

Information and FAQs on **ELECTRONIC MEDIA STORAGE**



FEDERAL RECORDS CENTERS
of the National Archives and Records Administration

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A close-up, blue-tinted photograph of a microchip, showing its intricate circuitry and grid-like patterns. The image is positioned on the left side of the page, partially overlapping the text area.

ELECTRONIC MEDIA STORAGE AT THE FEDERAL RECORDS CENTERS

Finding secure, readily accessible, and regulation-compliant storage space for the records your agency stores on electronic media can be a daunting challenge. **NARA's Federal Records Centers (FRCs)**, which have safeguarded our nation's paper records for over 50 years, can help your agency meet this challenge.

FRCs now offer **secure, environmentally-controlled storage of electronic records on media**, including optical and magnetic media objects such as CDs, DVDs, and magnetic tapes. This booklet provides an **overview** of the kinds and levels of services the FRCs provide for electronic media, followed by **detailed FAQs** on procedures, regulations, and other information.

Electronic media storage is part of the **comprehensive suite of e-records services** that the FRCs offer, including electronic media shredding and digital imaging services. Visit www.archives.gov/frc/electronic-records.html for more information on other FRC services for electronic records.

CUSTOM SERVICES FOR DIFFERENT RECORD TYPES

The FRCs can help your agency manage many different kinds of records saved to electronic media and can help you comply with federal records management regulations. From transfer to disposition, your records never leave federal custody.

Backup tapes

Tape rotation provides protection for electronic records from hard disk failures and other threats. FRCs provide off-site storage for full-system, incremental, and differential data backups. We will securely store your backup tapes, notify you when they are scheduled to be rotated back to your agency, and in many areas, can even provide door-to-door pickup and delivery service.

Classified records

Several FRCs offer storage and servicing for classified records stored to electronic media in our climate-controlled, classified vaults. Contact the Washington National Records Center (see contact information, back cover) for more information on these services.





Vital records

The FRCs can help you identify, manage, and protect your vital records stored on electronic media. We offer secure storage in our Electronic Records Vaults (ERVs) for these media and can help you update these records on a regular basis. FRCs provide off-site and out-of-region storage for your vital records stored on electronic media in compliance with Continuity of Operations Planning (COOP) recommendations. Should disaster strike, we offer 24/7 access to these media so your agency can quickly resume operations during the emergency and return to normal operations when the emergency is over.

Temporary records

FRCs can assist you in managing your agency's temporary electronic records by providing ideal storage conditions for the records while they are stored on electronic media. By storing your media in the ERV, you will reduce the risk of accelerated data decay while freeing up storage space on your computer, on your server, and in your office for more active electronic records. Should you need to access your agency's temporary e-records, the FRCs can return your media to you, usually within one business day.

Permanent records

Permanent records saved to electronic media pose special challenges. The FRCs can store these records and help you navigate and comply with the Federal regulations governing the storage, sampling, and refreshing of these media.


SERVICE LEVELS FOR YOUR REQUIREMENTS AND BUDGET

The level of storage you require will depend upon the type of records your agency stores, the media you choose, and how often you plan to recall that media. The FRC can store and service a range of types of electronic media for many purposes and can offer your agency expert advice on the best level of storage based on your particular needs.

Electronic Records Vaults (ERVs)

Select FRCs have ERVs, which feature around-the-clock camera security, appropriate temperature and humidity controls, and a non-aqueous fire suppression system. Media in the ERVs are tracked and controlled using bar coding and specialized vault software.





Media in the ERVs can be stored one of two ways:

- **Container Storage**

Media is stored in the ERV in cases that protect the media from impact and data loss. These media cases are portable and are ideal for tapes and other media that are frequently rotated from the agency to the FRC. They are also lockable and are appropriate for electronic media that should only be accessed by your agency staff.

- **Slotted Storage**

Slotted storage shelving units inside the ERV provide extra protection for your electronic media. These storage units ensure proper air circulation around the media; the discrete slotted storage further protects the integrity of tapes and discs; and the baked powder-coated finishes on the shelving exhibit no off-gassing or chemical leaching. In addition, the design of the storage unit facilitates rapid retrieval of individual media. Slotted storage is appropriate for a number of different kinds of media, such as:

- vital records stored on electronic media
- media that must be tracked at the object level
- media that will need to be rapidly and/or frequently recalled to your agency

Other Options for Storing Electronic Media

All FRCs can store electronic media (in proper media containers) in climate-controlled space within the centers. This level of storage is appropriate for a limited range of electronic records, including e-records that also exist in paper format and electronic records that are backed up on your agency's server or elsewhere. Classified records stored to electronic media can be stored in climate-controlled, classified vaults at several FRCs.

For an at-a-glance chart of the options the FRCs offer for storing electronic media, see figure 1.



Figure 1. FRC electronic media storage and servicing at a glance

FEATURES	ELECTRONIC RECORDS VAULT (ERV)		GENERAL CLIMATE-CONTROLLED SPACE IN FRCs	CLASSIFIED VAULTS IN SELECT FRCs
	SLOTTED STORAGE	CONTAINER STORAGE		
24-hour climate control	✓	✓	✓	✓
Stringent temperature, humidity, and particulate controls	✓	✓		✓
Standard FRC security ¹	✓	✓	✓	✓
Enhanced ERV security ²	✓	✓		
National Security Classified-level security ³				✓
Non-aqueous fire suppression system	✓	✓		
Storage available in portable containers		✓	✓	✓
Media protected in slotted storage shelving	✓			
Media tracked at object level	✓			
Media tracked at container level		✓	✓	✓

¹FRCs meet or exceed the security guidelines for Level III or IV facilities outlined in the U.S. Marshals Service's "Vulnerability Assessment of Federal Facilities" (June 28, 1995).

²For more information on the security features of the ERV, please see "Security System and Access Restrictions" on pages 16–17 of this booklet.

³For more information on requirements for storing records containing Classified National Security Information, please see 36 CFR 2001.43

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT FRC ELECTRONIC MEDIA STORAGE

1. I have records on electronic media that I would like to transfer to an FRC. Where do I start?

The transfer process for electronic media begins with the SF 135, Records Transmittal and Receipt Form (an electronic version of this form can be found at www.archives.gov/frc/forms/sf-135-intro.html).

In section 6(f) of the SF 135, please indicate the following:

- the type of electronic media
- a detailed inventory of the media
- the type of electronic system, if applicable (e.g. payroll system, etc.)
- the method of shipping
- the desired storage location for the media (slotted or container storage in the ERV, or climate-controlled storage outside the ERV)
- frequency of rotation of the media, if any





- whether the media contains personally identifiable information (see question 14, page 19 for more information)

Indicate in 6(g) if the media contains classified National Security Information.

The Archives and Records Centers Information System (ARCIS) will be deployed on an incremental basis. For information on how to initiate a transfer of electronic media using ARCIS, please see www.archives.gov/frc/arcis.

2. How is electronic media tracked at the FRC?

If your agency elects to use the slotted storage in the ERV, FRC staff will ensure that the items received from your agency match the itemized inventory on the SF 135, generate bar codes for each media item, and track these media at the object level. Media stored in containers will be bar coded and tracked at the container level. FRC staff will match bar codes on the media or containers with bar codes on the slots and/or shelving.

3. How do I recall electronic media from an FRC?

To recall your agency's electronic media, you may use the OF 11 Reference Request Form, the Centers Information Processing System (CIPS), or ARCIS.

If you are using the OF 11 or CIPS, please be sure to note the following in your request:

- the type of electronic media (e.g. CD, DVD, tape, etc.)
- whether you need to recall the entire container or an individual media object
- the item or container bar code number
- desired method of delivery (unless there are standing instructions on file with the FRC, as in the case of media rotation service)

If you are using ARCIS, please see www.archives.gov/frc/arcis for instructions on placing a reference request.

The FRC can offer 24/7 access to your agency's vital records. For details on after-hours access to records, please contact your local FRC director. Please note that an emergency reference fee, plus other standard reference charges, will apply for emergency requests.





4. How do I return electronic media to the FRC?

Your agency may ship refiles of electronic media to the FRC via commercial courier or batch them for pick-up by an FRC courier in areas where this service is available. A copy of the reference request should accompany the media to alert the FRC that these are refiles and ensure proper handling. Agencies are advised to store the media in a climate-controlled area while they are in agency custody and while awaiting pickup by a courier. Once you return your media to the FRC, we will return them to their original location (slot or shelf), and they will retain their original bar code.

5. Does the FRC offer pickup and delivery of electronic media?

The FRC offers courier service to agencies located within the metropolitan area of FRC locations. This service can be set up on an occasional basis (e.g., to pick up new transfers or deliver requested media) or on a regular, recurring basis (e.g., a regular backup media rotation service). All FRC couriers are uniformed Federal employees driving climate-controlled vehicles. If your records require higher levels of security, we offer dual-driver protective service, dedicated runs, and drivers with classified clearances.

6. What special services do you offer for my agency's backup tapes?

Backup tapes are crucial to maintaining the integrity of your agency's data after minor glitches or major disasters. FRCs can store your agency's backup tapes and can assist you with the tracking and rotation of this media. When you transfer your backup tapes, indicate in section 6(f) of the SF 135 your preferred rotation schedule. A member of the FRC staff will contact you to confirm the details of your agency's rotation requirements (for example, the location of the pickup, point(s) of contact, telephone numbers, directions, where to park, etc.).

Fees for rotation services include a processing fee to initiate the service and a standard labor rate for management of the tape rotation. We will waive the usual processing fees for subsequent rotations. We charge a premium fee for after-hours, emergency access to media.

7. Which FRC locations can store and service electronic media?

There are ERVs currently located at the Washington National Records Center in Suitland, MD, and at the Fort Worth, TX, FRC. All Federal agencies, regardless of their geographical location, may store electronic media at these facilities.

In addition to the two locations with specialized ERVs, all FRCs can store electronic media in climate-controlled space. Please see Figure 1 on page 9 to determine whether this service is appropriate for your electronic media.





8. Where can I acquire appropriate storage containers for my electronic media?

Rugged plastic media containers offer the best protection for transporting electronic media. To purchase media containers, visit www.gsaadvantage.gov (search on “media storage case”). Contact your FRC director (www.archives.gov/frc/directors.html) to discuss required container sizes for storage in the ERV. **Please note that cardboard boxes are not appropriate storage containers for electronic media, and due to contamination concerns, they will not be permitted in the ERV.**

9. How much do FRC electronic media services cost?

FRCs offer competitive rates for all electronic media services. For more information on services rates, contact your local FRC director (www.archives.gov/frc/directors.html).

10. Do the FRCs offer services for classified records stored to electronic media?

Several FRCs offer storage and servicing for classified records stored to electronic media in our climate-controlled, classified vaults. Please contact the Washington National Records Center (see contact information, back cover) for more information on these services.

11. What are the technical features of the FRC Electronic Records Vaults?

- **Construction**

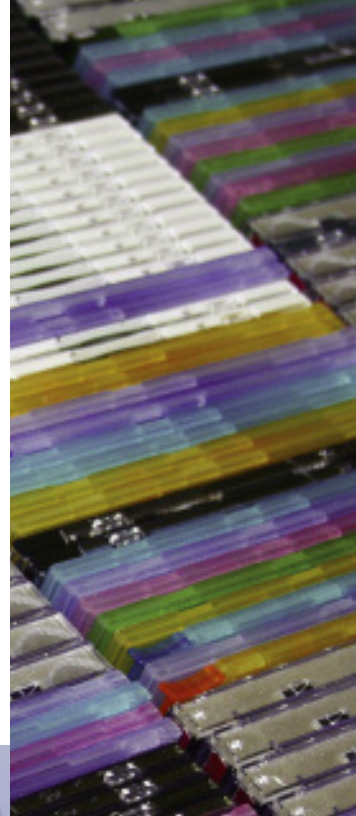
The construction of the ERVs is designed to provide a highly secure and protective environment that will stand alone structurally; resist damage from fork lifts, pallet jacks, etc.; and provide thermal and moisture protection from environmental conditions. Walls are constructed of grout-filled concrete masonry and have a four-hour UL rating. This construction is supplemented with rigid insulation and drywall to provide superior heat protection for sensitive media. The roof and floor are constructed of lightweight concrete with embedded rigid insulation.

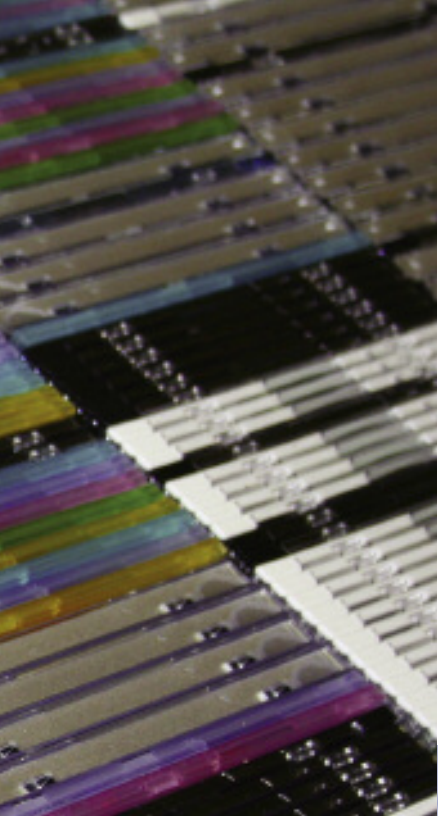
- **Fire Suppression**

The media storage area features a non-aqueous fire suppression system that, if ever discharged, will safely extinguish the fire without harming the electronic media. The system consists of a non-residue, clean-extinguishing agent stored in a pressurized canister and connected to discharging nozzles via a piping distribution network. A control panel is connected to the fire alarm system and requires cross-zone detection before initiating a discharge.

- **Security System and Access Restrictions**

The ERVs provide independent control of environmental conditions, personnel access, and specialty fire-protection needs. The ERVs' security systems integrate with the facilities' central security, monitoring, and intrusion detection systems. Access control





is via a proximity card reader at the entry door. The ERVs are also monitored by closed-circuit cameras that digitally record any activity within the vault.

- **Environmental Controls**

Each ERV includes an environmental conditioning system unit that is designed to maintain the ideal environmental conditions for electronic media: a temperature of 63 degrees Fahrenheit (± 2.5 degrees) and a relative humidity of 40 percent (± 5 percent). The system is equipped with redundant compressors and fan motors and utilizes 85 percent high-efficiency particulate filters. The system's refrigeration and condensate drain piping and electrical lines are protected by fire-sealed wall sleeves. The ERVs include a vestibule that is accessed via two single-panel automatic sliding doors to provide security and an air lock within the environment. This maintains the optimal environmental conditions in the media storage compartment and an acclimatization area for incoming and outgoing media.

- **ERV slotted storage units**

The ERVs are fitted with individually slotted media storage units. These units maximize the available capacity for storing electronic media and provide for flexibility in the mix of types of media capable of being stored. Media are stored in a vertical orientation that enhances long-term media survival. The units consist of vertical drawers that slide out on overhead channels. Drawer sizes range from four to seven inches to accommodate various media.

12. **Whom do I contact about accessioning my agency's permanent electronic records into the National Archives?**

If you have questions concerning the accessioning of scheduled permanent electronic records into the National Archives, your agency's records officer should contact the Archival Services Manager in NARA's Electronic and Special Media Records Services Division (NWME) at cer@nara.gov or 301-837-1474.

13. **How do I ensure that my agency's records are properly preserved?**

The ERVs can play an important role in your agency's electronic records retention strategy by providing optimal storage conditions for the media on which the records are stored. In order to ensure that the records are readable for their full retention period, you will have to regularly migrate the records onto fresh media, regularly test the media for any signs of data loss, and ensure that the data can be read on current software.





14. What regulations govern the storage of Federal e-records?

The U.S. Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 36 CFR Chapter XII Subchapter B - Records Management, outlines agency responsibilities for the retention and disposition of records and includes a section on electronic records management. These regulations can be accessed through the National Archives' web site at www.archives.gov/about/regulations.

Agencies are also responsible for ensuring that they meet the provisions of OMB M-06-16 (www.whitehouse.gov/omb/memoranda/fy2006/m06-16.pdf), issued on June 23, 2006, which requires that media containing personally identifiable information (PII) be encrypted if transported and/or stored off site.



For more information on electronic media storage, please contact:

The NARA Southwest Region Federal Records Center

1400 John Burgess Drive

Fort Worth, TX 76140

Tel: 817 551 2003

E mail: ftworth.eservices@nara.gov

Web: www.archives.gov/southwest/agencies

The Washington National Records Center

4205 Suitland Road

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