

National Weather Service Records Management

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1. Introduction. The purpose of this procedure is to provide guidance for maintaining and archiving National Weather Service (NWS) records. NWS follows all NOAA and National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) guidelines.

1.1 44 U.S.C. 3101. The U. S. Code (44 U.S.C. 3101), requires that the head of each Federal agency shall make and preserve records containing adequate and proper documentation of the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, and essential transactions of the agency and designed to furnish the information necessary to protect the legal and financial rights of the Government and of persons directly affected by the agency's activities.

1.2 Office Responsibilities. It is the responsibility of each office to determine the most efficient filing system that meets their needs. NOAA does not mandate a filing system since individual program requirements best determine the most suitable system, i.e., alphabetic, subject, or numeric.

2. NOAA Filing Disposition Handbook. Follow NOAA Records Schedules 100 and 200 for Routine, Administrative and Housekeeping Guidance. NWS records schedule, 1300, is obsolete. Revised Schedule 1300 is awaiting NARA approval. NOAA employees will be notified when approved revised Schedule 1300 has been posted to the NOAA Records Management Website, <http://www.rdc.noaa.gov/~audit/record-rev1.htm>

3. Records Liaison Officer. Each Office is assigned a Records Liaison Officer (RLO) who is the first point of contact for Records information. RLO information is available on the NOAA Records Management web site (www.ofa.noaa.gov/~audit/record-rev1.htm) or from Betty Dodds, W/CFO3. If the RLO cannot provide the information or is not available, contact the NOAA Records Management Officer, NFA, HCHB Room 6812, (202)482-5958.

4. Guidelines. Offices are instructed to review the records disposition schedule appropriate to office program files. Each series is based on the associated functions that crosscut the organization. They are appropriate throughout at least two different offices or comprise a headquarters function. Use the NOAA Records Management Guide and the Records Disposition Handbook to prepare the office Filing Plan. For a sample file plan, see Attachment 1

4.1 Drafts and Working Papers. Drafts and working papers should be filed and maintained as part of the agency's records. Working papers include documents explaining how the agency formulated and executed significant programs, policies, decisions, actions, or responsibilities; or contain unique program-related annotations or comments.

4.2 Privacy Act of 1974. All records protected by the Privacy Act must be handled in accordance with NOAA regulations. Privacy Act data includes personal names, identifying codes, symbols, and other identifiers such as a fingerprints, voice prints, or photographs. These records may also contain, but are not limited to, information about an individual's education, financial transactions, medical history, and criminal or employment history.

5. Records Review. Each office should conduct an annual review of office records. Guidelines for an annual review are posted to the NOAA Records Management Web site, Records Management Guide, Section III. Records Review. Suggested review guidelines include changes in file maintenance; records which are ready for transfer; and, records eligible for disposal in accordance with the NOAA Records Disposition Handbook. Reviews should ensure systems meet office needs and disposition instructions are appropriate.

5.1. Focal Points. Designated employees shall maintain a list of office files. Inform office personnel of the location of the office file list and an overview of office filing procedures.

5.2 Record Format Changes. Offices should contact their RLO when planning records format changes. For example, if an office plans to microfilm records and dispose of the original, the microfilm would become the record copy. The NOAA Records Officer requires additional disposal authority by the NOAA Records Officer.

6. Records Retirement and Disposal. Records may be retired to a Federal Records Center (FRC) when no longer in active use. See NOAA guidelines, storage procedures, retention costs and responsibilities.

6.1 Overview of Records Storage. Use only NARA approved storage boxes available through the Government Services Administration. Fill boxes with like materials, i.e., files with similar disposition dates. Make a list of box contents. Fill out SF 135 (available on the NOAA Informs Filler or from NOAA Records Management Web page). Send the form and the list to the NOAA records officer. NOAA will coordinate with NARA and insert an accession number on the form and notify the user. Upon receipt of accession number, insert the accession number in the appropriate location on the box(es). Contact the NOAA Records Officer to arrange for box pick up. Note: The accession number must be maintained in an appropriate office location until the disposal date is reached. Permanent records will be transferred to NARA when scheduled. Accession number is required to retrieve files from NARA facilities.

6.2 Records Retrieval. Records may generally be retrieved from a NARA site within 48 hours. A single box, or a specific file can be retrieved by providing the specific accession number. The file name on box list and storage date are also required.

6.3 Disposition of Records Located within NWS Facilities. Records maintained in the program office which have reached their scheduled disposition date, may be disposed of without additional authority. Generally, records reaching a 6-year maturity, are disposed of by 6-years and 3 months. Recycle general housekeeping and routing records that do not contain Privacy Act data (see 5. Privacy Act of 1994.) Shred Privacy Act records or arrange for pick up and disposal by NOAA Records Management.

6.4 Disposition of Records Stored in an FRC. Offices will be notified by the Records Management Officer when records stored in an FRC become eligible for disposal. If the office

rejects the disposal date, a written justification must be provided for continued retention, including a recommendation for a new disposal date.

6.5 Permanent Records. Permanent records should be transferred to NARA when no longer in active use. Generally, all NWS records signed at the division level and above, relating to the agency mission, policy, or procedures, are permanent Federal records. They cannot be removed or destroyed without authorization of the Archivist of the United States.

Permanent Records require a box list including dates and descriptions of the contents of each folder in the box. Enter the data on plain paper. Two copies of the list are required: one copy is maintained for office reference, and the second accompanies the SF-135. Submit the SF 135 to the NOAA Records Management Officer. Upon review, NOAA will forward to NARA for approval. An accession number will be assigned. The originating office will be notified of the accession number. Insert the number in the designated space on the boxes. Contact the NOAA Records Management Office to arrange for transferral. Instructions for completing the SF 135 on the NOAA Records Management web site.

A copy of the SF 135 with accession number will be filed in an appropriate location should document retrieval be required at a later date. The retrieval request must include accession number, file name, and date sent to NARA.

7. Vital Records Authorities. A vital record is any recorded data that is essential for the survival and continued operation of the organization; data that is part of NOAA's disaster preparedness program; data that is unique or cannot be replaced; or data needed to recreate NOAA's legal, financial and administrative obligations. (See NOAA Administrative Order 210-2 - NOAA Vital Records Program Title 36 Code of Federal Regulations, Chapter XII - Part 1236 - Management of Vital Records)

8. Contractor Records. Contractor records includes data created or received and maintained for the Government by contractors:

8.1 Office Responsibility. Agencies shall specify the delivery to the Government of all data needed for the adequate and proper documentation of contractor-operated programs in accordance with requirements of the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) and, where applicable, the Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement (DFARS).

8.2 Contractor Records Regulations. All data created for Government use and delivered to, or falling under the legal control of, the Government are Federal records and shall be managed in accordance with records management legislation as codified at 44 U.S.C. chapters 21, 29, 31, and 33, the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552), and the Privacy Act (5 U.S.C. 552a), and shall be scheduled for disposition in accordance with 36 CFR part 1228.

8.3 Contractor Responsibility. When data deliverables include electronic records, the agency shall require the contractor to deliver sufficient technical documentation to permit the agency or other Government agencies to use the data.

9. Electronic Mail Messages. Electronic messages created or received on systems meeting the definition of a record in 44 USC 3301, will follow current Department of Commerce (DOC) guidelines. See DOC guidelines, <http://www.rdc.noaa.gov/~foia/asdhome/rec-email-rev.htm>

10. Unlawful Removal, Destruction of Records. The head of each Federal agency shall notify the Archivist of any actual, impending, or threatened unlawful removal, defacing, alteration, or destruction of records in the custody of the agency of which he is the head that shall come to his attention and with the assistance of the Archivist shall initiate action through the Attorney General for the recovery of records he knows or has reason to believe have been unlawfully removed from his agency, or from another Federal agency whose records have been transferred to his legal custody. In any case in which the head of the agency does not initiate an action for such recovery or other redress within a reasonable period of time after being notified of any such unlawful action, the Archivist shall request the Attorney General to initiate such an action, and shall notify the Congress when such a request has been made. (See U. S. C. 3106.)

Appendix A - Definitions

Record: The U. S. Code 44 Section 3301 defines records to include all books, papers, maps, photographs, machine readable materials, or other documentary materials, regardless of physical form or characteristics, made or received by an agency of the United States Government under Federal law or in connection with the transaction of public business and preserved or appropriate for preservation by that agency or its legitimate successor as evidence of the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations, or other activities of the Government or because of the informational value of data in them. Library and museum material made or acquired and preserved solely for reference or exhibition purposes, extra copies of documents preserved only for convenience of reference, and stocks of publications and of processed documents are not included (see 44USC3301).

Categories of documentary materials to be covered by recordkeeping requirements.

- (1) Document the persons, places, things, or matters dealt with by the agency (non-mission/program policy and procedures).
- (2) Facilitate action by agency officials and their successors in office.
- (3) Make possible a proper scrutiny by the Congress or other duly authorized agencies of the Government.
- (4) Protect the financial, legal, and other rights of the Government and of persons directly affected by the Government's actions.
- (5) Document the formulation and execution of basic policies and decisions and the taking of necessary actions, including all significant decisions and commitments reached orally (person to person, by telecommunications, or in conference).
- (6) Document important board, committee, or staff meetings.

Record Series: A series is the basic unit for organizing and controlling files. It is a group of files or documents kept together (either physically or intellectually) because they relate to a particular subject or function, result from the same activity, document a specific type of transaction, take a particular physical form, or have some other relationship arising out of their creation, receipt, maintenance, or use (36 CFR1220.14).

Schedule: Each record series must be scheduled for appropriate disposition. Scheduled records mean NARA has authorized the disposition of Federal Records. The series concept is flexible. Government programs should create a series by organizing documents in ways that facilitate management of the records throughout their life cycle. For example, each record series in hard copy should be physically separated from all other record series. Electronic records should be managed in ways that link records to their disposition authority, within the context of a record keeping system.

Permanent: Permanent record refers to any Federal record that has been determined by NARA to have sufficient value to warrant its preservation in the National Archives of the United States. Permanent records include all records accessioned by NARA into the National Archives of the

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United States and later increments of the same records, and those for which the disposition is permanent. Forward to NARA when no longer in active use.

Reference Copy: These are duplicate copies used in multiple locations for reference in the course of doing business. Destroy when no longer needed.

Non-record Materials: Non-record materials are Government-owned documentary materials that do not meet the conditions of record status (see §1222.34(b)) or that are specifically excluded from status as records by statute (see 44 U.S.C. 3301):

Electronic Records: Electronic mail messages. Messages created or received on electronic mail systems may meet the definition of record in 44 USC 3301. See DOC and NARA guidelines.

FILE PLAN		Page of
Office (Name, Routing Code, and Organization Code:		For FY:
Prepared by (files custodian)		Phone Number:
Bldg/Rm Number		Date
Reviewed by (Supervisor Name)		Approved by (Records Manager)
PLAN ITEM NO. TITLE OR DESCRIPTION OF SERIES OR SYSTEM	DISPOSITION CITATION (Records Schedule Item Number)	