

## CHAPTER 11

### TRANSFER, PACKING, SHIPPING AND STORAGE OF RECORDS

1. **GENERAL.** This chapter provides instructions on the transfer, packing, shipping, and storage of records eligible for retirement to Federal Records Centers (FRC's), or the National Archives. Regional FRC's are located throughout the United States. In addition, there are two National Records Centers. The Washington National Records Center (WNRC), Suitland, Maryland, is available for the use of agencies in the Washington, DC area. The National Personnel Records Center (NPRC), St. Louis, Missouri, houses the personnel and pay records of all Federal employees. Exhibit 11-1 lists the addresses of the FRC's and the area served by each. Offices will retire eligible records to the nearest center. Included below are instructions for the retirement of files to the FRC. Local procedures should be followed when retiring records to a regional FRC, when applicable.
2. **TRANSFERRING RECORDS.** When records become eligible for transfer, the custodian of the records should estimate the volume in cubic feet involved and obtain the necessary fiberboard boxes.
  - a. **Riverdale/Washington Offices.** Recordkeepers in Riverdale/Washington should inform the Records Officer of the nature and quantity of records proposed retirement and any additional information that the Records Officer may require. The Records Officer will assign an accession number for use in retiring the records to the WNRC.
  - b. **Field Offices.** Regional office recordkeepers should inform their administrative officer when records retirement is planned. The recordkeepers should inform the Administrative Officer of the nature and quantity of the records proposed for retirement and any additional information that they may require. Administrative officials will advise the FRC Manager in the area in which the records are located that the records will be retired.
    - (1) **Selection of Records.** Before files are boxed for shipment, they should be screened to eliminate nonrecord material and screening should be limited to complete folders or subject classification categories. Retired records are subject to recall and reuse; therefore, effective controls must be maintained over them.

- (2) File custodians should survey their files **NO LATER THAN JUNE 30** of each year and set aside the inactive records which will be eligible for retirement on **SEPTEMBER 30**. The files selected ordinarily will include all subject files more than 3 years old and case files which are completed or which are referred to less than once a month per file drawer. A minimum of 1 cubic foot (1 box) is required to initiate retirement.
- (3) Do not send nonrecords to the FRC. (See Nonrecord Disposal List, Chapter 10, page 10-1).
- (4) Do not send records with less than 1 year remaining before destruction to the FRC.

c. **Packing and Shipping Records.** To the maximum extent practicable, all inactive records of an office (section, branch, or division) eligible for retirement should be assembled into one shipment and retired annually. Standard FRC boxes designed for the shipment of records hold 1 cubic foot of records. The contents of one, 36-inch size file drawer will require two and one-half boxes, and one 42-inch size file drawer will require three boxes. Consult the Records Officer for shipping Standard containers for odd-size documents such as blueprints, maps, or ledgers. records center boxes are available through normal supply channels.

<u>Federal Stock No.</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Unit of Issue</u>
8115-00-1178249	Box, Record (Tuck bottom)	25 per bundle

- Offices in Riverdale/Washington Business Site, will contact the Printing, Distribution, and Mail Management (PDM) Services Center for records boxes.
  - Field offices will order boxes through regular procurement channels.
- (1) Without disturbing the existing filing arrangement, pack the records firmly in the box. To make future references easier, records should not be packed too tight as to hinder withdrawal. Do not mix records with different retention periods in the same box. Tops of boxes should be folded. **Use only paper tape to seal boxes.**
  - (2) Face all folders in the same direction. Do not pack file guide cards. Letter-size files are placed facing the side of the box with the seam to the back.
  - (3) Fill each box completely, but do not over pack to cause bulges.

- (4) Wrap oversize and undersize records, such as ledgers, equivalent to less than 1/2 box, separately in heavy wrapping paper. Tie or tape the package bottom securely, label, and number each package as if it were a box.
3. RECORDS TRANSMITTAL FORM. Records are transmitted to the FRC's by SF-135, Records Transmittal and Receipt (see Exhibits 11-2 and 11-3). Exhibit 11-4 provides instructions for the preparation of the SF-135.
  - a. Washington Office records custodians will prepare an original and three copies of the SF-135. Permanent records require the submission of a shelf list. The shelf list is a listing of the records in each box; e.g., real property disposal cases, or contract files, itemized in sufficient detail to provide program officials with the information required for researching or retrieving retired records. Custodians will forward an original and two copies of the SF-135, and if applicable, three copies of the shelf list to the Records Officer, and retain a copy of the SF-135 and shelf list in a suspense file until the return of the approved copy. The Records Officer will review the SF-135 to ensure completeness of entries, accurate identification of the records, proper citation of disposition authorizations, and the applicability of the indicated retention periods or destruction dates. The Records Officer will inspect the boxes in each accession to ensure they are packed and numbered correctly. On completion of the review, the Records Officer will:
    - (1) Sign and transmit the original and two copies of the SF-135 to the WNRC.
    - (2) Return one copy of the approved SF-135 to the records custodian and retain one copy of the SF-135 and the shelf list in the suspense file.

The file custodian will place one copy of the SF-135 in the first box of the first accession listed on each SF-135.

- b. Field office records custodians will prepare an original of the SF-135 and two copies of a shelf list. Custodians retiring the records will retain one copy of the SF-135 and shelf list in suspense and forward the original of the SF-135 and the other copy of the shelf list to the Support Services Supervisor. The Support Services Supervisor will review the SF-135 to ensure completeness of entries, accurate identification of the records, proper citation of disposition authorizations, and the applicability of the indicated retention periods or destruction dates. Field Support Services Supervisors will:
    - (1) Authorize, sign, and transmit the original and two copies of the SF-135 to the appropriate FRC.
    - (2) Retain a copy (suspense copy) of the SF-135 and shelf list for the field master file.

- (3) Forward the copy of the SF-135 returned by the FRC to the records custodian of the office retiring the files.
- c. On receipt of the shipment, the FRC will return a receipt copy of the SF-135 to the Records Officer or the Field Records Officer, as appropriate. The Records Officer or the field Records Officer will file the receipted copy of the SF-135 in the master file and inform the appropriate personnel of the location number.
- d. **Labeling Records Center Boxes.** Leave blank. The Records Officer or the Support Services Supervisor will label each box after it has been inspected and approved. The information will be marked clearly with a black felt tip pen in letters at least 1 inch from the front end of the box (unstapled end). See Exhibit

11-5.

- (1) The accession number should be in the upper left corner.
- (2) The box number should be in the upper right corner to indicate its relationship to the total number of boxes in the accession; e.g., 1/6, 2/6, etc.
- e. Submission of SF-135.
  - (1) Field offices will contact the appropriate FRC and obtain accession numbers for each series of records. The Records Officer, will assign accession numbers for headquarters offices in the Riverdale/Washington Business Site.
  - (2) Offices will submit an original and three copies of the SF-135 to the Records Officer for review, approval, and transmittal to the WNRC or FRC, as appropriate. A suspense copy will be retained and confirmation copy will be returned to the originating office.
  - (3) WNRC or FRC will review the SF-135 for completeness and determine the propriety of the transfer. WNRC or FRC will no longer routinely accept transfers of unscheduled (or "Retain") records that National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) has not inspected or appraised for permanent retention. Be sure to cite the disposal schedule number and the applicable item in block 6(h) of the SF-135. If the disposal authority is not shown on the SF-135, WNRC or FRC will return the SF-135 for completion of that block.
  - (4) When an accession of 100 cubic feet or more is to be sent to WNRC or FRC, the director of WNRC or FRC must receive written notification at least 2 weeks before the records are actually shipped to allow for allocation of space and manpower.

4. SHIPPING THE RECORDS. The most economical means available should be used to ship files to an FRC. If records are to be moved only a short distance, FRC trucks may be available to pick them up. Contact the FRC regarding this. Otherwise, records may be transferred by regular United States mail for small shipments (under 100 lb.) or by commercial motor or rail freight for larger shipments with costs to be paid by the Agency. To obtain the lowest freight rate for records shipment, enter the following description on bills of lading or other shipping documents:

Records, Office, Old (the agreed or declared value of the property is hereby specifically stated by the shipper to be not exceeding 3-1/2 cents per pound.) Shipping regulations require the boxes to be sealed and addressed. Properly packed containers weigh approximately 25 to 30 pounds each.

- a. Washington Headquarters -- Special Instructions for Transferring Records to an FRC.

(1) If WNRC approves the transfer, WNRC will complete block 6(j) indicating the location of the first box in each series records. WNRC will return the SF-135 to the Records Officer indicating the records may be transferred. The Records Officer will arrange with the transferring office to pick up and transfer the records. The Records Officer will furnish a copy of the SF-135 to be placed in the first box of the accession.

**NOTE:** Delays in shipment of **more than 90 days** will result in the return of the SF-135 requiring resubmission of the paperwork.

(2) After receipt of the records, WNRC will return the SF-135 to the Records Officer. A copy will be furnished to the transferring office.

- b. Field Offices -- Special Instructions for Transferring Records to an FRC. If applicable.

(1) If an FRC approves the transfer, the FRC will complete block 6(j) indicating the location of the first box in each series of records. The FRC will return the SF-135 to the field office indicating the records may be transferred.

**NOTE:** Delays in shipment of **more than 90 days** will result in the return of the SF-135 requiring resubmission of the paperwork.

(2) Shipment of Records. The transferring office will:

(a) Tape the boxes closed, place a shipping or mailing label on each box, and determine the least inexpensive method of shipment.

(b) Ship parcel post (4th class) if the number of boxes is small, if it is the least expensive method, if a post office is nearby, or if a parcel post pickup is made in the building. If parcel post pickup service is provided, contact the local post office for quantity restrictions.

(c) Ship by freight under an SF-1103, U.S. Government Bill of Lading, (GBL) if it is not practical to use parcel post service. To obtain the lowest shipping rate, include the following statement on the GBL:

"The agreed or declared value of this property is hereby specifically stated by the shipper not to exceed 3-1/2 cents per pound." When shipping by GBL, always place the GBL number on each shipping label.

in Instruct the carrier to contact the Accession and Disposal Branch the appropriate FRC, 24 hours **before** delivery. Note this requirement on the GBL.

(d) Receipt of SF-135 from the FRC. The FRC will send the SF-135 to the Administrative Officer. The Administrative Officer will furnish a copy of the SF-135 to the transferring office.

c. Transfers to National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) PRC. Official personnel folders and related payroll records will be retired to NPRC (civilian) at St. Louis, Missouri, as prescribed in the records disposition standards and as further explained in this paragraph. This Center does not acknowledge receipt of records.

d. Transfer of General Accounting Office (GAO) Audit Records. GAO Site Audit Records are those which are audited or are subject to audit by GAO at the site where the records are located. Accountable officers' records and site audit records are Agency records maintained for audit by GAO. These records are located in the budget functional area of the Agency. They cannot be destroyed by the Agency but must be sent to the FRC. GAO Site Audit Records consist of:

Statements of transactions.

Statements of accountability.

Collection and disbursement schedules.

All other schedules and vouchers or documents used as schedules or vouchers.

5. REFERRALS TO STORED RECORDS. Even though records are physically stored in an FRC, they are readily accessible to the offices that retired them. The requester may ask for information from the records or for the loan or return of the records themselves. Optional Form 11, Reference Request - Federal Records Center, is available for use in requesting reference service. (Exception: Standard Form 127, Request for Official Personnel Folder, will be used for the retrieval of or reference to personnel records from NPRC.) Persons requesting reference service should specify:

- a. The name and location of the person for whom the request is being made.
- b. The accession number of the transfer in which the records were included, as shown on the SF-135, Records Transmittal and Receipt.
- c. A description of the information and/or records desired.
- d. The box number of the carton in which the records are located.
- e. Whether a permanent or temporary withdrawal is being made. Requests for permanent withdrawal must be in writing.
- f. Urgent Requests. For urgent requests, contact the Records Officer directly by telephone. The Records Officer will contact the records center by telephone and have the records sent directly to the requestor. Provide the same information as in a routine request plus the requester's telephone number.
- g. Returning Records to WNRC.
  - (1) Folders. Return them to the Records Officer. Use chain or manila (Kraft) envelopes. If there are too many folders for an envelope, wrap them in heavy paper. Address the envelope or package to:

Chief, Reference Service Branch, Washington  
National Records Center  
Washington, DC 20409  
or to the appropriate field records center.

- (2) Boxes. Contact the Records Officer or field Administrative Officer. Provide the following information:

Name, program or division and office, room number, and building.

Accession number(s).

Number of boxes under each accession.

Arrangements will be made to pick up the boxes. Be sure the records are returned in the same boxes and in the same order in which they were received.

6. DISPOSITION OF RETIRED RECORDS.

- a. The disposition instructions contained in this Handbook are mandatory. In instances where a claim, investigation, litigation, or other similar action arises and there is a requirement for the retired records to be held beyond the scheduled disposal date, the program official will prepare a letter requesting the appropriate Records Officer to suspend disposal action. The Records Officer will notify the FRC to suspend disposal action at each FRC.
- b. An office may have retired records to an FRC without a specific disposal authority cited on the SF-135. Records may have been retired on a contingency ("pending") basis. THE FRC will use GSA Form 1301, Notice of Intent to Dispose of Records, or an equivalent form to notify agencies of records scheduled for disposal. In these cases, THE FRC will notify the Records Officer of the intent to destroy. The Records Officer will contact the appropriate program official and obtain concurrence for disposal.
- c. The program official or Records Officer must respond within 90 calendar days from the date of the FRC's notice if they do not concur in the disposal. The FRC will destroy the records in accordance with the applicable disposition authority if the program official or Records Officer does not send a written exception or nonoccurrence within the 90 calendar days.