

CHAPTER 10

RETIREMENT GUIDELINES

1. RECORDS RETIREMENT (GENERAL). Offices should retain as current records a minimum volume of records consistent with efficient operations. Inactive records on hand and not scheduled for early destruction should be retired to appropriate Federal Records Centers (FRC's). The disposition standards in Chapter 9 include retirement instructions for many file series. Listed below are general criteria regarding retirement of records:
 - a. **Reference Rate.** Files which are referred to not more than once a month per file drawer are to be transferred to a records center, provided the transportation cost does not exceed savings in space. Agency files that meet this criteria should be transferred to a records center regardless of how urgent the need for reference, how important the records, their security classification, or how extensive the restrictions on their use may be.
 - b. **Retention Less than 3 Years.** Ordinarily, records should not be retired if they will be destroyed within one year of the transfer. Occasionally, records with less than a year's retention may be retired if the file is bulky, continued retention in office space is costly, and the local FRC agrees in writing to the transfer.
 - c. **Volume.** Small amounts of records (less than one cubic foot) may not be retired as a sole transfer action. Wait until at least one or two boxes are ready for transfer. Records should be retired at annual intervals except when the volume warrants more frequent transfers.
2. RETIREMENT DEVIATIONS. The Records Officer is authorized to approve specific deviations from retirement procedures on an individual basis. Deviations apply only to records retirements. No records will be destroyed sooner than authorized by approved disposal schedules unless the schedule is officially changed. Exceptions to retirement procedures will be approved in writing by the Records Officer, with information copies furnished to the applicable records liaison officer and records custodian.
3. NONRECORD DISPOSAL LIST. The following list describes items which may be disposed of as nonrecord working file material. Although these items are useful in daily operation and may appear to acquire record characteristics because they are involved in daily activities, they do not serve to document the procedures, practices, or operations of the Agency. Provisions of this nonrecord disposal list may be applied at any time:

- a. **Extra Copies of Security Papers.** Extra copies of security papers may be destroyed as nonrecord material. Method of destruction is the same for extra copies of these papers as with official copies.
- b. **Extra Copy Files of Unclassified Papers.** Because the official files contain the record copies for documentation purposes, extra copies are non-record and may be disposed of at any time, unless otherwise specifically provided for in the disposal schedule.
- c. **Reading Files, Chronological Files, Index Files, and other Files Used as Cross-reference Finding Aids.** Index files are made up of extra copies of correspondence, letters, and memoranda, arranged by date, number, or organizational element. Like newspapers, reading files present a random selection of topics for current interest and information. Reading files are not suitable for documentation and may be disposed of after circulation to designated readers. Files used as finding devices are unnecessary in view of the prescribed Agency filing and disposal system. Since they constitute duplication of subject matter already in official files, cross-reference and index files should be destroyed as nonrecord material.
- d. **Suspense Files.** These are extra copies of documents which serve as reminders of action due on a certain date or other indicators of chronological or sequential character which do not acquire a record character from this function. They may be destroyed when action is completed.
- e. **Publications.** Books, circulars, catalogs, and periodicals which are given general public or Governmentwide distribution are nonrecord. All reference aids and expendable published material must be reported as excess to the Library Officer. All expendable published material may be destroyed when superseded, obsolete, or otherwise not needed. Newspapers and magazine clippings and abstracts from them pertinent to Agency programs or which document the Agency missions should be combined with official files. This item does not apply to publications originated by your office. These are covered in the Agency disposal schedules.
- f. **Reproduction Materials.** These include any device which performs the function of causing production of printed copy. Destroy upon completion of the production job. If it is anticipated a reprint will be needed, they may be retained for that purpose.
- g. **Work Papers.** Rough drafts, notes, figures, and calculations, etc., which an individual uses in preparation of a letter, report, or other finished product may be disposed of when the product is satisfactorily completed and approved.

- h. **Stenographic Notes.** Stenographic notes, including filled notebooks, recording discs from stenographic machines, and steno tape recordings, are of no value when the text has been satisfactorily transcribed and may be destroyed.
- i. **Wrappers, Labels, Envelopes, and Routine Slips.** Destroy immediately. EXCEPTION: Envelopes which list the time and/or date of mailing and/or show the time and date of receipt when necessary to document a file, such as sealed bid envelopes documenting a contract file, may be retained with the file.
- j. **Personal Files.** These are files maintained by an individual for the personal management of his/her affairs and include such things as travel papers, travel vouchers, employee copies of T&A's, employee copies of personnel actions, salary and allowance papers, etc., already documented in official files. Such material should be maintained in the employee's desk, **NOT** in the file cabinets. If they are forgotten by a departed employee, they may be mailed to his/her forwarding address. If the employee does not want them, they may be destroyed as nonrecord material.
- k. **Working Files.** Folders which contain notes, reference material, duplicates of papers in official files, and other related papers used by individuals in day-to-day transactions of their work are nonrecord. These are papers of a temporary or transitory value which are primarily used as reference or background material but retention of which is not required as supporting evidence of an official policy, program operation, or transaction. They may be destroyed at the discretion of the individual who created them.
- l. **Letters of General Inquiry.** These letters do not involve substantive questions and, when answered, complete the cycle of correspondence and have no further value. Examples: Requests for and transmittals of publications, photographs, etc. Dispose when reply is made or information is furnished. OPTIONAL METHOD: Return letters to the originator along with the requested material.
- m. **Notification of Change of Address.** Dispose when the change has been made on the records.
- n. **Routine Reference and Control Papers.** These include job control records, status cards, routing slips, etc. Dispose when work is completed or when no longer needed for operating purposes.
- o. **Stocks of Superseded or Obsolete Blank Forms and Processed Documents Preserved for Supply.** Dispose when obsolete or superseded.
- p. **Mailing Lists.** These include individual cards. Dispose when obsolete.