



**U. S Department of Agriculture  
Electronic Official Personnel Folder (e-OPF)**

**Frequently Asked Questions**

**1. What is the Official Personnel Folder (OPF)?**

The Official Personnel Folder (Standard Form 66) is a file containing records that cover an individual's employment history. It covers Executive Branch service under Title 5, United States Code (<http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/get-cfr.cgi?TITLE=5&PART=293&SECTION=302&TYPE=TEXT>). The long-term records included in the file are chosen to protect the legal and financial rights of the Government and the employee. The Official Personnel Folder is part of the Governmentwide system of records, OPM/GOVT-1. While a person is employed at a Federal agency, that agency becomes the custodian of the OPF. The OPF is ultimately the property of the Office of Personnel Management. The Guide to Personnel Recordkeeping, published by the OPM, contains the rules for creating, maintaining, using and disposing of the OPF.

**2. What is the Electronic Official Personnel Folder (e-OPF)?**

The e-OPF is an electronic version of the original OPF and a system for accessing the electronic folder online. The e-OPF allows each employee to have an electronic personnel folder instead of a paper file. Some of the features of the system include:

- o Provides immediate access to OPF forms and information
- o Delivers an e-mail notification to the employee when a document is added to the e-OPF
- o Supports a multi-level secure environment, with security rules for vital information
- o Eliminates loss of an employee's official personnel files during filing and routing
- o Reduces costs associated with storage, maintenance, and retrieval of records
- o Provides for electronic transfer of human resources data
- o Integrates and compliments agency human resource information systems capabilities
- o Complies with OPM and federally mandated HR employee record management regulations

**3. What process was used to get old documents into the e-OPFs?**

All paper documents stored in the OPF were inventoried, boxed, and shipped to an off-site facility where they underwent the “backfile” conversion process. Backfile conversion included scanning, indexing, and quality assurance checks of each document in the file.

**4. Who will input new documents into the e-OPFs?**

After initial conversion is complete, new SF-50's will be electronically transmitted from the National Finance Center Personnel/Payroll system to the e-OPF system. Other documents will either be scanned by the HR staff or sent to a scanning facility for scanning and inclusion in the e-OPF.

**5. What does OPM plan to do with the original paper OPFs once they are available online?**

OPM is working to issue official policy regarding the paper OPFs. OPM is considering a number of alternatives, one of which is that existing paper OPFs be returned to the employees after scanning and an appropriate amount of time has passed. Another option under consideration is to retire the paper file to the Federal Personnel Records Center in St. Louis, MO.

**6. How secure is my personal information in the e-OPF system?**

We have taken several steps to ensure that your information is protected. First, the e-OPF can only be accessed through an Internet browser using Secure Socket Layer (SSL) with 128-bit encryption. This ensures that all of the information the e-OPF system sends to you over the Internet is encrypted or ‘scrambled’ and thus cannot be readily intercepted and read. Second, access to your e-OPF account is controlled by your password. Do not give your password to anyone else. Third, the e-OPF has been programmed to limit movement between screens to ensure that someone cannot go directly to your documents using a temporary URL, and system timeouts are employed to inactivate the system after periods of inactivity. Even with these protections, every employee should protect their own data privacy by printing and filing personal documents and ensuring others are not able to access their information.

**7. Who will have access to the e-OPFs?**

HR Specialists will have access to employees that they service; OPM investigators will have access when conducting a background investigation; and employees will be able to see their own information. Each employee is responsible for the consequences of providing others access to their e-OPF. In addition, each time a folder is accessed by someone other than the employee, a record is made of who accessed it and why.

**8. How can I get email notifications when new documents are added to my e-OPF?**

If you would like the system to notify you each time a document, such as an SF-50 (Notification of Personnel Action), is added to your e-OPF account, you must input a valid email address. At the initial e-OPF entry screen, follow the links to input an email address of your choice. You can either use your government provided e-mail or your personal e-mail. It is your responsibility to change the address if you no longer use it. This will also serve as the distribution method for your SF-50s. If you do not input an email address you will not be notified of personnel actions.

**9. What information will be included in the e-mail notification?**

The e-mail notification sent to the employee when a document is added will contain only basic information about the document, such as form number, type of action, and effective date.

**10. Will employees be notified when items are removed from their e-OPF, i.e. letters of reprimand, SF-50s?**

The removal of documents, such as the expiration of a Letter of Reprimand or a Cancellation SF-50 will not generate notifications.

**11. Will employees be notified if someone looks at their e-OPF?**

No. E-mail notification occurs only when a new document is added to the e-OPF. However, a complete audit trail is recorded each time a document is accessed by any user.

**12. Who processes removal of documents?**

HR Specialists are the only users that may add or delete documents from the e-OPF. If you have a concern about a document which should be removed from your e-OPF (e.g., a letter of reprimand), notify your HR Specialist or follow the same procedures that you have followed in the past. All questions regarding the content of your e-OPF should be directed to your HR Specialist.

**13. What measures will be taken to ensure that e-OPF data will not be lost?**

OPM will be hosting the e-OPF system for the USDA and other government agencies. Nightly incremental backups will be conducted, which includes all new documents and any related information added on a given day. Full system-wide backups will occur weekly. OPM will perform complete off-site storage of the entire data repository on a monthly basis.

**14. How will I receive training on the system?**

The e-OPF, like other web-based systems, is very intuitive. However, an online tutorial is available that illustrates the basic features of the system. HR staff will be provided training on the use of the system.

**15. Will this system include other documents that are not a part of the OPF?**

With the e-OPF, we will be able to create “virtual” sides (i.e., left side – temporary) in which we can store other HR documents, such as training or performance appraisals. No decision has been made if other forms, outside those required for the current paper OPF, will be stored in the e-OPF in the future. Access to other forms will be based on current OPM recordkeeping practices.

**16. What is the target date for our agency to be fully converted to electronic folders?**

All of the REE Mission Area will be converted by the end of the 2007 fiscal year.

**17. Who owns the OPF and e-OPF, the employee or the agency?**

Neither. According to The Guide to Personnel Recordkeeping (OPM) “ The Office of Personnel Management owns the personnel folder and its contents.” The Guide contains the Office of Personnel Management’s rules for creating, maintaining, using, and disposing of the Official Personnel Folder.

**18. What is the role of the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) in the new folder system?**

OPM is working with NARA’s Modern Records Program group to discuss the impacts of implementing e-OPFs federal-wide and establish guidance on areas such as disposal, transfer, and migration.

OPM is also engaged with the National Personnel Records Center at NARA to determine when they can subscribe to e-OPF. The records center has significant scanning capabilities already and is evaluating whether they could provide an alternative to agencies hoping to outsource the scanning function.

For more information on NARA’s role follow these links:

[http://www.archives.gov/electronic\\_records\\_archives/records/electronic\\_records.html](http://www.archives.gov/electronic_records_archives/records/electronic_records.html)

[http://www.archives.gov/electronic\\_records\\_archives/acquisition/design\\_contract\\_award.html](http://www.archives.gov/electronic_records_archives/acquisition/design_contract_award.html)

[http://www.archives.gov/records\\_management/policy\\_and\\_guidance/frequently\\_asked\\_questions\\_image\\_d.html](http://www.archives.gov/records_management/policy_and_guidance/frequently_asked_questions_image_d.html)

**19. How will things be handled for employees in remote locations who do not have access to PCs to review their OPFs online?**

Employees with no access to a PC will still be able to get copies of the documents in their OPF. These requests will be handled the same as they have been in the past.

**20. What if I lose my password for accessing my e-OPF?**

There is a “Reset my Password” button if you forget or lose your password. You will be asked a few questions to verify your identity and, once successfully verified, a new password will be randomly generated for you. Reset passwords are distributed in a follow-up email or, if an email address is not available in the system, by letter through the U.S. Mail.

**21. How long after I click on the “Reset My Password” button until I receive a new password?**

When you click on the ‘Reset my Password’ button, your password is immediately changed to a new randomly generated password. The regenerated password will be emailed to the email address you have provided within the e-OPF system. If you do not have or do not list an email address in the e-OPF system, the new password will be mailed to you via U.S. Mail and you should receive your new password within 2 weeks.

**22. Does any other agency use electronic Official Personnel Folders?**

Several agencies including the HHS, DHS, FAA, DLA, Air Force, and the State Department have already implemented electronic OPF systems. All e-OPF vendors are following the 36 CFR 1228.270

which discusses transfer of permanent electronic records. Follow this link for more information:  
[http://www.archives.gov/records\\_management/initiatives/pdf\\_records.html](http://www.archives.gov/records_management/initiatives/pdf_records.html)

**23. I have reviewed my folder and it appears that the latest document is missing. What should I do?**

It's probable that the missing document has not yet been scanned and added to your e-OPF file. Some forms, like the Notification of Personnel Action (SF-50) come directly from the NFC and will be transmitted directly into the e-OPF. However, certain processes still produce paper which will have to be manually scanned in-house and added to your OPF. Therefore, the conversion of paper documents will be standard practice for the foreseeable future. You can contact your servicing HR Specialist to follow-up on the document.

**24. Some of my documents that were scanned are on the wrong side of the folder. How could this happen? What do I do to fix that?**

Documents in the paper OPF were scanned and placed in e-OPF according to the Guide to Personnel Recordkeeping. If you find a document you believe is on the wrong side of the folder, please contact your HR Specialist.

**25. I am a new USDA employee, how soon can I expect my e-OPF user ID and password?**

Information regarding your user ID and password will be provided to you during your enter-on-duty processing. It will take approximately 3 weeks from the time you enter-on-duty until your account is set-up in the e-OPF system.

**26. I noticed that a document in my e-OPF is incorrect, what do I do?**

Contact and inform your local HR Specialist of the problem. The HR Specialist is responsible for ensuring that the documents in question are corrected if necessary. You may be asked to provide documentation to help the HR Specialist make and/or verify the correction.

**27. Is there a Help feature for e-OPF?**

e-OPF has an online help function that you can reach by clicking on the word 'Help' at the top of most pages within the web site. The instructions in the help feature can be printed out if you wish to do so.

**28. I click on a document to see it through the Adobe Acrobat viewer, and then click on another document and it doesn't open up. What do I do?**

Only one document can be viewed at a time. Close out the first document by clicking on the 'X' in the right corner of the Acrobat viewer and then click on the next document you wish to see.