



RM *At-A-Glance*

Subject: How to Write for the Record

What is a record?	<p>A <u>record</u> is recorded information that supports an activity of the agency or the business unit that created it. Records can take the form of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Paper documents, such as a hand-written notes, memoranda, or agency reports;• Electronic records, such as e-mails, presentations, spreadsheets, data in databases or systems; and• Graphic images, video conferences, or photographs in either electronic or hard-copy formats.
Why are records important?	<p>Records are a critical information asset of FHFA. The quality of records may determine an agency’s success or credibility. Examples of activities that should be recorded include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transactions such as an orders, payments, or contract awards;• Decisions, interpretations, or opinions that could result in new policies or procedures;• Supporting documents used in developing findings, making agency decisions, or writing opinions;• Activities required by regulation or law; and• Critical business activities of the FHFA. <p>All records have a lifecycle: they are created, used and stored, then either destroyed or archived. Throughout their use and maintenance, records must be reliable and available for retrieval, reproduction, and authentication. If not managed effectively, records can cost the agency time and money, as well as increase risks from litigation or negative publicity.</p>
Who is responsible for creating records?	<p>If possible, the record should be created by the person who is most directly involved in the action being recorded. In order to provide quality records that accurately reflect FHFA activities, information should be recorded as close as possible to the time of the action, decision, or incident.</p>

<p>How do I write for the record?</p>	<p>When writing for the record, ask yourself these questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Am I the right person to author this? • Would I or FHFA be embarrassed if it were published in a newspaper or put onto the Internet? • Am I confident that the content is accurate? • Do I have any hesitation signing my name to the document? <p>Do</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use only relevant facts. • Write clearly and concisely. • Indicate the source of your information, unless you have first-hand knowledge. • Send the document only to those who need to know. • Assume that the documents will have a wide distribution which you cannot control. <p>Don't</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make exaggerated claims. • Speculate or make assumptions. • Use jargon or ambiguous words and phrases. • Defame another's character. • Use sarcasm or irony; it does not work effectively in a business document. • Defame another's character. • Use sarcasm or irony; it does not work effectively in a business document. • Paper documents, such as a hand-written notes, memoranda, or agency reports; • Electronic records, such as e-mails, presentations, spreadsheets, data in databases or systems; and <p>Graphic images, video conferences, or photographs in either electronic or hard-copy formats.</p>
<p>Where can I find more information about Records Management?</p>	<p>Contact your office's Records Liaison; contact a member of the Records and Information Management team by telephone or email: Karen Rogers at 202-649-3673 (karen.rogers@fhfa.gov) and Brigitte Tolbert at 202-649-3675 (brigitte.tolbert@fhfa.gov); or see the Records Management page on the Intranet.</p>