



# FEDERAL RECORDS CENTERS

of the National Archives and Records Administration



## The FRC Toolkit

*Your Guide to Federal Records Center Services*



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## GENERAL INFORMATION

### Introduction

For more than 50 years the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) and its predecessor agencies have provided comprehensive records management services to the Federal Government. The first Federal Records Center (FRC) opened in 1950. Since then, the NARA Federal Records Center system has grown into a national network of 17 regional facilities, storing and providing access to over 25 million cubic feet of records. In 1999, the FRC system converted to a reimbursable program that has provided the Federal community with exceptional records center services on a fully fee-for-service basis.

This *FRC Toolkit* is intended to serve as a resource for Federal employees with records management responsibilities. It provides step-by-step instructions for transferring, retrieving, and returning records to a Federal Records Center as well as information on records disposition and accession of records into the National Archives at the end of their retention schedule. It also provides definitions of key terms, which are highlighted throughout the document.



## Authority

NARA is authorized to establish, maintain, and operate records centers for Federal agencies under 44 U.S.C. 2907 and to approve a records center that is maintained and operated by an agency under 44 U.S.C. 3103. NARA is also authorized to promulgate standards, procedures, and guidelines to Federal agencies with respect to the storage of their records in commercial records storage facilities under 44 U.S.C. 2104(a), 2904, and 3102. NARA is authorized to determine the disposition of Federal records under 44 U.S.C. 2904. (The U.S. Code is available online at [www.gpoaccess.gov/uscode](http://www.gpoaccess.gov/uscode).)

## Federal Records Center Staff

NARA's Federal Records Center staff is a dedicated team of professionals with expertise in all aspects of records management. This team includes agency-specific **account representatives** at NARA headquarters in College Park, MD, and local **Federal Records Center Directors** and their staffs in the regional facilities. These staff members will work with you to identify and meet your agency's unique needs.

**ACCOUNT REPRESENTATIVES** serve as your agency records officer's point of contact with NARA. Account representatives can also provide information on billing and special services. In addition, account representatives facilitate preparation of Interagency Agreements for agency customers. See [www.archives.gov/frc/acct-reps.html](http://www.archives.gov/frc/acct-reps.html).

**FEDERAL RECORDS CENTER DIRECTORS** and their staff members provide reference, transfer, and disposition information and answer operational questions from Federal offices within their service areas, including the availability of special services. See [www.archives.gov/frc/directors.html](http://www.archives.gov/frc/directors.html).

*Your agency's invoice is now available in electronic format via PDF. Avoid mail delays—contact your account representative to receive your invoice electronically.*

## FRC on the Web

Information on the FRC is available online at [www.archives.gov/frc](http://www.archives.gov/frc). The web site links to forms, web sites of local FRCs, Federal regulations, staff contacts, and other key information.

## Materials and Supplies

The FRCs require agencies to use specific types of materials for preparing records transfers. These supplies and forms are available on the GSA web site [www.gsaadvantage.gov](http://www.gsaadvantage.gov). In FY 2008, standard-size record boxes can be ordered directly from the FRC. Please visit the FRC web site at [www.archives.gov/frc](http://www.archives.gov/frc) for updates.

### BOXES

- **Standard-size record box** (14¾" x 12" x 9½") for legal- or letter-size files (NSN 8115-00-117-8249).  
Please note: Boxes exceeding these dimensions will not fit on FRC shelving. If your records do not fit into a standard box with these measurements, please call your local FRC to discuss alternatives before choosing a different size box.
- **Special-purpose boxes**
  - **Half-size box** (14¾" x 9½" x 4¾")  
NSN 8115-00-117-8338
  - **X-ray box** (18" x 15" x 5½")  
NSN 8115-00-290-3386

### OTHER USEFUL MATERIALS

You may also wish to purchase the following supplies to prepare your records for shipment to the FRC:

- Clear packing tape (does not obscure numbers)
- Black felt-tip markers

## TRANSFERRING RECORDS TO A FEDERAL RECORDS CENTER

This section provides information on organizing your records for transfer; completing, submitting, and receiving approval for the Standard Form 135; packing and labeling your boxes and pallets; sending your shipment to the FRC; and retaining appropriate documentation. If you have questions on any step of the transfer process, please call the staff at your local FRC for guidance.

Please note that the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) in St. Louis, MO, has special procedures for transferring records. If you are transferring records to NPRC, please see page 21 of this Guide.

Figure 1: Box packed with letter-sized files



Figure 2: Box packed with legal-sized files



A *series* is a block of records having the same disposition authority and same disposition date.

### Transfer vs. Accession

*Transferring* refers to moving records into the physical custody of a NARA Federal Records Center. The transferring agency retains the legal custody of transferred records until final disposition. When permanent records are accessioned into the National Archives NARA takes legal custody of the records, and in most cases takes physical custody of the records as well. Accessioned records become the property of NARA.

*Did you know?* NARA no longer requires original signatures on the SF 135. Save time and submit your SF 135 electronically.

## Organizing Your Records

Before transferring records to the FRC, separate the records into series. Each item or subordinate item in your records schedule represents a *series*. Identify and separate your records into series by records schedule item number and cutoff date. Each series will be handled as a separate *transfer*. Each transfer must consist of at least one box and normally only one closing year date for a series of records. FRCs may accept more than one year of records in a transfer.

### TIPS FOR PACKING THE RECORDS

(See figures 1 and 2)

- **Please do not overpack the boxes.** Leave a 1- to 2-inch space in each box to allow ease of reference.
- Do not put additional material on the bottom, side, or top of the records in the box.
- Mixed media (e.g., computer diskettes, microfilm, or videocassettes) cannot be stored in the same environment as paper records. Please do not include these media in the same transfer with paper records without prior approval from the FRC.

### PACKING PALLETS

Local FRCs differ slightly regarding the stacking of pallets and the preferred order of boxes on pallets. Please contact the transfer office at your local FRC to confirm proper box order for your FRC. E-mail addresses are available on the FRC Directors' page [www.archives.gov/frc/directors.html](http://www.archives.gov/frc/directors.html). Pallets should be securely banded with shrink-wrap, steel, plastic, or cord strapping before shipping.

## Preparing and Submitting the Standard Form 135, Records Transmittal and Receipt Form

The SF 135 contains important information about your transfer that enables the FRC to properly document, store, and service your records. A completed SF 135 must be sent to your records

center for approval *before* shipping records.

A separate SF 135 is required for each individual record series having the same disposition authority and disposition date.

The current version of the form is available online at [www.archives.gov/frc](http://www.archives.gov/frc).

### FILLING OUT THE SF 135

- **Item 1:** Enter the name and address of the FRC to which you are submitting records. See [www.archives.gov/frc/directors.html](http://www.archives.gov/frc/directors.html) for the most current address information.
- **Item 2:** Enter the name of the transferring agency official. **To expedite and improve the transfer process for our customer agencies, FRCs will accept SF 135s without original signatures.** Please note that your agency may have internal procedures that require signatures. If you are in doubt, please contact your agency's records officer.
- **Item 3:** Provide the name, office, business telephone number (including area code), and e-mail address of the person to contact about the records.
- **Item 4:** Completed by the FRC.
- **Item 5:** Provide the complete address of the transferring office. If records come from one office, but the SF 135 should be sent to a different office, please include BOTH addresses. Specify where the approved SF 135 should be sent, and where the final SF 135 should be sent.
- **Item 6:** This three-part number comprises the accession number (also called the transfer number).
- **Item 6(a):** Enter the NARA record group number assigned to the records of the agency making the transfer.
- **Item 6(b):** Enter the last two digits of the current fiscal year.
- **Item 6(c):** Unless NARA has granted authorization to your agency to pre-assign numbers, FRC staff will assign a sequential number in this

**Stratified Report Invoicing** refers to billing that is broken out by different functions and/or geographical locations within the same agency. If you are unsure whether your agency participates in Stratified Report Invoicing, contact your agency's records officer, or your NARA FRC account representative [www.archives.gov/frc/acct\\_reps.html](http://www.archives.gov/frc/acct_reps.html).

Each individual record series being transferred requires a separate SF 135. See 36 CFR 1228.160 (e) for more details.

FRC staff can prepare detailed folder indexing for your transfers on a fee-for-service basis. Please see the "Special Services" chapter of this guide for more details.

column. At the Washington National Records Center (WNRC), agency records officers typically control and assign transfer numbers.

- **Item 6(d):** For transfer and billing purposes, a standard-size box equals one cubic foot. Enter the total number of boxes included in this transfer. If the records do not fit in a standard records center box, leave this column blank, add the dimensions of the container to item 6(f), and contact the FRC staff to verify acceptance.
- **Item 6(e):** Enter the inclusive range of numbers (e.g., 1–30).
- **Item 6(f):** Describe the records in sufficient detail to allow FRC personnel to verify compliance with your records schedule. You may wish to use the series description provided in your Records Control Schedule, or the General Records Schedule. A *complete* series description includes the series title and closing date (or inclusive dates) of the records.
  - Include the organizational component that created the records if the component is other than that described in item 5.
  - Indicate in this section if the series of records is subject to the Privacy Act. Since SF 135s are public records, information included on SF 135s (including folder title lists) should not contain National Security Classified information or information restricted by exemption B6, the Freedom of Information Act.
  - If the records are scheduled for permanent retention, are unscheduled, or if disposition instructions indicate sampling records is necessary, you must include a detailed folder listing for each box in item 6(f) (if space permits) or as an attachment. If you are submitting the SF 135 electronically, you may send the listing as a separate e-mail attachment.
  - Special description requirements apply for certain records and should be stated in item 6(f):
    - **Stratified Report Invoicing:** For agencies participating in Stratified Report Invoicing, a caret (^) followed by a valid two-digit charge code must be placed at the beginning of the series description.
- **Site Audit Records:** State "GAO Site Audit" if the records have been so designated by the Government Accountability Office, and indicate whether the site audit records pertain to Native Americans.
- **Non-paper-based and special format records:** These can include records such as microfilm, engineering drawings (because of their special format), electronic media, etc. Include the format type in 6(f) (see [www.archives.gov/frc/guide/codes.html](http://www.archives.gov/frc/guide/codes.html) for information on specific codes for non-textual record types).
- **Item 6(g): Restrictions**
  - If your records pertain to National Security Information, you must complete this section using one of the three National Security Classification codes (C=Confidential, S=Secret or T=Top Secret). Please note that the codes Q, R, or W (listed on the back of the SF 135) should no longer be used. If you designate a National Security Classification, you **MUST** also indicate whether the records are designated as Code E (Restricted Data or Formerly Restricted Data). For further information, please see EO 1235 [www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/eo12356.htm](http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/eo12356.htm), later amended by EO 13292 [www.fas.org/sgp/bush/eo13292inout.html](http://www.fas.org/sgp/bush/eo13292inout.html).
  - At agency request, FRCs can store non-National Security Classified records in vault storage for an additional fee. To request vault storage, please use code A in item 6(g). If you are unsure whether your agency has authorized funding for vault storage for your records, please contact your agency's records officer.
  - If there are no special restrictions on your records, you may designate code N or leave this section blank. In this case the default restriction (restricted to authorized agency users and researchers) will apply.



*Freeze—In records disposition, those temporary records that cannot be destroyed on schedule because of special circumstances, such as a court order or investigation, require a temporary extension of the approved retention period.*

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- Cite the appropriate schedule identifier and item number in your agency records schedule or the General Records Schedule (GRS). For accountable officers' records, cite the appropriate item from GRS 6. You may also use the General Records Schedules (36 CFR 1228.40-46 [www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/ardor/records-schedules.html](http://www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/ardor/records-schedules.html)) when dealing with records common to most offices such as contracts, travel and transportation records, and similar records. If you need further assistance, contact your agency's records officer. Also indicate in this section if the records are subject to extended retention, commonly known as a "freeze" on destruction. The "freeze code" is a three-letter designation created by FRC staff to identify the freeze pertinent to the records.
- Item 6(i): Follow the instructions on your records schedule to compute the disposition date. Because disposal is accomplished in quarterly cycles (i.e., January, April, July, and October), advance the date to the beginning of the next calendar quarter to obtain the actual date of disposal. For example, if the ending date of your records is September 2006, and the retention period is three years, then the disposal date will be October 2009. Permanent records are offered to the National Archives on an annual basis; no month is shown in the disposition date field. Place "P" after the offer year. If records are unclassified, please indicate "U" in this section.
- Item 6(i), 6(k), 6(l), and 6(m) are completed by FRC personnel.

#### SUBMITTING THE SF 135

Agencies may transmit the SF 135 to FRCs either in hard copy or electronically. Submitting the form electronically reduces mail time, is more secure, and allows revisions to be made in a timely manner. You may obtain an electronic version of the SF 135 online in Word or PDF format at [www.archives.gov/frc/forms/sf-135-intro.html](http://www.archives.gov/frc/forms/sf-135-intro.html).

Before shipping records, you must send a completed SF 135 to your local FRC and receive approval of the form from the center. The "transfers" e-mail address for each FRC is available at [www.archives.gov/frc/directors.html](http://www.archives.gov/frc/directors.html). A separate SF 135 is required for each individual record series having the same disposition authority and disposition date. For instructions on completing the SF 135, please see the "Filling out the SF 135" section of this guide or page 2 of the SF 135.

### Approval of the Standard Form 135 and Preparation for Transfer

After you submit the SF 135, the FRC staff will review it to ensure that it is complete and accurate. FRC staff will then assign the transfer number and will return one copy of the SF 135 to you within 10 working days, authorizing shipment of the boxes.

You must include a copy of the approved SF 135 in box #1 of each transfer. If you submitted a SF 135 electronically, print out the approved copy of the SF 135 that was e-mailed back to you by the FRC and place it in the first box as the "shipment" copy. If the boxes or other containers are sealed and must not be opened by NARA staff, place this shipment copy in an envelope securely taped to the outside of box #1.

Always retain a copy of the detailed box content listing so that you may provide agency box numbers when requesting reference service. We also strongly recommend that you include a copy of the box content listing in box #1.

After the FRC staff shelve the records, they will issue a records center location number and will return a completed, signed copy of the SF 135 to you as an official receipt. FRC staff will add the location of the records to the receipt copy of the SF 135. Your agency staff will use this location information when requesting records. This receipt copy is your official record of the transfer and should be retained in your files.

*Unscheduled records are Federal records whose final disposition has not been approved by NARA in a records schedule.*

*An active record is a record necessary to conduct the current business of an office.*

*Transfers typically contain one series—the records all have one subject, function, or activity in common.*

*Mixed series are records grouped together into a transfer that do not have any relationship with each other, aside from being from the same agency or office. Mixed-series records may have different disposition authorities but must have the same disposition date.*

## NOTES ON SPECIAL TRANSFERS

The majority of transfers to FRCs are paper-based, long-term, scheduled, temporary, non-classified records. If your transfer does NOT fall into these categories, please note the following:

- **Unscheduled Records**

In order to transfer **unscheduled records** to an FRC, agencies must:

- Inform NARA's Life Cycle Management Division (NWML) in writing prior to the transfer. This can be done by sending NWML a copy of the SF 135 submitted for FRC approval before transferring the unscheduled records to the FRC. Be sure to include on the SF 135 the date you notified NWML, or include the number of a pending SF 115, Request for Disposition Authority. NWML's address is: 8601 Adelphi Road, Room 2200, College Park, MD 20740.
- Include the official series title (if applicable) or a general descriptive title for the records in item 6(f): series description on the SF 135.
- Include a folder title list of the box contents or equivalent detailed records description. This description can be listed under item 6(f): series description or included as an attachment.
- Indicate "U" for unscheduled records under item 6(i) disposal date on the SF 135.
- See 36 CFR 1228.152 and 154, *Code of Federal Regulations* ([www.archives.gov/about/regulations/part-1228/i.html](http://www.archives.gov/about/regulations/part-1228/i.html) or [www.archives.gov/frc/unscheduled\\_records\\_faqs.html](http://www.archives.gov/frc/unscheduled_records_faqs.html)) for more information on transferring unscheduled records.
- **Active Records**  
Agencies may transfer **active records** to an FRC by using local NARA agreements. Usually, these records stay on-site in the agency office. However, some active records may be suitable for off-site storage. Contact your local FRC for details.
- **Records with Short Retention Periods**  
FRCs will accept records that have less than a one-year retention period before disposition,



but agencies should consider the costs of proposing such a transfer. It may be more cost-effective to simply retain the records for the short time they are still needed.

- **Mixed Series**

FRCs, by prior agreement with some agencies, will accept **mixed-series** transfers. These transfers must consist of only one box. Contact your agency's records officer to determine if such an agreement exists for your agency.

- **Mixed-media Records**

Several FRCs will accept for storage mixed-media records (e.g. videos, cassettes, CDs, diskettes, etc.) Please contact your local FRC before transferring mixed-media records. Describe the non-paper media in item 6(f). Because mixed-media records cannot be recycled without screening, the records center will apply additional charges at the time of disposal.

- **Permanent Records**

The SF 135 for **permanent records** must be accompanied by a detailed folder title list.

**Permanent records**  
are records that warrant preservation by the Federal Government beyond the time they are needed for administrative, fiscal, or legal purposes because of their historical or other value. The National Archives makes the final determination on permanent records (see 44 USC 29).

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Agencies may include these lists on the SF 135 (if space permits) or as an electronic or hard-copy attachment.

- **Permanent Microfilm Records**  
Permanent microfilm records may be stored at the Washington National Records Center in Suitland, MD, prior to their accessioning to the National Archives.
- **Storage and Servicing of Classified Records**  
Several FRCs are cleared to accept records containing classified National Security Information. These facilities are cleared for Confidential, Secret, Top Secret, Sensitive Compartmentalized Information, Restricted Data, and Formerly Restricted Data. In addition, most centers can store, for an additional fee, sensitive but unclassified records in a separate vault. Contact the records center in your region for more information about availability of these services.

## SHIPPING RECORDS TO THE FRC

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- **Numbering Boxes for Shipment**  
After you receive the approved SF 135 back from your local FRC, write the transfer number and the box number (if not already indicated) in the designated printed blocks on the front of each box. Use a black permanent felt-tip marker and make the numbers at least 1.5" high. Be sure not to write on sealing tape or place tape over transfer or box numbers. For boxes without the printed blocks, write the transfer number in the upper left corner and the agency box number in the upper right corner on one end of each box. Begin with box number 1, and include the total number in the transfer, such as 1/10, 2/10, and so forth. Do not use labels to cover old box markings or to supply additional identifying information. This is especially important for transfer and box numbers. No standard method of affixing labels is effective for long-term storage. You may use the sides of the boxes to write any information concerning box content. Be

sure to seal your boxes securely with packing tape. For further information on box assembly and notation, please see figures 1 and 2, page 4.

- **Shipping Records**  
Agencies are urged to arrange for the shipment of their records within 90 days after receipt of the approved SF 135. If the transfer cannot be made within this period, please advise FRC staff. Unexplained delays of more than 90 days may result in the FRC canceling the transfer and returning your SF 135.

Agencies are responsible for covering costs of shipping their records to FRCs. You may send your agency's records via the U.S. Postal Service, commercial carrier, common carrier (on pallets), or by agency courier. In addition, some FRCs will pick up agency records through NARA's Metro Courier service at very competitive rates (see the "Special Services" section of this guide, page 18). Check with your local FRC for scheduling and fees.

If you are mailing a shipment of 20 boxes or more, you may send it in a postal container or by bulk mail. Agencies shipping their boxes on pallets using a commercial carrier should complete a Transportation Services Order [www.archives.gov/frc/transportation-services-order.pdf](http://www.archives.gov/frc/transportation-services-order.pdf).

For large shipments, please call your local FRC to schedule a delivery date, and instruct commercial carriers to contact the records center 24 hours before delivery.

FRCs will make every effort to assist and advise agencies during the transfer process. However, shipments that arrive at the center out of order, in oversize boxes, damaged, improperly taped, improperly marked, without an SF 135 approved for transfer, or with an SF 135 that does not match the shipment, may require extensive remedial effort and increased costs. These costs are the responsibility of the shipping agency.

## REFERENCE SERVICES

This section outlines the process for requesting, receiving, and returning your agency's records. You may access your agency's records by removing them on temporary loan, reviewing them on-site at the FRC, requesting photocopies or electronic scans of the records, or permanently withdrawing the records.

Please note that the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) in St. Louis, MO, has special procedures for requesting records. If you are requesting records from the NPRC, please see page 21 of this Guide.



Most reference requests are for **temporary withdrawal** (loan) of agency records. Temporary withdrawals are returned after agency use to the records center for refiling in the FRC.

**Permanent withdrawals** are removed and retained by the agency. The agency may only return permanently withdrawn whole boxes by submitting a new SF 135. These records must be submitted in new boxes with a new transfer number.

## Requesting Records

Agencies may submit reference requests using one of four methods:

1. CIPS—The Centers Information Processing System ([www.archives.gov/frc/cips](http://www.archives.gov/frc/cips))
2. The Federal Records Centers Reference Request Optional Form 11 (OF 11)
3. Electronic OF 11 ([www.archives.gov/frc/pdf/of-11.pdf](http://www.archives.gov/frc/pdf/of-11.pdf))
4. Other formats (including agency request forms).

Specific instructions for each method of requesting records are included in this chapter.

**In all cases, include the following information in the reference request:**

1. Transfer number (formerly accession number);
2. Agency box number;
3. Folder name/number (if applicable);
4. Beginning location of transfer at the records center;
5. The type of request (temporary loan, review, permanent withdrawal, photocopies, SmartScan, etc.);
6. Date;
7. Complete name, address, telephone number, and e-mail address of requestor; and
8. For any records requested under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), the Privacy Act, or due to congressional interest, note the applicable reason in the “Remarks” section of the OF 11.

**Be sure to complete a separate request form or CIPS submission for each folder or box requested.** Please note that the FRC will bill your agency separately for each item, folder, or carton requested (as specified in your agency’s agreement with NARA) regardless of the type of reference service requested.

Agencies participating in **Stratified Report Invoicing** (see definition, page 6) must include a caret (^) followed by a valid, legible two-character charge code encircled on the top right front of every request. Agencies that use CIPS may request to have their charge code included as part of their shipping address. Contact your agency’s account representative for more information.

### REQUESTS USING CENTERS INFORMATION PROCESSING SYSTEM (CIPS)

CIPS allows you to request your agency’s records right from your desktop computer. Requesting your records via CIPS is the fastest and most cost-effective method, because it minimizes mail delays and allows the FRC to more efficiently process your request. CIPS provides all copies needed by FRC staff to process the request.

To apply for access to CIPS, complete both the Department of Veterans Affairs VA Form 9957, Timesharing User Access Request ([www.archives.gov/frc/va-form-9957.pdf](http://www.archives.gov/frc/va-form-9957.pdf)), and the NA Form 13166, CIPS Registration Form ([www.archives.gov/frc/cips/cips-reg-form.pdf](http://www.archives.gov/frc/cips/cips-reg-form.pdf)). Send the completed forms to the CIPS Systems Administrator at the FRC in your area. Information about CIPS, including forms and a list of administrators, is available online at [www.archives.gov/frc/cips](http://www.archives.gov/frc/cips). Requests for a CIPS account must be authorized by your agency.

Please note that the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) is the FRC’s contractor for CIPS. The DVA will issue a user ID and password to each user when the completed forms are received. You will need to specify your agency’s record group numbers, the records center(s) for which you will need access, and any charge codes for stratified billing. Contact the CIPS Systems Administrator at the FRC in your area for further information.

*FRCs can work with your agency to make reference requests easy and cost-effective. FRCs can provide copies of the necessary paperwork for reference requests on a reimbursable basis—contact your FRC Director for details.*

## **REQUESTS USING THE OF 11 REFERENCE REQUEST FORM**

If your agency does not use CIPS for reference requests, you may request records by submitting the Federal Records Centers Reference Request, Optional Form 11 (OF 11).

The OF 11 is a three-part form. The records center uses the first part (white) of the OF 11 to service the request. This part remains with the file until it is returned for refile. The requesting agency retains the second part (pink) for tracking and control purposes. The records center uses the last part (tan) as a charge out for the file/box until it is returned from the agency for refile.

Submit requests using the OF 11 through the U.S. Postal Service or commercial couriers whenever time permits. Agencies also may fax requests to the designated numbers listed for each FRC. Agencies may telephone FRCs with emergency requests. Please note that these emergency requests are billed at a higher rate than regular requests.

## **REQUESTS USING THE ELECTRONIC OF 11**

You may also e-mail reference requests by completing the PDF version of the OF 11 ([www.archives.gov/records\\_center\\_program/of\\_11.pdf](http://www.archives.gov/records_center_program/of_11.pdf)) and sending it to your local FRC at the designated e-mail address listed for each center [www.archives.gov/frc/directors.html](http://www.archives.gov/frc/directors.html).

## **REQUESTS IN OTHER FORMATS (INCLUDING AGENCY FORMS)**

You may request records via letter, e-mail, memo, or by using an appropriate form from your agency. Please check with your agency's records officer to determine if you should use an agency-specific form.

## **Delivery of Requested Files to Agencies**

In most cases, properly submitted and complete reference requests will be ready for mailing, pickup, or delivery to the agency one business day after receipt by the FRC.

### **STANDARD REQUESTS**

The U.S. Postal Service or commercial carriers are the standard methods of delivering requested files to agencies.

### **URGENT/SPECIAL REQUESTS**

FRC customers have several options for delivery of urgent/special reference requests (requests requiring same-day or overnight delivery):

- **Overnight express courier:** Please provide the name of the overnight express courier (along with a billing account number) in the "Remarks" section.
- **Delivery by agency's messenger:** Please provide the approximate time of pick-up in the "Remarks" section of the OF 11. Messengers will be required to provide photo ID and agency affiliation when arriving at the FRC to pick up requested files. The agency messenger must also be on the approved agency authorization list.
- **FRC Metro Courier and SmartScan services:** Select Federal Records Centers provide next-day delivery of reference requests via Metro Courier and same-day electronic delivery of requested files with SmartScan. Please see the "Special Services" section of this guide (page 16) for more information.

## **Refiles**

You should return your agency's files to the Federal Records Center when they are no longer needed. Write the word "REFILE" on the white copy of the OF 11 or CIPS request form that accompanied the

requested file, and return it to the records center. If the OF 11 is no longer attached, provide a brief note or cover memo annotated “REFILE” and attach it to the file being returned. The memo must also include the same information that was contained on the original OF 11:

- transfer number;
- box number;
- records center location number; and
- charge code (if the agency is participating in [Stratified Report Invoicing](#)—see definition page 6).

Do not refolder or rebox records requested from the records center. Unless you have made some prior arrangement with the center, return the records in the original folders or boxes to allow accurate refiling. If the box or folder is unusable for shipment, copy the transfer number, location, box number and any other information on the outside of the container onto the front of the replacement box or folder. FRCs will contact agency customers when expanded refiles are too large for their original location.

## Interfiles

Agencies may send documents or folders that were not included in the original transfer to be interfiled into that transfer at the center. The agency must provide the transfer number, charge code (if participating in [Stratified Report Invoicing](#)—see definition, page 6), box number, records center location number, and correct file designation where the interfile should be filed. The FRC will contact agency customers if the new material will not fit into the original box.

Please note that the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) in St. Louis, MO, has special procedures for interfiles. If you have records for interfile at NPRC, please see page 23 of this Guide.



## Relocation of Records

Occasionally, it becomes necessary to move records within a Federal Records Center. When this happens, NARA will notify agencies of the relocation. A Notice of Transfer Location Change, NA Form 13016 ([www.archives.gov/frc/pdf/na-13016.pdf](http://www.archives.gov/frc/pdf/na-13016.pdf)), is mailed to the agency after the relocation. Following a relocation, you should update your agency’s file copies of SF 135s to show new location numbers for use in requesting these files in the future. For further information concerning the relocation of records, contact the FRC staff. **Note: If you are using CIPS, the system automatically connects your transfer number with the current location number.**

## RECORDS DISPOSITION

In addition to storing your records and making them accessible when needed, Federal Records Centers actively manage their disposition. This section gives an overview of the processes for disposing of records at the end of their retention schedule, accessioning (see definition, page 5) records into the National Archives, and updating disposal authorities.





*Did you know?  
The FRCs recycle  
over 18,000 tons of  
paper per year. That  
is the equivalent of  
300,000 trees!*

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*Contingent records  
are records scheduled  
for final disposition  
at some unspecified  
future time after the  
occurrence of a specific  
event. Examples of  
such events include  
the decommissioning  
of a vessel, the sale of  
property, or the  
destruction of a  
building.*

---

*The FRC staff is  
expert on disposal  
and can work with  
you to ensure that  
your agency's most  
sensitive records are  
disposed of properly.*

*Records are main-  
tained in secure  
environments until  
properly destroyed.  
Certificates  
of destruction are  
sent to the FRC  
following disposal.*

---

## Disposition Notifications

When the disposition date of your agency's records is approaching, the FRC will send you the appropriate notice as described below.

### DISPOSITION OF TEMPORARY RECORDS

FRCs will send the Notice of Eligibility for Disposal, NA Form 13001, [www.archives.gov/frc/pdf/na-13001.pdf](http://www.archives.gov/frc/pdf/na-13001.pdf), to you 90 days before scheduled destruction of your agency's records. Please contact the Transfer and Disposition staff from the FRC that sent you the notice if you have any questions.

When you return the signed disposal notice (NA Form 13001) the FRC will destroy the records as scheduled. Since your agency still owns the records stored at the FRC, the center will not destroy any of your records without your agency's written approval.

Adherence to retention schedules is good records management, saves your agency money in storage costs, and conforms with Federal regulations. Therefore, the FRC strongly recommends that you review each disposal notice carefully and in a timely manner. If your agency does not concur with the disposal, you must provide a justification for non-concurrence, sign and date the form, and return it to the appropriate FRC.

### DISPOSITION OF CONTINGENT RECORDS

Each October, FRCs mail the Agency Review for Contingent Disposal, NA Form 13000, [www.archives.gov/frc/pdf/na-13000.pdf](http://www.archives.gov/frc/pdf/na-13000.pdf), to agency

customers. At this time you should review the status of your agency's **contingent records** to determine if a particular action or event (upon which the destruction of the records is contingent) has occurred. If this is the case, sign and return the form to your local FRC, indicating approval of disposal and disposal date. If the contingent records should not be destroyed, sign, date, and return the form, and indicate a new review date.

### ACCESSIONING OF PERMANENT RECORDS

When permanent records stored at the records center are scheduled for accessioning into the National Archives, you will receive an Agreement to Transfer Records to the National Archives of the United States, Standard Form 258, [www.archives.gov/frc/pdf/sf-258.pdf](http://www.archives.gov/frc/pdf/sf-258.pdf). The SF 258 is used to document the change in legal custody of the records from your agency to the National Archives and to state terms of the accession. The Transfer and Disposition staff at your local FRC can provide more information on the process for accessioning records into the National Archives.

## Updating Disposal Authorities

Over time, records schedules are subject to change, and this can affect how long your records should be kept. When this happens, FRC archives specialists review and promptly update the holdings database so your records remain correctly scheduled. The most current disposal authority is reflected for each transfer.

## SPECIAL SERVICES

In addition to traditional records center services, the FRCs offer a portfolio of customer-focused solutions to just about any records management challenge. Many of these services were offered in response to requests from customer agencies and have resulted in significant savings of money and staff time for these agencies.

The following is a partial listing of special services. For more information, or to find out if a particular service is available in your area, please contact your account representative or your local Federal Records Center Director.



## Storage and Servicing of Active Records

For years, FRCs have accepted agencies' inactive records for storage and servicing. Recently, a number of agencies have entrusted their active records to their local FRCs as well. This service helps agencies to free up both precious office space as well as agency staff. In storing and servicing your agency's active files, the FRC serves as an off-site "back office." Reference requests for these active files can (in many cases) be serviced on a same-day basis.

## Electronic Records

FRCs now offer a comprehensive suite of e-records services for Federal electronic records. For more information, see [www.archives.gov/frc/electronic-records.html](http://www.archives.gov/frc/electronic-records.html).

- **E-records storage:** Select FRCs offer secure storage of electronic records saved on or copied to optical or magnetic media objects such as CDs, DVDs, and magnetic tapes. Storage can be provided in climate-controlled space within the FRCs or in specialized Electronic Records Vaults (ERVs). FRCs can securely store e-records such as temporary records saved on e-media, backup tapes, and vital e-records.
- **E-media shredding:** Select FRCs now have industrial disintegrators to securely shred your e-media. All shredding services are conducted at an FRC by Federal employees, so you can rest assured that your records are safe from unauthorized disclosure throughout the disposal process. For your agency's most sensitive records, FRCs can also accommodate witnessed disposal of e-media by your agency representatives.
- **Digital imaging:** FRCs can convert your agency's paper records into electronic images on high-speed scanners. FRCs can undertake digitizing projects of all sizes, will scan to your agency's specifications, and can provide you with scanned copies in a number of different outputs.

## Storage and Servicing of Classified Records

Several FRCs are cleared to accept records containing classified National Security Information. These facilities are cleared for Confidential, Secret, Top Secret, Sensitive Compartmentalized Information, Restricted Data, and Formerly Restricted Data. In addition, most centers can store, for an additional fee, sensitive but unclassified records in a separate vault. Contact the records center in your region for more information about availability of these services.

## 24/7 Access to Records

Several FRCs can offer around-the-clock access to critical agency records. Please contact your local FRC Director for availability and details.

## Fast Pack Service

As agencies face downsizing and budget cuts, their employees may not have the time or training to prepare records for transfer to the FRC. Many FRCs offer reimbursable staff time to help agencies organize, document, and pack shipments. Fast Pack service covers preparation of the SF 135, packing of boxes, and preparation of a boxed file inventory, and may also include transportation to the records center. Free, no-obligation cost estimates are available.

## Folder Indexing Services

FRC staff can assist your agency in completing detailed folder lists, documentation that is mandated by the *Code of Federal Regulations* for transfers of permanent records and unscheduled records. Such lists are also useful for future reference requests, since this level of detail helps your agency's staff more easily identify the records to be recalled. Please contact your local FRC for more details.



## **Metro Courier Service**

FRCs provide courier service for pickup and delivery of transfers and requested files in select metropolitan areas. Metro Courier service can be provided to your agency each business day or on an as-needed basis. This service is offered on a reimbursable basis. A number of FRCs also offer a trucking service for large transfers at rates competitive with commercial carriers. Contact your local FRC for more information.

## **SmartScan**

A number of FRCs can provide same-day electronic delivery of requested files through SmartScan. FRC staff members research your request, convert it to a high-quality scan, and e-mail it to your desktop computer the same business day in Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF). SmartScan eliminates outbound and return shipping costs and is ideal for both small jobs and urgent requests.

## **Holdings Information (INFORM)**

FRCs offer customer holdings information in electronic format through the INFORM service. Customers can receive INFORM holdings data in several formats (Access, Excel, or text file via e-mail or on CD-ROM). INFORM allows customers to easily run queries and reports on their holdings and set their own criteria for filtering and scrolling through information. INFORM can also sort by disposal authority, disposal code, storage location, or other options. Please contact your local FRC or your agency's account representative for more information about this service.

## **Micrographics Services**

The FRC offers comprehensive micrographics services at three of its centers (San Bruno, CA; Kansas City, MO; and Ft. Worth, TX). Services include roll film and microfiche, as well as document preparation, processing, and duplication. Please contact the

Federal Records Center Director at any of the facilities that offer micrographics services for further information (see [www.archives.gov/directors.html](http://www.archives.gov/directors.html)).

## Custom Solutions

Each records center can undertake, on a reimbursable basis, a number of records-related special projects, such as screenings, inventories, data entry, etc. The FRC staff is experienced in all aspects of records management and can offer customized assistance to agency customers. Examples of projects that FRCs have successfully undertaken for agency clients include:

- Data-entry services, including remote or on-site input into agency databases;
- Barcoding services for large agency holdings;
- Consolidation of agency records (including records of a similar type, records being held under disposal “freezes,”—see definition, in the “Transfer and Disposition” section, page 7—or records from a certain location or office);
- Preparation of inventories of agency holdings (including box listings); and
- Provision of on-site space at FRCs for agencies to conduct research on large collections.

## Records Management Training and Assistance

NARA establishes policies and procedures for managing Federal records and assists Federal agencies in documenting their activities, administering records management programs, scheduling records, and retiring records to records centers. An important part of this role is records management training. NARA provides a full range of training both in Washington, DC, and through its regional facilities nationwide. The courses are offered primarily for Federal employees but are also open to Federal contractors, and employees of state and local governments, tribal governments, and international organizations. Please see [www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/](http://www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/) for more information on NARA records management training.



## TRANSACTIONS WITH THE NATIONAL PERSONNEL RECORDS CENTER (NPRC), ST. LOUIS, MO

NPRC is one of the National Archives and Records Administration's largest operations. It is a central repository of personnel-related records, both military and civil service. Some of these collections have procedures for transfers and reference requests that differ from the procedures at other FRCs. This section provides information on these special procedures, including forms, instructions, and points of contact for further information. For more information, please visit NPRC's web site at [www.archives.gov/st-louis/index.html](http://www.archives.gov/st-louis/index.html).







- Social security number (for United States citizens);
- Foreign National Overseas (FNO) in place of a social security number (for foreign nationals); and
- Date of birth.

You may also submit your request via fax to 314-801-9271 or e-mail at [cpr.center@nara.gov](mailto:cpr.center@nara.gov). Additional instructions on requesting OPFs and EMFs are available online at [www.archives.gov/st-louis/civilian-personnel/federal-agencies.html](http://www.archives.gov/st-louis/civilian-personnel/federal-agencies.html).

#### OFFICIAL MILITARY PERSONNEL FILES (OMPFs)

The NPRC provides access to the Military Personnel Registry (MPR) File Index to authorized users through a web interface. The MPR is a locator index for OMPFs that have been transferred to NPRC custody and that are under automated controls. Users who have registered with NPRC and have a user ID may submit inquiries and record orders from their Government worksite. Security registration is required for all users who will be accessing the MPR Registry File Index. Remote users who wish to order Army and/or Air Force records for delivery to their worksite must obtain authorization from the Army or Air Force, and be placed on an official access list. The Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard restrict review of records to NPRC premises for approved users unless otherwise authorized. To register for online access and a user ID, all authorized users must submit VA Form 9957, ACRS Time Sharing Request Form.

#### MILITARY MEDICAL TREATMENT RECORDS

Original medical treatment records are returned to military hospitals and clinics upon request. NPRC offers three options (MRS, DD 877-1, and CIPS) for routine record requests. Select the option that pertains to the record that you want to order.



- MRS (Medical Registry System) Record Orders  
With few exceptions, inpatient and outpatient records transferred to NPRC since 2003 are electronically indexed on NPRC's MRS. Users may query the MRS database by patient's name or sponsor's/patient's social security number. All records matching the query will be displayed, and users may electronically order those needed. MRS registration, access, and user instructions are available online at [www.archives.gov/st-louis/military-personnel/agencies/medical-registry-system.html](http://www.archives.gov/st-louis/military-personnel/agencies/medical-registry-system.html).
- CIPS or DD 877-1 Record Orders  
All other medical treatment records that are not indexed on the MRS are stored and identified by the shipment in which they were retired. Facilities that recall records transferred to NPRC must provide information regarding the shipment containing the desired record to facilitate retrieval. This shipment information includes



the transfer number, box number, and shelf location number, as well as patient identifiers.

- To use CIPS to order records, see the “Reference Service” section of this guide, page 10.
- DD Form 877-1, Request for Medical/Dental Records from NPRC, is authorized for use by U.S. military medical facilities only. It should not be distributed for personal use to former patients. The form can be ordered through supply channels. Please check to make sure that records have been transferred to NPRC before preparing the form. (For records retired during or after 2003, check MRS first.) Most inactive records are held at the military treatment facility one to five years after the end of the treatment year before being transferred to NPRC. Contact the records management officer of the related facility to find out if records have been transferred, if they are in a records holding area, or are still at the facility. Instructions for completing the form are available online at [www.archives.gov/st-louis/military-personnel/agencies/clinical-and-treatment-records.html](http://www.archives.gov/st-louis/military-personnel/agencies/clinical-and-treatment-records.html).

## Interfiles

Agencies may send Federal employee documents to NPRC’s Civilian Personnel Records Center (CPR) for interfile in the OPF. The complete name of employee, social security number, and date of birth is required to place these documents in the appropriate record.

Military medical treatment facilities may send records to NPRC for interfile. The patient’s name and social security number, sponsor’s name and social security number (if dependent), transfer number, box number, and shelf location are required to process the interfile.







For more information on any FRC services described in this toolkit,  
please visit us online at [www.archives.gov/frc/](http://www.archives.gov/frc/).



National Archives and Records Administration  
[www.archives.gov/frc](http://www.archives.gov/frc)

