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VITAL RECORDS MOST FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Additional Help for ADS 511

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1. What is the difference between a files plan and a vital records submission?

A files plan contains a list of the current and active official records of an office and includes the disposition item number and description of the retention period for the records.

A vital records submission (or report) contains a list of the most critical records required in case of an emergency and includes those records that are needed immediately and those records that are needed to rebuild activities.

2. If I have vital records stored at another building or mission, do I have to list the files on my vital records submission?

Yes. Listing your vital records that are stored at another building or mission will alert the emergency/rebuilding team of another location to include when records are retrieved.

3. How often do I update my vital records?

Vital records must be updated as often as necessary to ensure that the information is current. The affected office must determine the frequency of updating the vital records.

4. My office sent files to Washington for Retirement. Can we use those for vital records?

No. Retirement records are considered inactive records that have completed their purpose and are transferred to the records center for storage until eligible for either permanent transfer to the National Archives or destruction. Vital records are active records that are not yet eligible for retirement.

5. Is it okay to store vital records electronically?

Yes, as long as the electronic records can be retrieved by authorized staff and there is equipment to support its retrieval. For example, if you store data on a CD or disk, you must make sure that IT equipment is available to support access to the CD or disk.

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