

Department of the Interior Departmental Manual

Effective Date: 05/09/95

Series: Information Resources Management

Part 380: Records Management

Chapter 3: Files Management

Originating Office: Office of Information Resources Management, Office of the Secretary

380 DM 3

1. **Purpose and Objectives.** This chapter establishes Departmentwide files management responsibilities and standards. The objectives are to ensure the Department's records, regardless of media, are organized and maintained in a way that facilitates efficient storage and retrieval of needed information and facilitates proper records disposition. Files management is necessary to:

- A. Provide information employees need to do their job.
- B. Protect the legal and financial rights of the Department and the individuals affected by its actions.
- C. Preserve the institutional memory of the Department's responsibilities.

2. **Authorities and Guidelines.** The Federal Records Act (44 U.S.C. ' 3102 (1)) requires Federal agencies to provide for effective controls over the maintenance and use of records in the conduct of current business. 41 CFR 201-9.1 reaffirms this requirement. Consult the following General Services Administration (GSA) and National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) publications to supplement information contained in this Chapter.

- A. Files Maintenance Handbook, GSA, December 1993, available through the Superintendent of Documents.
- B. Applying Technology to Record Systems, GSA, May 1993, available through the Superintendent of Documents, ISBN 0-16-041784-8.
- C. Disposition of Federal Records, A Records Management Handbook, NARA, 1992.

3. **Files Management Responsibilities.**

A. The **Office of Information Resources Management** is responsible for developing Departmentwide files management policy and guidance and for providing assistance, as needed, to bureaus and the Office of the Secretary.

- B. **Bureaus** are responsible for:

(1) Developing the most efficient and effective filing systems to organize and retrieve their records, while conforming to the broad guidelines contained in this Chapter;

(2) Maximizing the use of automation to organize, store, and retrieve information;

(3) Establishing safeguards against the unauthorized destruction or removal of record materials;

(4) Documenting internal files management procedures and widely disseminating this information within the organization;

(5) Ensuring all record materials contained in internal filing systems are covered by a NARA approved disposition authority. Consult NARA's Disposition of Federal Records Handbook for additional guidance; and

(6) Periodically evaluating internal filing systems to ensure they are meeting the needs of the organization.

C. Employees are responsible for following established files management procedures for information they create or receive to conduct Departmental business.

4. **Basic File Types.** A file type is a collection of records that have similar characteristics or relate to specific business transactions. These materials are generally separated into distinct groups and should be able to be retrieved separately from other types of office records to ensure their effective retrieval and proper disposition. Consult the GSA Files Management Handbook, December 1993, for an explanation of basic file types.

5. **Files Management Standards.** Departmental filing systems should meet the following standards:

A. Filing systems should be simple to use and should be designed to organize and retrieve information in any media.

B. Filing systems should provide unique identifiers or file codes to provide a structure for organizing, retrieving, and properly disposing of information. File codes should have some relationship to specific file types so they are easy to learn and use. Consult the GSA guidelines referenced in 380 DM 3.2A and B for information on specific types of file codes. The Privacy Act requires that systems of records that employ personal identifiers as file codes be maintained as formal Privacy Act systems of records. Therefore, personal identifier file codes should be used only when required to conduct agency business. In these cases, the requirements of the Privacy Act should be followed.

C. Filing systems should have the capability to retrieve, or sort records chronologically so required business transactions or events can be recreated for legal or other purposes and to permit the proper disposition of the records.

D. Filing systems should provide the ability to cross reference or integrate records from different systems that relate to specific file types (e.g., electronic mail records should be

integrated with other records dealing with the same transaction or subject).

E. Filing systems should distinguish records from non-record materials to ensure duplicate copies or other unnecessary information is not retained.

F. Filing systems should include provisions for properly disposing of record materials.

6. **Automated Information Systems (AIS).** Ideally, system development life cycle management (LCM) procedures should be followed when developing an AIS. LCM procedures include defining the requirements of the AIS. The filing standards outlined in paragraph 3.5 above, should be included as part of these requirements to ensure efficient storage, retrieval, and proper disposition of information are incorporated into the design of the overall system.

05/09/95 #3038

Replaces 03/15/85 #2632