p>a(1). Break file upon issuance or publication. Retire to FRC at file break or when superseded. Transfer to NARA in 5 year blocks, 20 years after file break.</p> <p>a(2). Break file upon issuance or publication. Destroy when no longer needed or superseded.</p> <p>a(3). Break file upon issuance or publication. Retire to FRC at file break or when superseded. Transfer to NARA in 5 year blocks, 20 years after file break.</p> <p>b. Break file upon decision to not publish. Keep in office 3 years, then retire to FRC. Destroy 10 years after file break.</p>	007	DIRE	NI -41 2-94-2/4

Description	Retention	EPA Number	Agency File Code	NARA Number
<p>Final Deliverables and Reports</p> <p>a(1). Programmatic or mission related - All programs except Superfund site specific</p> <p>a(2). Programmatic or mission related - Superfund site specific</p> <p>b. Non-programmatic or administrative</p>	<p>Break file upon completion of project</p> <p>a(1). Keep in office at least 1 year after file break, then retire to FRC. Transfer to NARA 20 years after file break.</p> <p>a(2). Keep in office at least 1 year after file break, then retire to FRC. Destroy 30 years after file break.</p> <p>b. Keep in office at least 1 year after file break, then retire to FRC. Destroy 7 years after file break.</p>	258	SURV	NI -41 2-94-2/37

Description	Retention	EPA Number	Agency File Code	NARA Number
<p>FOIA Requests Files</p> <p>a(1). Correspondence and supporting documents - Granting access</p> <p>a(2)(a). Responding to requests for non-existent records; to requestors who provide inadequate descriptions; and to those who fail to pay fees - Request not appealed</p> <p>a(2)(b). Request appealed</p> <p>a(3)(a). Denying access to all or part of the records requested - Request not appealed</p> <p>a(3)(b). Request appealed</p> <p>b. Official file copy of requested records</p>	<p>Break file at end of each year.</p> <p>a(1). Destroy 2 years after date of reply.</p> <p>a(2)(a). Destroy 2 years after date of reply.</p> <p>a(2)(b). See EPA 032.</p> <p>a(3)(a). Destroy 6 years after date of reply.</p> <p>a(3)(b). See EPA 032.</p> <p>b. Dispose of in accordance with the approved disposition instructions for the related records, or with the related FOIA request, whichever is later.</p>	030	FOIA	GRS 14/11

Description	Retention	EPA Number	Agency File Code	NARA Number
Nonrecords	Close when obsolete, superseded or no longer needed for reference, then destroy.	008	NONR	Not applicable
Office Administrative Files a. Record copy	Break file annually; bring forward active materials. a. Destroy when 2 years old or when no longer needed.	110	ADMI	GRS 23/1
Program Development Files	Break file at the end of the activity, project, or topic. If the record is paper, retire to a certified records center 2 years after file break and transfer to the National Archives when 20 years old. If the record is electronic, transfer to the National Archives when 20 years old.	145	PROG	NI -41 2-04-5
Program Management Files a. Held by Division Directors and higher level offices b. Held by Branch Chiefs and other personnel	Break file annually; keep in office at least 1 year. a. Retire to FRC. Destroy 10 years after file break. b. Retire to FRC. Destroy 5 years after file break.	006	PROG	NI -41 2-94-2/3

Description	Retention	EPA Number	Agency File Code	NARA Number
Reading & Chron Files	See Transitory Files	167	Not applicable	Not applicable
Rulemaking Committees	Break file when committee superseded or canceled.	518	COMT	NI -41 2-94-2/47
a. Published regulations, etc.	a. Keep in office up to 5 years, then retire to FRC. Transfer to NARA 20 years after file break.			
b. Unpublished regulations, etc.	b. Keep in office up to 3 years, then retire to FRC. Destroy 10 years after file break.			
Supervisor's Personnel Files		122	PERS	GRS 1 / 8
a. Supervisors' personnel files	a. Review annually and destroy superseded or obsolete documents, or destroy file relating to employee within 1 year after separation or transfer.			
b. Duplicate documentation	b. Destroy when 6 months old.			

Description	Retention	EPA Number	Agency File Code	NARA Number
Suspense Files a. Note or other reminder to take action b. File or extra copy of outgoing communication	a. Destroy after action taken. b. Withdraw when reply received. If extra copy, destroy. If file copy, incorporate into official files.	166	ADMI	GRS 23/6
Time & Attendance Records (for offices other than Financial Management Division) a. Source records b. Input records	Break file at end of pay period. a. Keep in office 1 year after file break, then destroy. b. Destroy after GAO audit or when 6 years old, whichever is sooner.	276	PERS	GRS 2/7 (Item a) GRS 2/8 (Item b)
Transitory Files a. Documents of short-term interest	a. Destroy when 3 months old.	167	ADMI	GRS 23/7

Description	Retention	EPA Number	Agency File Code	NARA Number
Travel and Transportation Files a. Record copy, except original travel receipts b. Record copy of original travel receipts	a. Destroy when 2 years old. b. Destroy 6 years 3 months after period covered by account.	121	FINA	GRS 9/4a (Item a) GRS 6/1 a (Item b)

*This list gives abbreviated disposition instructions and does not include instructions for electronic copies created with word processing and electronic mail applications. See the official schedules for details.
 [http://www.epa.gov/records/policy/schedule/index.htm]

CHECKLIST #3: RETIRING RECORDS TO THE FRC

PREPARING RECORDS FOR RETIREMENT

Once you have completed your records inventory and sorted your records, you can prepare records for retirement to the FRC. Here are some tips to help you.

- Identify the records to be retired.
 - Separate records according to records schedule.
 - Separate inactive records from active records.
 - Separate the inactive records for each group by their closure date.
- Prepare the records for boxing.
 - Remove duplicate copies and nonrecord material.
 - Prepare material for future recycling by removing plastic products (rubber bands, inserts, notebooks, label protectors, etc.). Staples, and paper clips do not have to be removed. You don't need to take pressboard folders with fasteners apart.
 - Make sure all folders are labeled with a unique, meaningful name identifying the contents.
 - Organize the folders in a logical order (e.g., alphabetical, chronological, numerical, or in the order provided by the file structure).
- Box the records.
 - Obtain and assemble new FRC boxes. Assembly instructions are provided with the boxes.
 - Pack the folders into the boxes. The labels should face the front of the box which is the end opposite the stapled end. Do not overstuff the boxes.
 - In pencil, number the boxes consecutively for each group on the front of the box. For example, the first box in a set of ten would be numbered 1/10; the second 2/10, and so forth to 10/10.
- Prepare a box content list (or box inventory). *Remember, the ability to retrieve the records will depend on the accuracy of the inventory.*

List each folder in each box according to the folder label and in the order in which it is packed.

Make sure the box number on the inventory matches the number on the box.

- Contact your Records Officer for instructions on obtaining an accession number and who should prepare the following forms:

Standard Form 135 - Request to Transfer - Federal Records Center.

EPA Form 5100-8 Facilities Service Request (headquarters) or the equivalent for your location.

Sample forms can be found in the NRMP publication, *Using The Federal Records Center: A Guide For Headquarters Staff*.

[<http://www.epa.gov/records/tools/toolkits/usingfrc/index.htm>]

[Note: If you don't know who your Records Officer is, contact the NRMP.]

Send the forms to the appropriate office for approval.

Make copies of the approved SF 135 and box contents list for your files.

- Prepare for shipment. [See *Using the Federal Records Center* for more detailed instructions.]

Once approval is obtained, write the accession number and box numbers on the front of the boxes in the appropriate places with a black felt tip marker.

Place one copy of the box content list and the approved SF 135 in the first box of the accession and fold in the top flaps of the boxes. Copies of contents list should be placed in each box.

Be available when the Facilities staff comes to remove the boxes for shipment.

6 - CHECKLIST #4: SPACE PLANNING

EFFECTIVE USE OF SPACE

Once you have completed your records inventory and sorted, retired, and purged your records, you will know how much material needs to be moved to your new space.

Here are some tips on how to plan for the most effective use of your new space.

- Consider these issues when determining where records should be located:
 - Usage - Who will use the records, how frequently, and for what purpose? Are there multiple users?
 - Security - Records with restricted access or valuable records requiring special protection may require special placement and equipment.
 - Suitability of space - Some records may require special storage conditions such as temperature or humidity controls.
- Would your office benefit by centralizing files? Centralizing the right records at the right places can have the following advantages:
 - Better use of personnel
 - Better documentation
 - Streamlined operations.
- If you have or will have a centralized storage area, determine the location of:
 - Active records
 - Inactive records
 - Nonrecords, including technical reference material and duplicate publications and forms
- Plan space to allow for existing materials *plus growth*. The person who does the filing can probably tell you how much the files grow in a month or a year. Also, take into account the records you will retire at the end of the year.

- Determine what will be maintained electronically and who will be responsible for maintenance:

Records

Publications

Forms

- Order the appropriate equipment or verify that the appropriate equipment has been ordered. See part 2 of this checklist, “Choosing Filing Equipment”.
- Determine which materials will be maintained in which equipment.
- Do you need to plan for a “reference area” where people can review files?
- Do you need to plan for a “staging area” where records can be prepared for filing, retiring, microfilming or scanning?
- Do you need to plan for space for computers and barcoding equipment, microfilm readers, or other specialized equipment?
- Are there electrical and telephone outlets for the equipment?
- Is there sufficient space and appropriate equipment for storing oversize items such as maps and nonpaper items such as videotapes and slides?

CHECKLIST #4: SPACE PLANNING

CHOOSING FILING EQUIPMENT

Selection Criteria

- **Compatibility**

Equipment should be compatible with the size and format of the materials to be stored.

Supplies should be compatible with the equipment (for example, use side tab folders for lateral shelving).

- **Accessibility**

Equipment should be easily accessible and located near the users so they don't need to go too far to get their records.

There needs to be sufficient room for people to access the materials safely.

- **Cost**

Take into account the initial cost, maintenance, repair, and operating costs for the equipment, and cost of accessories and supplies. Also consider costs of converting to a different system.

If moves are frequent, include costs for moving (and in some cases, dismantling and reassembly).

Non-standard supplies may be needed for proper use of equipment.

- **Security**

Special equipment such as locks or fireproof cabinets may be needed for vital or confidential records.

- **Site**

Certain types of equipment will require reinforcement of the floor to handle the weight.

Very sensitive records may need to be secured in areas with locked doors or limited access.

Amount of aisle space will vary with type of equipment.

TYPES OF FILING EQUIPMENT

Standard Equipment

On the following chart you will find descriptions of the four most common types of equipment, with advantages and disadvantages.

In addition, you will find there are other variations such as vertical cabinets which rotate like a “lazy susan” (also known as Times 2s or x2s) and lateral cabinets which move from side to side, instead of back and forth.

Also, while many of the types of equipment listed above can be tailored to hold nonpaper materials, there is a wide variety of specialized equipment.

Specialized Equipment

Large collections of maps, blueprints, charts, and drawings can be more efficiently stored in cabinets with:

- Horizontal drawers where the documents lay flat.
- Vertical drawers where the documents are suspended vertically.
- Cabinets or boxes with pigeonholes which accommodate rolled documents.

Magnetic media (disks and tapes) can be stored in a variety of types of equipment. Security, sturdiness, and environment (temperature and humidity) are important criteria when choosing this type of equipment.

Microform storage also comes in many styles, both automated and manual. Microforms can be housed in cabinets, binders, panels and trays. Environment is important in this case also.

FILING EQUIPMENT COMPARISON CHART

Equipment Type	Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>Standard drawer cabinets - These are the traditional vertical cabinets with one to five pull out drawers. Folders are placed vertically, front to back, with top tabs.</p>	<p>Suitable for smaller collections.</p> <p>Relatively easy to move.</p> <p>Minimum supply problems.</p>	<p>More time is required to retrieve and refile folders since drawers must be opened to gain access.</p> <p>Only one drawer can be accessed at a time.</p> <p>Limited adaptability to nonpaper materials.</p> <p>Requires additional space when drawers are extended.</p> <p>Difficult to read folders in back of drawers and in top drawers of 4 and 5 drawer cabinets.</p>
<p>Open shelves - Stores records on open, horizontal shelves. Folders are placed vertically, arranged in rows, from one side to the other, with side tabs.</p>	<p>Shelves do not extend into aisles.</p> <p>Can be stacked higher than standard cabinets.</p> <p>More than one person can access at a time.</p> <p>Easily adaptable to color coding, bar coding, and computer based tracking systems.</p> <p>Usually less expensive than drawer cabinets.</p> <p>Rapid retrieval and refile.</p>	<p>More difficult to move than drawer cabinets.</p>

Equipment Type	Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>Lateral filing equipment - Stores records in same way as open shelves. Drawers or shelves roll out or extend forward.</p>	<p>Can be designed to have drawers, or shelves (which roll out or are stationary), or to handle either suspension or regular folders.</p> <p>Can be equipped with doors and locks.</p> <p>Adaptable for nonpaper materials.</p>	<p>Only one drawer or shelf can be accessed at a time.</p> <p>Drawers or shelves may be pulled out into aisles for access.</p>
<p>Mobile shelving - Shelves move along a track either horizontally or rotate vertically like a ferris wheel. May be manually operated or powered.</p>	<p>Can often double amount of storage space since there are few permanent aisles.</p> <p>Reduces time required to walk to search for materials. In the case of vertical power files, for example, the appropriate shelf is delivered to the operator based on the operator's electronic command.</p> <p>Can be equipped with locks on shelves and aisles to improve security and limit access.</p> <p>Easily adaptable for nonpaper materials and other special needs such as temperature and humidity controlled conditions.</p>	<p>Requires more floor load capacity (ability of the floor to bear the weight of the equipment fully loaded).</p> <p>May have to wait to access desired area until a particular aisle is available.</p> <p>More expensive than other types of equipment.</p> <p>If your equipment is powered by electricity and the power goes out, you can not access your materials.</p>

SAMPLE RECORD INVENTORY FORM

From the OARM Records Management Study

NONSHADED AREA COMPLETED BY RECORDS HOLDER/SHADED AREA COMPLETED BY PROJECT TEAM

Date	Phone	Name	
Office	Division	Branch	Room
Title		Location: <input type="checkbox"/> Work Station <input type="checkbox"/> File Station <input type="checkbox"/> Both	
Purpose (Legal Requirement and/or reason records were created)			
Description (Refer to instructions on back - the description must be comprehensive.)			
<p style="text-align: center;">Contains the following kinds of documents (Check all that apply)</p> <div style="display: flex; flex-wrap: wrap;"> <div style="width: 50%;"><input type="checkbox"/> Nonrecords</div> <div style="width: 50%;"><input type="checkbox"/> Office Administrative</div> <div style="width: 50%;"><input type="checkbox"/> Grants & Support Agmts*</div> <div style="width: 50%;"><input type="checkbox"/> Interagency Comm</div> <div style="width: 50%;"><input type="checkbox"/> Program Management</div> <div style="width: 50%;"><input type="checkbox"/> Program Development</div> <div style="width: 50%;"><input type="checkbox"/> Training (given) Materials</div> <div style="width: 50%;"><input type="checkbox"/> Legal*</div> <div style="width: 50%;"><input type="checkbox"/> Contract Deliverables</div> <div style="width: 50%;"><input type="checkbox"/> Contract Information*</div> <div style="width: 50%;"><input type="checkbox"/> Regs/Legs*</div> <div style="width: 50%;"><input type="checkbox"/> Investigation*</div> <div style="width: 50%;"><input type="checkbox"/> Original Signed Documents*</div> <div style="width: 50%;"><input type="checkbox"/> Personal Papers</div> <div style="width: 50%;"><input type="checkbox"/> Policies/Procedures/Directives</div> </div>			
Are these convenience copies for your reference only? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If yes, who has the official copy?			
Estimated volume (in Linear Inches)	Current _____ Annual _____	Date Range	Start _____ End _____
How long is this material needed for administrative use? _____ For legal reasons (if known)? _____			
SHADED AREA TO BE COMPLETED JOINTLY BY EMPLOYEE & PROJECT TEAM CHECK ALL THAT APPLY			
FILE INTEGRITY <input type="checkbox"/> File breaks <input type="checkbox"/> Missing documents <input type="checkbox"/> Related files elsewhere	FINDING AIDS <input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> Shelf list <input type="checkbox"/> File plan <input type="checkbox"/> Other	FILE CONTROLS Access <input type="checkbox"/> Open <input type="checkbox"/> Closed Locks <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Staff <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Trained <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Written <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Policy/Procedures	DUPLICATION <input type="checkbox"/> Original <input type="checkbox"/> Copy <input type="checkbox"/> Signed Copy <input type="checkbox"/> Official <input type="checkbox"/> Other copy locations: <input type="checkbox"/> in Dept <input type="checkbox"/> in OARM <input type="checkbox"/> in EPA <input type="checkbox"/> out of EPA
MEDIUM <input type="checkbox"/> Paper <input type="checkbox"/> Ltr <input type="checkbox"/> Lgl <input type="checkbox"/> Microform <input type="checkbox"/> On-line <input type="checkbox"/> Diskette <input type="checkbox"/> Audiovisual <input type="checkbox"/> Maps/Drawings	ARRANGEMENTS <input type="checkbox"/> Subject <input type="checkbox"/> Chron <input type="checkbox"/> Alpha/numeric <input type="checkbox"/> Alpha <input type="checkbox"/> Numeric by:	LEGAL STATUS <input type="checkbox"/> Official <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting files <input type="checkbox"/> Working papers <input type="checkbox"/> Reference material <input type="checkbox"/> Personal papers <input type="checkbox"/> Convenience copy	STORAGE <input type="checkbox"/> Lateral <input type="checkbox"/> Vertical <input type="checkbox"/> High density <input type="checkbox"/> Book shelf <input type="checkbox"/> Box <input type="checkbox"/> Desk drawer
CUTOFF <input type="checkbox"/> End of year <input type="checkbox"/> Periodically <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____		RESTRICTIONS <input type="checkbox"/> Vital <input type="checkbox"/> Subject to audit <input type="checkbox"/> Public disclosure <input type="checkbox"/> Confidential <input type="checkbox"/> Archival <input type="checkbox"/> Required <input type="checkbox"/> Prohibited	
Revised 10/31/94		Control # R-	

Instructions

Complete an inventory form for each records group. A records group or “series” is defined as file units or other documents arranged according to a filing system or kept together because they relate to a particular subject or function, result from the same activity, document a specific kind of transaction, take a particular physical form, or have some other relationship arising out of their creation, receipt or use, such as restrictions on access and use.

Date, Name, Office, Division, Branch and Phone: Self-explanatory.

Title: Each series should be given a title for brief reference. Examples: general correspondence, EPA forms, leave records, office administrative files, etc.

Purpose: Self-explanatory.

Description: Each description should contain enough information to show the purpose, use and subject content of the records. Follow these guidelines:

- (a) Avoid emphasizing form numbers, especially when describing case files.
- (b) Consider combining into a single inventory item a number of very small series of temporary records if they serve the same function and/or are proposed for the same retention period.
- (c) Avoid terms, such as “miscellaneous” or “various,” that add nothing to the description.
- (d) Give special attention to describing potentially permanent records, because NARA requires more detailed information on them.

Volume: Indicate the volume of records in linear inches. NARA requires agencies to give volume figures of records proposed for permanent retention and also for nonrecurring records proposed for immediate destruction.

Annual Growth: Estimate annual growth for each series if the records are current and continuing. NARA requires agencies to furnish the rate of growth of such records proposed for permanent retention but not those proposed for disposal. If growth is not expected, indicate “none.”

Date Range: List the earliest and latest dates of the records in each series. If the series is still being created at the time of the inventory, indicate the latest date by the designation “to date” or “to present.”

Disposition Authority: Enclosed in this packet is a list entitled “EPA Approved Disposition Schedules”. Please review this list carefully. Match your records to a records title on the list (if you can) and indicate the number. If the purpose or use of the records has changed, please explain what the change is. Example: regulations now mandate the files be maintained where before you kept them for administrative purposes only. Conversely, laws no longer require the files be kept, but you are still keeping them for reference.



more conspicuous than the folder tab. File guide cards are made of press-board with one-third cut tabs in the first, second, or third position.

Labels. Two basic file folder labels are available from the Federal Supply Service. One is a general-purpose, white, self-adhering label with a colored stripe for easy indexing. The labels come 248 in a package and are fanfolded. This label is intended for captions of three or less typewritten lines. The other is a gummed, oversize label available in a variety of colors, issued in perforated, continuous fanfold strips or rolls, with 500 in a box. This label is ideal for captions consisting of more than three typewritten lines, such as lengthy project or publication titles.

Other Supplies. Check either the GSA Supply Catalog or a Customer Service Center catalog for recommended file folder tabs, file backers, drawer/guide labels, desk tray label holders, tape, binders, and alphabetical guides.

Forms. The GSA Supply Catalog lists commonly used optional forms in files operations, such as: Optional Form 21, Cross-Reference; Optional Form 23, Chargeout Record; and Optional Form 24, Shelf File (Letter Size) Chargeout Record.

8

Electronic Filing

The advent of the computer and its related information storage and retrieval capability has produced a new category of files—electronic files. These files are stored in a form that only a computer can process. The information is stored electronically on media such as magnetic tapes and disks or optical disks. Configurations of electronic files on

magnetic storage media can differ. For example, one reel of magnetic tape or one disk can contain one or more files. Or, one file can consist of one or more reels of magnetic tape or disks.

Electronic files differ from most other files in that they:

- Reside on erasable, reusable media.
- Require control in a shorter and more complex life cycle due to ease of duplication, alteration, or deletion of the data.
- Require related documentation—generally in the form of paper records—in their planning, creation, operation, and use.
- Are best managed in the context of an agency electronic information system, which includes inputs, information on electronic media, and outputs. (See 36 CFR Part 1234.28 and the Federal Information Resources Management Regulation [FIRMR] Bulletin B-1 for a discussion of the selection and maintenance of electronic storage media).

For more information on arranging electronic information, read *Electronic Recordkeeping* in the IRM handbook series. (See the Bibliography for information on how to obtain this publication.)

Electronic Filing Process

In an electronic filing system, the file clerk or technician may keyboard information from the original document into a personal computer (PC) or terminal. Another way to input data is by using an optical character recognition device to scan and digitize the document. Another way captures existing electronic records via data communication. After the document is complete and the operator has checked its accuracy, it can be entered into an electronic file where it is stored on media such as magnetic tape or disk. There is no paper required or involved. For retrieval, a name and/or number identifier will activate the system to scan through the files, find the document, and display it on the screen.

Electronic files can be transferred to other users through a computer

network or by using a portable storage medium such as a diskette. A laser or impact printer can be directed by the system to produce a paper “hard copy” of the document for distribution. After a time, inactive files may be transferred for long term storage to backup computer files, an optical disk, or computer-output microfilm. The previous media used for storing the files may then be erased. Some users may immediately direct files to optical storage, maintaining active files on optical media.

Electronic Filing Guidelines

Certain basic record management principles or guidelines apply to any record whether in a filing cabinet or on a computer disk. Records are valuable only when they can be found when needed for action or reference. In a paper-based filing system the tendency is to save and file. With office automation, predominantly electronic files, users tend to retain more information than they need because the record is very compact and not visible. Therefore, users must make a conscious effort to delete transient records. They must also retain adequate system and file documentation with the help of system and records managers.

Labeling and Arranging Electronic Files

To retrieve information created and stored electronically, the user is dependent on labels, both internal and external. Accurate and complete labels are essential for two major reasons:

- To ensure that agency personnel can identify the contents of individual disks and diskettes.
- To retrieve the information stored on them.

External Labels. External labels for diskettes or removable disks should include the originating office symbol, title, begin and end dates, application software, equipment type used to produce the file, and agency file codes as required. (See the accompanying illustration, “Labeling Diskettes”.)



Labeling Diskettes

Diskette label for official file

Record Series	9C1a
Series title, year of creation	Correspondence FY91
Disposition	COFF 9/30/91; Delete 10/1/93
Directory; software version	<Jan>; SW-Doc. Dsgnr 2.2
Hardware	HW-CT

Diskette label for Word Processing file

Record series; title	9A25. Word Processing
Title of handbook, report, etc.	OADP1820.2, ch.4
Disposition	DELETE when no longer needed
Directory/software version	<Fran>; SW-WordPerfect 5.1
Hardware	HW-IBM

External labels or the equivalent automated tape management system for magnetic tapes should provide specific information for each reel: volume and/or serial number, the name of the organizational unit responsible for the data, data set name(s), and any security classification.

Internal Labels. Internal labels should show the index, table of contents, or list of documents stored electronically on the disk or diskette. Documents, files, and directory-naming conventions should be easily understandable and standardized or patterned after manual methods so authors and their colleagues or successors can find and use information stored on disks or tapes.

Arranging Electronically-Stored Information. Information stored on diskettes or on hard disks may be arranged like information in paper files. One effective system is to file similar documents in the same place—on the same labeled floppy or in the same directory on a hard disk. This avoids the necessity of rummaging through a drawer full of floppy

disks or searching through multiple directories on a hard disk to find needed documents. If possible, use a separate diskette for each file category or separate hard disk directory for major file categories to make it easier for users to find and retrieve information.

Indexing Electronic Files

If like information is not filed in the same place, that is on the same diskette or in the same hard disk volume, an index or text search system may be needed to find and retrieve electronically stored documents. The complexity of such an index will depend on such factors as the number of the files, file retention time, type of retrieval, and how familiar the users are with file documents. An electronic index may be based upon the same items used to call up a paper document: date, subject, file code, or number (for case, contract, or purchase order). The index may be printed out or stored on a labeled diskette. File a hard copy of the index and system documentation indicating how to use the index with the office files plan or near the workstations.

In addition to the electronic index to the files, indexes to diskettes may be required. If the diskettes are few in number and are properly labeled, they may be largely self-indexing. If there are many, subdivide the physical file of diskettes as necessary. Print out updated diskette indexes periodically to ensure easy access to them.

The need to establish a formal, office-wide system for filing, labeling, and naming electronic records depends on how the information is used. Such a system is essential if the office plans to maintain records solely in electronic form without converting the information to paper or microforms. If there is a high turnover of personnel, or if the information is shared or routed electronically, a formal system may be particularly advantageous. If

Electronic Files Checklist

- [] Has the systems manager established guidelines for document creation, including protocols for coding and indexing?
- [] Does the systems manager monitor for compliance?
- [] Are the automated files inventoried and assigned disposition with assistance from the agency records manager?
- [] Has the archival storage medium been determined in consultation with the agency records manager? Has someone been assigned responsibility for transferring permanent information to an archival storage medium?
- [] Has a comprehensive list of subject (index) terms been compiled, and is it used for systems "folder" titles, as appropriate?
- [] Is the index produced by the system adequate to meet retrieval requirements?
- [] Are back-up files stored off-site?
- [] Are inactive files/tapes checked for data loss and reconstruction promptly accomplished?
- [] Is adequate system documentation available?
- [] Are sensitive records marked?



information is shared on paper, however, minimal identifying information should be sufficient. Whatever the nature of the electronic file system, the need to properly classify and schedule electronic records per agency and NARA requirements remains. (The "Electronic Files Checklist" on page 23 can serve as a guide to evaluating a formal electronic files system.)

Retrieving Electronic Files

With proper labeling and indexing, current files can be retrieved easily in a timely fashion. If an office upgrades its system or buys a new one, it should convert electronic records to the new system or design the new system so that these records can be retrieved readily. One possibility is to design systems that are compatible with a variety of other systems. An alternative is to contract with a commercial service that will convert records from one format to another.

Storage Media Technology

Electronic files are commonly stored on magnetic media such as diskettes, hard disks, and magnetic tapes, and also on optical disks.

Magnetic Media

Generally, magnetic media used to store electronic records can be grouped into three broad categories: diskettes, hard disks, and magnetic tapes.

Diskettes. A diskette, also called a floppy or flexible disk, is a circular, flat, plastic storage device that has a magnetized recording surface. The diskette provides users with low cost, portable, high capacity, direct-access storage. The flexible 5 1/4-inch diskette was the most widely used format in the 1980s. However, most new personal computer systems come equipped with a smaller floppy disk drive. The new 3 1/2-inch format diskette has a rigid, hard-shelled, disk cover that protects the data. The new format also reduces power requirements to run the disk drive and provides a greater data

storage capacity.

Flexible diskettes are delicate and require special care. The recording surface of all magnetic media can be damaged and the information obscured by high humidity, fingerprints, dust, spilled liquids, cigarette smoke, and other contaminants. (See the accompanying list for details on the proper care of floppy disks.)

Hard Disks. A hard disk is a high-capacity file storage and retrieval medium for computers. While similar to a floppy diskette in function and in magnetic surface composition, the hard disk is rigid. Hard disks on most small computers are integral to the equipment. Such hard disks are contained within

sealed units and are not accessible to operating personnel. However, some small computers use external, removable hard disks, or cartridges.

The data recorded on hard disk are subject to error, or even obliteration, if any device that emits a magnetic force is placed or located near the computer's hard disk. Power spikes and surges will also destroy data on a hard disk on a computer plugged into an electrical outlet, even if the computer is turned off. A surge protector for all computer hardware is strongly recommended. Data may also be lost if a computer or external disk packs are subject to rough handling.

Magnetic Tapes. Magnetic tapes are normally associated with large main-frame computer operations rather than with PCs.

However, PC files are often transferred to magnetic tapes for use on large computers. This provides an important backup copy for the material. In addition, if any of the files need to be transferred to the National Archives, magnetic tape is an acceptable long-term storage medium of permanent electronic records.

Magnetic tapes are stored on reels, cassettes, or cartridges. The tapes are best stored upright, hanging, or standing. For storage and retrieval purposes, hanging is the most common method of storing tape reels. Using color-coded labeling strips on magnetic tape reels can help make filing and retrieval easier.

Caring for Magnetic Media. Magnetic media are extremely fragile. Without using special precautions, magnetic media may easily become damaged or destroyed. Proper handling and storage of magnetic media will prevent contaminated disks, damaged equipment, and loss of information or errors in stored data. Proper backup procedures are a vital part of caring for and handling of computer files and magnetic media. In addition, be sure to retain documentation related to the electronic files.

Care of Floppy Disks

Always store disks in protective jacket.

Maintain storage temperatures between 50° and 125° F.

Avoid disk contact with equipment generating magnetic fields, such as telephones.

Avoid writing on a label affixed to a disk or on the jacket or sleeve if the disk is inside. A felt tip pen can be used to add information sparingly. The best practice is to make a new label and place it over the old one.

Protect disks from direct sunlight.

Avoid using clips of any kind to attach things to floppy disks.

Protect disks from direct liquids or dampness.

Do not bend, handle roughly, flex, or bind disks with rubber bands.

Do not touch exposed portions of a disk.

Do not lay metal objects on a disk even if the disk is covered by a protective jacket.

Use care when inserting a disk into, or removing a disk from, a computer's disk drive.

Store disks vertically in a rigid container that is not vulnerable to light and dust.



For further guidelines on the care and maintenance of electronic media, consult *Care and Handling of Computer Magnetic Storage Media*, National Bureau of Standards Special Publication 500-101, June 1983, published by the National Institute of Standards and Technology, as well as National Archives and Records Administration regulations (36 CFR Part 1234, Electronic Records Management).

Optical Disks

An optical disk (sometimes called optical digital disk or optical digital data disk) is very similar in shape to a magnetic disk. Optical disks range from 3 1/4 to 14 inches in diameter. Information is entered on the optical disk by a laser beam that writes data onto the disk's light-sensitive surface. Because such a laser beam is microscopic, very large amounts of information can be stored on a single disk. Information is retrieved or read back by using a low-powered laser.

Optical disks are rigid, durable, removable, and are not affected by static or magnetic influence as are the magnetic storage devices previously described. Features of optical disk technology include:

- The ability to convert images into digital data. The technology can record digital, audio, video, and graphics data efficiently. Images such as pictures, illustrations, and signatures can be stored in digitized form on the disk with other electronic data.
- Capacity/space savings. An optical disk can store about 400 times more information than can a regular magnetic floppy disk, and about eight times more than a typical hard disk. This difference in storage capacity is a plus if the data is to be stored only and not changed.
- A tendency to lock users into proprietary products due to lack of standards.

A number of storage media systems are associated with optical disks. The common types include WORM, Rewritable, CD-ROM, and CD-I.

WORM (Write Once-Read Many). WORM disks allow users to record data but not to write over or change it. The disks can be used for document storage and backup since they hold thousands of pages. In day-to-day office operations, WORM disks can function as file cabinets. The filed or stored data can be retrieved or viewed but not modified.

Rewritable. Rewritable (or erasable) disks permit users to read, write, erase, and write over data. These disks operate much like hard disks but with much greater capacity. Rewritable disks are suited to data that must be continually changed. This is still an experimental technology, with limited use, and it is currently very expensive.

CD-ROM (Compact Disc-Read Only Memory). CD-ROM is a read-only optical technology. This means that the data on the disc is pre-recorded and cannot normally be erased or updated. CD-ROM is used mainly for publishing and distributing large, unchanging databases such as encyclopedias, dictionaries, and commonly used references.

CD-I (Compact Disc-Interactive). CD-I technology adds a multimedia (audio, video, graphics) dimension to a CD-ROM disc. These interactive compact discs are intended for home entertainment and learning, education, and training. CD-I players connect to stereo and television systems, rather than to a computer.

Optical Disk Document Imaging

The storage capacity of the optical disk has made possible optical disk-based document image processing systems that can streamline some low activity, paperwork-intensive operations. These on-line systems feature digitizing, storing, and retrieval on optical disks; indexing with specialized software; laser printing; and delivery by electronic mail or other telecommunication media.

9

Vital Records

Vital records are those records necessary to:

- maintain continuity of operations during an emergency,
- recover full operations following an emergency, and
- protect the legal and financial rights and interests of citizens and the government.

The two basic categories of vital records are emergency operating (or preparedness) records and rights and interests records.

Emergency Operating Records

These are records vital to a Federal agency from the beginning through the full recovery of an emergency. Such records include any plans and procedures necessary for the maintenance of public health, safety and order, and for the conduct of essential civil defense activities. They also include records necessary for military efforts and for mobilization and protection of material and manpower resources, services, and systems.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) defines emergencies as occurring both in peacetime and wartime. Emergencies come from natural, man-made, and nuclear causes. FEMA has classified Federal departments and agencies and their regional components having emergency operating records into three categories.

Category I: Federal departments and agencies required to have a continuous emergency operating capability during national security emergencies.

Category II: Federal departments and agencies required to establish an emergency operating capability such that the capability may be interrupted during extreme emergencies such as nuclear attack.

SAMPLE ELECTRONIC SYSTEM INVENTORY FORM

From the OARM Records Management Study

Date		Name		Phone	
Office	Division	Branch	Title		
System Name			Acronym and/or #	Program Supported	
Purpose (Legal Requirement and/or reason system was created)					
Main Subject Description (Refer to instructions on back...The description must be comprehensive)					
<p>This system contains the following kinds of documents (Check all that apply):</p> <input type="checkbox"/> System data <input type="checkbox"/> System documentation <input type="checkbox"/> System development <input type="checkbox"/> Operation/Mtnc <input type="checkbox"/> Input source data					
System Managers		Name		Office	
For development documentation		_____		_____	
For systems documentation		_____		_____	
For operation/maintenance material		_____		_____	
Hardware			Software		
Date Range			Record Value		
Start _____ End _____			<input type="checkbox"/> Fiscal <input type="checkbox"/> Administrative <input type="checkbox"/> Legal <input type="checkbox"/> Historical <input type="checkbox"/> None		
Disposition Authority (if known)			Disposition Recommendation		
Approved schedule #			User Requirement		
Has purpose / use changed since schedule was approved?			Legal Requirement (if known)		
<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes If yes, Explain					
			Possible schedule number(s)		
<p align="center">OTHER RECORDKEEPING REQUIREMENTS</p> <p align="center">Check all that apply</p>					
Restrictions <input type="checkbox"/> Vital <input type="checkbox"/> Confidential <input type="checkbox"/> Subject to audit <input type="checkbox"/> Archival <input type="checkbox"/> Public Disclosure <input type="checkbox"/> Required <input type="checkbox"/> Prohibited		Duplication <input type="checkbox"/> Original <input type="checkbox"/> Copy <input type="checkbox"/> Copy locations: <input type="checkbox"/> In Dept <input type="checkbox"/> In Agency <input type="checkbox"/> In OARM <input type="checkbox"/> Out of Agency		Major Output <input type="checkbox"/> Reports <input type="checkbox"/> Tables <input type="checkbox"/> Charts <input type="checkbox"/> Publication <input type="checkbox"/> Other:	
		Frequency <input type="checkbox"/> Daily <input type="checkbox"/> Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly <input type="checkbox"/> Yearly <input type="checkbox"/> Other:		Documentation <input type="checkbox"/> On-line <input type="checkbox"/> Hard copy _____ # volumes _____ # copies _____ # locations	
Update cycle:			Superseded information saved: <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes		
Information transferred to other systems: <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (if yes, what systems):					
Control # E- _____ Revised 10/31/94					

An electronic or "information" system is the organized collection, processing, transmission and dissemination of information in accordance with defined procedures. It includes the inputs and outputs that are generated, as well as the information on electronic media. The system may contain budgetary, fiscal, social, economic, scientific-technical or program-related data and information, operated in support of agency programs and management responsibilities.

The Agency's concern is with the government information in the system, i.e., information created, collected, processed, transmitted, disseminated, used, stored, and disposed of by the Federal Government. Examples of electronic systems include: Audit Tracking System, ADP Budget Planning System, and Contract Payment System. Examples of what are NOT electronic systems include: word processing memos and Freelance Graphics presentations.

INSTRUCTIONS

Complete an inventory form for each electronic system. NOTE: Only one form should be completed for multi-user systems. The person who maintains responsibility for the system should complete the form.

Date, Name, Phone, Office, Division and Branch: Self-explanatory.

System Title: The commonly used name of the system.

Acronym: The commonly used acronym of the system.

Program Supported: Self-explanatory.

Purpose: The reasons for and the requirements met by the system.

Systems Managers: Indicate all persons designed as back-ups, and/or the names and offices of the person(s) who can provide additional information about the system and the program it supports.

Authority: Indicate the laws, directives, etc. which authorize the system.

Main Subject Description: The description should include the following information:

(a) **Sources of data:** The primary sources or providers of data to the system [e.g., broadcast license holders, corporations doing business in the U.S.]. Does this system receive information from other systems, either from within or outside your agency?

(b) **Information content:** The principal subject matter, data coverage, update cycle, whether the system saves superseded information, major characteristics of the system, and whether the system contains microdata or summary data.

(c) **Outputs:** The principal products of the system [e.g., reports, tables, charts, graphic displays, catalogs, correspondence] and an indication of the frequency of preparation. Is information from this system transferred to other systems?

Hardware, Software: Self-explanatory.

Disposition Authority: Enclosed in this packet is a list entitled "EPA Approved Schedules". Please review this list carefully. Match your electronic system to a title on the list (if you can) and indicate the schedule number. If the purpose or use of the system has changed, please explain what the change is. Example: regulations now mandate the files be maintained where before you kept them for administrative purposes only. Conversely, laws no longer require the files be kept, but you are still keeping them for reference.