Records Management for EPA Senior Officials

Requirements and Responsibilities

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact the Records Help Desk
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E-mail: records@epa.gov
Web: www.epa.gov/records

Agency Records Officer:
John B. Ellis, CRM, 202-566-1643

HQ Records Officer:
Tammy Boulware, 202-566-1665

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Practice Group:
Kevin Miller, 202-564-2691

Records Liaison Officers:
Headquarters
www.epa.gov/records/people/hq.htm

Regional
www.epa.gov/records/people/region.htm

Lab & Field Office
www.epa.gov/records/people/labs.htm

EPA United States
Environmental Protection
Agency

WHY RECORDS MANAGEMENT?

- Ensure statutory and regulatory compliance
- Preserve the rights of the government and citizens
- Support better decision making
- Safeguard vital information
- Preserve organizational memory
- Minimize litigation risks – ensure systematic and routine disposal of records
- Reduce operating costs through control over creation and growth of records

WHAT RECORDS RESPONSIBILITIES DO SENIOR OFFICIALS HAVE?

- Create records necessary to document your activities and actions taken on behalf of the Agency
- Ensure that you capture information that is a record, if it is not captured elsewhere
- Identify a custodian who can file records for safe storage and efficient retrieval
- Ensure records are managed appropriately and can be accessed by authorized staff
- Identify and transfer records prior to your departure
- Protect records from unauthorized destruction
- Do not use non-EPA email accounts to conduct official business
- Understand that all records generated during your tenure belong to EPA

WHAT RECORDS DO SENIOR OFFICIALS TYPICALLY HAVE?

- Calendars, schedules and logs of daily activities
- Records pertaining to various committees, including Federal Advisory Boards, committees and councils, inter-agency and external committees in which the senior official participated
- Materials for internal and external meetings
  - May include briefing materials, minutes, personal notes (if they are only personal observations or reminders, they may be personal papers)
  - Need to preserve if not captured elsewhere
- Records that document the development of EPA's policies and programs
  - May include correspondence, briefings, issue papers and reports about policy, strategy, research and legislative priorities, program evaluation and planning, and similar topics
- Reports to Congress and/or the President
- Speeches and testimony
- Major correspondence

DO I NEED TO WORRY ABOUT OTHER FORMATS?

- **E-mail and Instant Messages (IM)**
  - 💻 www.epa.gov/records/faqs/email.htm
  - o Key substantive comments on draft action memos
  - o Documentation of significant Agency decisions
  - o Capture e-mail records into the Enterprise Content Management System (ECMS), the agency's official electronic recordkeeping system on a regular basis (Lotus Notes is not a recordkeeping system)

- **Calendars**
  - 💻 www.epa.gov/records/faqs/calendar.htm
  - o Permanent records and must be retained
  - o Capture calendars into a recordkeeping system on a monthly basis

- **Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs)**
  - 💻 www.epa.gov/records/faqs/pda.htm
  - o Common Agency records maintained on PDAs include e-mail, IM and calendars
  - o Capture records from the PDA into a recordkeeping system on a regular basis

- **Oral Communications**
  - 💻 www.epa.gov/records/faqs/verbal.htm
  - o Agency decisions or commitments reached orally and not otherwise documented
  - o Write a memo to the file and capture it into a recordkeeping system

HOW DO I MANAGE MY RECORDS?

Establish a records management program, which is composed of:

- **People** – Designated records managers
  - 💻 www.epa.gov/records/contact.htm

- **Policies** – Mandatory records schedules
  - 💻 www.epa.gov/records/policy/schedule/
  - o How long to keep records (retention), and
  - o What to do with them afterwards (disposition)

- **Procedures** – Organizational file plan
  - 💻 www.epa.gov/records/tools/toolkits/filecode/

- **Recordkeeping system** (paper-based or electronic)
  - 💻 www.epa.gov/records/tools/toolkits/procedures/part4.htm
  - o Collects, organizes, and categorizes records, and
  - o Facilitates their preservation, retrieval, use, and disposition

Federal Records Act of 1950	
What is a Record?	**What is not a Record?**
- **Created in the course of business** Examples: *correspondence, agreements, studies*	- **Personal papers not related to EPA business** Examples: *soccer schedule, PTA roster*
- **Received for action** Examples: *FOIA requests, controlled correspondence*	- **Reference materials** Examples: *vendor catalogs, phone books, technical journals*
- **Documents EPA activities and actions** Examples: *calendars, meeting minutes, project reports*	- **Convenience copies** Examples: *duplicate copies of correspondence, directives or EPA publications*
- **Mandated by statutes or regulations** Examples: *administrative records, dockets*	- **Draft documents*** Examples: *drafts with no substantive revisions /comments*
- **Supports financial obligations or legal claims** Examples: *grants, contracts, litigation case files*	- **Working papers*** Examples: *rough notes, calculations*
- **Communicates EPA requirements** Examples: *guidance documents, policies, procedures*	* Unless needed to support the decision trail or required in the records schedule
- **Can be in any format** Examples: *paper, electronic including e-mail, photos, videos, maps, sound recordings, posters, slides*	Note: A record is defined more broadly under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and includes documents not covered under the Federal Records Act (FRA). **Any** Agency document may be requested under FOIA and must be maintained as long as there is a pending request, appeal or legal proceeding, even if the record has reached the end of its legal retention period under the FRA.