

What are Electronic Records?

Electronic records are any information (regardless of format) which meets the definition of a federal record and is produced and read by a computer, which may include:

Email communication; Social media sites (Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and LinkedIn) that are used for sharing and discussing information; Blogs used to exchange information and ideas.

E-Mail messages may constitute Federal Records when:

- E-mail provides key substantive comments.
- E-mail adds to a proper understanding of the formulation or execution of Agency action, operations, and responsibilities.
- E-mail provides documentation of significant Agency decisions and commitments reached orally (person-to-person, by telecommunications, or in conference) and, not otherwise documented in Agency files.
- E-mail conveys information of value on important Agency activities.

Points to Remember about E-Mail

- Agency e-mail systems are for “official business” and should have limited personal use.
- Delete messages that are not records when no longer needed, in accordance with retention policies, unless they are subject to a hold or freeze due to litigation, an audit, or a FOIA request.
- Before deleting any e-mail message, the author should determine whether it meets the legal definition of a record and its retention period is served.



Hot Topics

VA has a requirement to comply with the Presidential Memorandum “Managing Government Records.”

- By 2016 VA must manage all email records in an electronic format.
- By 2019 all permanent electronic records in VA must be managed electronically for eventual transfer and accessioning by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) in an electronic format.
- Use of personal email.
- NARA Capstone Approach.

Points of Contact:

Samuel Nichols
Director, Records Management Service
Samuel.Nichols@va.gov
(202) 632-7485

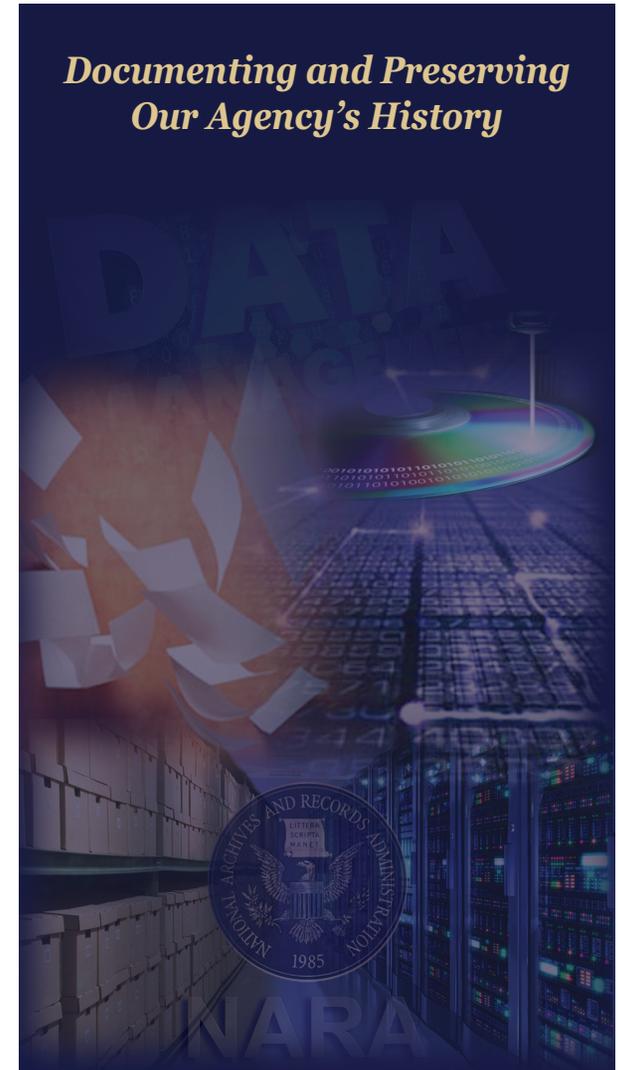
Dr. Dorotheia Y. Byrd, ThD
Office of Privacy and Records Management
Lead Program Specialist
Dorotheia.Byrd@va.gov
202.632.7807



Office of Information & Technology
Records Management Service

Records Management

Documenting and Preserving Our Agency's History



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Records Management Service

What is Records Management?

"When records are well managed, agencies can use them to assess the impact of programs, to reduce redundant efforts, to save money, and to share knowledge within and across their organizations. In these ways, proper records management is the back-bone of open Government."

-President Barack Obama

Records Management is:

- The planning, controlling, directing, organizing, training, promoting, and other managerial activities related to the creation, maintenance, use, and disposition of records.
- The primary purpose of records management is to allow staff to locate and use information.
- Protects the rights of citizens, businesses, the agency, and its employees.
- Ensures continuity in the event of a disaster.
- Protects records from inappropriate and unauthorized access.
- Meets statutory and regulatory requirements, including archival preservation, audit, and oversight activities.
- Effective means of maintaining institutional knowledge.

Why is it important to you?

Adhering to the Records Management policy:

- Documents agency business interactions.
- Frees up office space and allows for the quick retrieval of documents.
- Keeps VA compliant with both agency policy and Federal law.

What are Records?

Records Management LifeCycle



Materials made or received by an agency of the U.S. Government under Federal law or in connection with the transaction of public business and appropriate for preservation as evidence of the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations, or other activities, or because of the informational value of the data (44 U.S.C. 3301).

Official Agency Records - Desktop computer applications: e.g., Word processing, spreadsheet, and personal database software, Electronic mail (e-mail) systems, Electronic document management systems (VAIQ), Agency Web sites, Management Information Systems (MIS), and other Electronic Information Systems (EIS), Digital media files.

Non-Records - Items that are usually not included within the scope of official records as well as documents not required or included on a records schedule. Examples include extra copies, stocks of publications, blank forms, routing slips, drafts and worksheets, transmittal sheets, envelopes, catalogs, trade journals and publications.

Your Roles and Responsibilities

Who's Job is It?

Yours...

- Every person who works for the federal government is responsible for Records Management.
- Creating any document/media within the VA involves Records Management.



Duties as a records custodian:

- Create and manage the records necessary to document official activities and actions, including those generated by VA contractors.
- Destroy records only in accordance with approved records schedules; never removing records from VA without authorization.
- File records for safe storage and efficient retrieval and maintain personal papers and non-record materials separately from official VA records.

