

AMS Directive 270.1
2/13/96

AMS RECORDS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

- I. PURPOSE This Directive states policy and assigns responsibilities for administering the Records Management Program in the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS).
- II. REPLACEMENT HIGHLIGHTS This Directive replaces AMS Directive 270.1, AMS Records Management Program, dated 11/8/93. Changes are marked with asterisks.
- III. POLICY
- A. It is AMS policy to create and preserve records containing adequate and proper documentation of the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, and essential transactions of the Agency. The policy is designed to furnish the information necessary to protect the legal and financial rights of the Government and of persons directly affected by the Agency's activities.
- B. The creation of additional Agency, Division or Staff directives regarding records disposition, as well as revisions to disposition schedules, must be approved * - by the AMS Records Management Officer (RMO), through the Information Management Branch (IMB), Executive Resources Office (ERO), AMS. - *
- IV. AUTHORITIES The laws that establish and define Federal records management and provide guidelines for the creation, maintenance, use, and disposition of records are:
- A. The Federal Records Act of 1950, as amended, and codified in chapters 21, 29, 31, and 33 of title 44 of the United States Code (U.S.C.), establishes the basis for records management programs in Federal Agencies. It also sets out the records management oversight responsibilities of both the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) and the General Services Administration (GSA).
- B. The Paperwork Reduction Act of 1980, as amended, and codified in chapter 35 of title 44 of the U.S.C., legally introduced into the Federal Government the concept that information is a valuable asset and should be managed as such. It makes records management a part of a broader program of Federal information resources management.
- C. Title 36, Chapter XII, subchapter B, of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), provides NARA's guidance for implementing Agency responsibilities under the above laws.
- D. The Federal Information Resources Management Regulation (FIRMR), subchapter B, requires the establishment of standards and procedures to ensure efficient and effective records management by Federal Agencies.
- E. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-130, Management of Federal Information Resources, provides updated guidance on records management policies as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1980.
- V. DEFINITIONS The following definitions are based on those set forth by the U.S.C., the CFR, the Office of the Archivist of the United States, and USDA:
- A. File. An accumulation of records or nonrecord materials arranged according to a plan.
- B. File Plan. A plan designating the physical location(s) of an Agency's files. The plan identifies the specific types of files to be maintained, and the organizational element(s) having custodial responsibility.
- C. General Records Schedules (GRS). NARA-issued schedules governing the disposition of specified records common to most Government Agencies.
- D. NARA. The organization responsible for appraising, accessioning, preserving, and making available, Federal records.

E. Records. Federal Government records consist of "... all books, papers, maps, photographs, machine-readable materials, or other documentary materials, regardless of physical form or characteristics, made or received by an agency of the United States Government under Federal law or in connection with the transaction of public business and preserved or appropriate for preservation by that Agency or its legitimate successor as evidence of the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations, or other activities of the Government, or because of the informational value of data in them." (44 U.S.C. 3301)

F. Records Disposition. The actions taken regarding records no longer needed for current Government business. These actions include:

1. Transfer to Agency storage facilities or Federal Records Centers (FRC's),
2. Transfer from one Federal Agency to another,
3. Transfer of permanent records to the National Archives, and
4. Disposal of temporary records.

G. Records Schedule. A document providing mandatory instructions on the handling/treatment of records (and nonrecord materials) no longer needed for current Government business, with provision of authority for the final disposition of recurring or nonrecurring records. The Agency's records disposition schedules and NARA's GRS assign value to the record by providing the guidelines and authorities for establishing, maintaining, using, retaining, transferring, and disposing of program and administrative records.

VI. RESPONSI BILITIES

A. The Administrator has overall responsibility for the AMS Records Management Program.

B. The * - Assistant Administrator, - * as delegated by the Administrator, has direct responsibility to establish and maintain an active, continuing program for the economical and efficient management of AMS records. This is accomplished by establishing continuous and systematic control and coordination over the creation, maintenance and use, and disposition of AMS records, in accordance with statutory and regulatory requirements.

C. The * - Deputy Assistant Administrator - * has overall responsibility for the implementation of the AMS Records Management Program, and for all records management support services provided to AMS personnel.

D. The Chief, IMB, through * - the RMO, - * manages the AMS Records Management Program by controlling AMS records management activities throughout their life cycle, from creation to disposition; and develops and furnishes policy guidelines. Specifically, the RMO will:

1. Formulate, direct, and coordinate the AMS Records Management Program.
2. Develop uniform records systems, including file outlines and disposition schedules.
3. Review AMS records management practices.
4. Review and take appropriate action on all requests for filing equipment. (See AMS Directive 210.1, Acquisition Management Program, and the AMS Acquisition Handbook.)
5. Serve as Agency liaison with NARA/FRC's, for disposition, transfer, and retrieval of records.
6. Serve as Agency liaison with the Department and other Federal agencies on matters relating to records management.
7. Develop, conduct, and coordinate briefings and training programs for headquarters and field employees involved in Agency records management activities.
8. Report to NARA any instances of unauthorized removal or

destruction of AMS records, since such unauthorized action is illegal and may lead to fines and imprisonment.

E. Heads of offices (Division Directors, Branch Chiefs, Section Heads, Supervisors, Officers in Charge, and Administrative Officers) will:

1. Recognize their records management responsibility by making the program a continuing priority and assigning appropriate resources.
2. Ensure that employees understand records management in the Federal Government and their responsibilities.
3. Furnish a copy of this Directive, records disposition schedules, and subsequent changes to employees assigned to file and maintain records.
4. Provide guidance to secretarial and clerical employees to ensure that records are properly classified, filed, maintained, transferred, and disposed of, in accordance with established guidelines.
5. Ensure that all office records are approved for disposition (scheduled) by NARA, with assistance from * - the RMO. - *
6. Establish safeguards against the unauthorized removal or destruction of AMS records, and notify * - the RMO - * if such removal or destruction occurs or threatens to occur.

F. Administrative Officers/Records Management Liaisons
* - (RML's) - * will:

1. Follow the guidelines established by the Agency on matters pertaining to the creation, maintenance, use, retention, transfer, and disposition of records.
2. Work with the * - RMO - * in developing uniform records systems, including program file outlines and disposition schedules, for Division and Staff offices.
3. Advise Division and Staff personnel in the creation, maintenance, use, retention, transfer, and disposition of records.
4. Furnish heads of offices within the Divisions and Staffs with copies of this Directive, records disposition schedules, and subsequent changes. Obtain copies from: * -

USDA/AMS/ERO
Information Management Branch (IMB)
ATTN: AMS Records Management Officer
P.O. Box 96456
Washington, D.C. 20090-6456 - *

G. Originators/creators of AMS records will:

1. Be responsible for the record copy through all steps of the information life cycle: requirements, collection, transmission, processing, storage, retrieval, and disposition.
2. Cooperate with NARA and GSA in applying standards, procedures, and techniques to improve the management of records.
3. Comply with the requirements to prevent unauthorized destruction or removal of AMS records.
4. Comply with the requirements from NARA to transfer permanent AMS records that are over 30 years old.

VII.
QUESTIONS

All questions concerning AMS records management should be directed to * - the RMO, IMB, ERO. - *

Gary Scavongelli
Assistant Administrator

