



Office of Information Affairs

Departmental Records Management Entrance Quick Guide

Why Records Management?

- Ensures statutory and regulatory compliance
- Preserves the rights of the Government and citizens
- Supports better decision making
- Safeguards essential information
- Preserves organizational knowledge
- Minimizes litigation risks

What is a Record?

Records are **everything and anything created and received on behalf of USDA**, in any format.

What are personal papers?

Information about you, only you, and no one else but you.

Who owns Agency information?

Records created or acquired while conducting Government business **are the property of the United States Government, regardless of where they were created or received.**

What is a Records Schedule?

A legal document, approved by the Archivist of the United States, that describes records series (types or groups of records) and mandates:

- How long the records and information are to be maintained (retention), and
- What happens to the records at the end of that time (disposition activities).

What is a File Plan?

A document that lists groups of files in your office, and describes:

- Where they are located
- What record series they belong to; and what their retention instructions are
- Whether they contain Personally Identifiable information (PII) or are essential

Records Lifecycle

Records management encompasses the entire lifecycle of records and information, which is the period of time that records are in the Federal government's custody.



- Records and information are created and received by USDA
- Records and information are kept and used for current business
- Once a record has lived a useful and active life, it is considered inactive and moves to either retirement (storage) or final disposition

What are your Records responsibilities?

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Personnel, defined as employees, contractors, students, volunteers, interns, Fellows, and Political Appointees, are required to:

- Complete annual mandatory [USDA Records Management Training](#);
- Review the complete list of your [Records Responsibilities](#);
- Document the work you do on behalf of USDA, using only USDA official accounts;
- Keep personal papers and USDA records and information separate;
- Use only USDA accounts to complete business;
- Ensure records are managed appropriately and can be accessed by authorized staff;
- Do not destroy, delete, shred, or dispose of records without [Agency Records Officer](#) approval; and
- Prior to departure, Schedule with your [Agency Records Officer](#) to complete the Exit Clearance Interview, [AD-3001](#), and checklist, and provide all copies of records requested for official review.

How to Identify Records

If you answer "yes" to any of these questions, it is a **record**:

- **It contains information about USDA, its customers, collaborations, or business.**
- Does it contain informational value as evidence of your organization's functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operation, mission, programs, projects, or activities?
- Does it document business actions, such as: what happened, what was decided, what advice was given, who was involved, when it happened, the order of events, and decisions?
- Is it an original document related to agency business that does not exist elsewhere?
- **Records can be in any format, including but not limited to electronic documents, data systems, text, chat, electronic messaging, and email messages.** Think content, not format.

Records Management Laws and Regulations

- [Federal Records Act of 1950](#), as amended (44 U.S.C., Chapters 29, 31 and 33);
- [E-Government Act of 2002, Section 207](#);
- [Title 36, CFR Parts 1220 through 1239](#); and
- [Title 18, U.S. Codes § 2071](#) establishes criminal penalties for the unlawful concealment, removal, or destruction of Federal records, and [Title 18, U.S. Code § 793, 794 and 798](#).

USDA Policy and Guidance

- [Office of Information Affairs](#)
- [Departmental Records Management](#) Web Page
- [USDA Records Management Training](#)
- [DR 3080-001](#), *Records Management*
- [DR 3085-001](#), *Vital Records Management Program*
- [DR 3090-001](#), *Litigation Retention Policy for Documentary Materials including Electronically Stored Information*
- [DR 3099-001](#), *Records Management Policy for Departing Employees, Contractors, Volunteers and Political Appointees*
- [AgRecords](#) Web Page

Contact Us

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