NIH Policy Manual

1742 - Transfer, Withdrawal and Destruction of Records at the Washington National Records Center

Issuing Office: OD/OM/OMA/DCM **Phone:** (301) 496-4606

Release Date: 12/20/2004 ? **Technical Revision Date:** 5/03/2021 ?

Transmittal Notice

1. **Explanation of Material Transmitted:** This chapter revises instructions for completing paperwork for the transfer of records to the Washington National Records Center.
2. **Filing Instructions:**

   Remove: NIH Manual 1742 dated 8/30/2000.
   Insert: NIH Manual 1742 dated 12/20/2004.

PLEASE NOTE: For information on:

- content of this chapter, contact the issuing office listed above.
- NIH Manual System, contact the Division of Management Support (DMS), OMA, OM, on 301-496-4606.
- on-line information on the NIH Manual System and on-line chapter text, use: INTERNET http://oma.od.nih.gov/manualchapters/

A. Purpose

This chapter describes how to transfer inactive records from NIH to the Washington National Records Center (WNRC) for storage, retrieve records stored at WNRC, and arrange for disposal of records stored at WNRC.

B. References

1. General Records Schedules (GRS) http://www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/ardor/
2. NIH Manual 1743 "Keeping and Destroying Records," Appendix 1, NIH Records Control Schedule (NIH RCS)

C. Definitions

1. **Accession** – a group of records transferred to WNRC as a unit. All the records in one accession must: (a) originate in the same organization; (b) come under a single item in

the General Records Schedule (GRS) or the NIH Records Control Schedule (RCS); (c) have the same disposition; and (d) be eligible for disposition in the same month or year.

a. **GRS** – provides disposal authorization for temporary records common to agencies of the Federal Government, such as: procurement, personnel, printing, and other general administrative records.
b. **NIH RCS** – provides disposal authorization for permanent and/or program-specific NIH records, such as: policy, research, committee records, grants.

2. **Disposition** – the final action taken by NIH on official records. It may be either: (a) offer of the records to the National Archives for permanent preservation; (b) transfer to another agency in connection with a transfer of functions; or (c) destruction. Disposition must follow the specific instructions in the GRS or the NIH RCS. Records authorized for destruction may be donated to a person or organization outside of the Federal government only with the specific written approval of the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA).
3. **Non-Record Materials** – certain documentary materials are specifically excluded by law (44 U.S.C. 3301) from the records of the Federal government. Such materials are called "non-record." Any one or more of three factors determines whether something is record or non-record. These factors are: (a) the nature of the material; (b) the relationship to records; and (c) the use of the material.

    a. **Nature of the material** – some items by their very nature are non-records. They include blank forms, routing sheets, transmittal sheets and reproduction materials such as stencils and offset plates.
    b. **Relationship to Records** – documents such as transcribed stenographic materials, working papers and drafts, that are used in creating official records are non-record. Identical duplicates of all records maintained in the same file are non-record. Follow-up materials, such as "tickler" or suspense copies of correspondence, that are used to facilitate operations, but not to document those operations, are non-record. However, indexes and other finding aids to records are themselves record materials.
    c. **Use of the material** – any materials used exclusively for reference purposes are non-record. They include library collections, vendor catalogs, journals and similar materials. Copies of records which are maintained solely for reference purposes are also non-record if no administrative action is taken on them. Materials used solely for exhibit or display are non-record, unless they describe the operations, policies, procedures or accomplishments of NIH.

        Stocks of publications and processed documents kept for distribution are non-record, but one copy of each publication must be kept as a record in the office responsible for issuing the publication.

        Documents created or used in fringe activities, such as carpool locators, charitable fund drives, and employee recreation and welfare activities are not government records.

Caution should be used in applying the term “non-record.” Improper application of this qualification may be equivalent to the illegal disposition of government records.

4. **Official Records** – any papers, books, photographs, magnetic tapes, machine readable materials, microfilm, or other materials which document official actions, decisions, policies or procedures.

D. Responsibilities

1. **NIH Records Officer (RO), Division of Compliance Management, Office of Management Assessment, Office of Management:**

    a. provides instructions and assistance for sending, withdrawing and disposing of records at WNRC;
    b. reviews and approves the SF-135, "Records Transmittal and Receipt" http://forms.nih.gov/msword/misc/SF135.DOC and submits to the WNRC; and
    c. coordinates authorizations for disposal of records at WNRC.

2. **IC RMOs and OD Administrative Officers:**

    a. may issue supplemental guidance for implementing the instructions of this chapter in their organizations. Such supplements may only be in addition to this chapter; they may not change, abridge or delete the requirements of this chapter;
    b. must inform the NIH RMO of any supplemental guidance issued;
    c. review, initial and transmit, to the NIH RMO, the Records Transmittal and Receipt, Form SF 135, for transferring records to the WNRC;
    d. review and transmit reference requests, Form OF 11, for withdrawing records from WNRC;
    e. assist IC staff in sending, withdrawing, or disposing of records at WNRC; and
    f. maintain a current listing of all IC records sent and stored at the WNRC.

3. **Each office:**

    a. initiates requests to transfer records to WNRC or withdraw records from WNRC;
    b. boxes its records and marks the boxes, as instructed in Section E.5.b. and 5.c., before transfer to WNRC; and
    c. prepares forms and other paperwork necessary for sending, withdrawing or disposing of records at WNRC and transmits the paperwork to their respective IC Records Officer for review and clearance.

E. Transferring Records to the Washington National Records Center for Storage

1. **Form Required:**

   SF 135, “Records Transmittal and Receipt”

2. **Packaging Material Required:**
3. **Standard-size record box for legal- or letter-size files:**

14-3/4" x 12" x 9 -1/2"	**NSN 8115-00-117-8249**

Special-purpose boxes:

Half-size box 14-3/4" x 9-1/2" x 4-3/4"	NSN 8115-00-117-8338
Magnetic tape box 14-3/4" x 11-3/4" x 11-3/4"	NSN 8115-00-117-8347
(Assembled) X-ray box 18" x 15" x 5-1/2"	NSN-8115-00-290-3386

NOTE: Use the proper size box when packing records. For legal- and letter-size material, use standard-size boxes. Use half-size or other boxes only for microfilm, index cards, or other odd-size material. Contact your IC RMO or the WNRC for assistance in selecting the proper container for odd-size materials.

When using “special-purpose boxes,” indicate the size of the boxes in item 6.f. of the SF 135.

4. **Selecting Records for Transfer:**

   a. Separate records from non-record materials. Non-record materials are defined in Section C of this chapter. Non-record materials may not be stored in WNRC.
   b. Select groups of closed files or other groups of files which are used less than once a month.
   c. Separate groups of files according to the item and disposition instruction in the GRS or the NIH RCS which applies to these groups.
   d. Divide these groups into subgroups which must be destroyed, or reviewed for disposal, or offered to the NARA, in the same month and year. Calculate the month and year from the dates of the records and the disposition instruction which apply to them. Each of these subgroups is a separate accession.

5. **Completing Paperwork for Transfer of Records:**

a. **Transmittal Form**. Accessions to be transferred to WNRC must be listed and described on an SF 135, "Records Transmittal and Receipt." (See Appendix 1 for examples). Complete the SF 135 as follows:

Item Entry

1 “Washington, DC Stop 386”
2 NIH Records Officer
3 Name, telephone number, and building and room number of an official responsible for the records.
4 Leave blank
5 NIH Records Officer
National Institutes of Health
MSC 7669
6011 Executive Boulevard, Rm 601
Rockville, MD 20892-2075
6 a-c The NIH RMO maintains a log and assigns the accession number. Call the NIH RMO (301-496-4606) to obtain an accession number for each accession to be transferred.

For each accession, provide the following information:

Item Information

6d Total volume. A standard-size box equals one cubic foot. This is equal to the number of cartons if the standard cartons for legal or letter-sized files, as specified in E.2., are used.

6e First and last box numbers separated by a slash. (For example, if there is only one box in an accession, enter "1/1"; if there are 30 boxes enter "1/30".)

6f Series Description.

(1) At the top of 6f , identify the Charge Code (^XX). Each IC has a specific Charge Code. Contact the IC RMO or NIH RMO (301-496-4606) to obtain the Charge Code for your IC.

(2) Identify the IC and the division/branch/section which has the records.

(3) Describe the records in sufficient detail to allow the NIH RMO to verify compliance with the GRS or the Chapter 1743 which describes the records, e.g., for research data covered by item Chapter 1743, 3000-G-3-b, identify the research project in which they were used and the particular type of records. No description is completed without the closing date (or inclusive dates) of the records. Specify the earliest and most recent dates of records in the accession by calendar or fiscal year, as appropriate.

(4) Identify the basis of any restriction or use of the records as specified in 6.g. (For example, for records subject to the Privacy Act, enter "Privacy Act System of Records" and give the system number.) Restrictions are not allowed unless permitted by the Freedom of Information Act.

(5) **All records related to smoking tobacco, the tobacco industry and tobacco products, and research on health effects of smoking, smoking cessation programs, and nicotine addiction, are frozen and must be identified and retained indefinitely. Therefore, indicate in this section if any of these records are related to tobacco, by entering "These Records are or are NOT Tobacco Related" and the requestor, Principle Investigator or IC Records Officer.**

(6) Indicate "**special-purpose boxes**," if applicable (i.e., half-size; magnetic tape; microfiche; and X-ray boxes).

(7) **Special description requirements apply for certain records**:

Site Audit Records. State "GAO Site Audit" if the records have been so designated by the General Accounting Office and indicate whether the site audit records do or do not pertain to Native Americans.

Non-textual Records. Descriptions of non-textual records must include the non-textual code. See the following list of codes.

Codes Description

ARF Artifacts (include museum items)
AVM Audiovisual material
BND Bound volumes
DRA Architectural and engineering drawings
EDD Electronic data processing, flexible disks
EDH Electronic data processing, hard disks
EDO Electronic data processing, optical digital data disks
EDP Electronic data processing, unspecified
EDT Electronic data processing, magnetic tape
EIR Electronic imaging records
FDN Microfiche, diazo negative
FDP Microfiche, diazo positive
FON Microfiche, other negative
FSN Microfiche, silver halide negative
FSP Microfiche, silver halide positive
FUN Microfiche
FVN Microfiche, vesicular negative
FVP Microfiche, vesicular positive
GRA Graphic arts

MAP Map
MBN Motion picture film, black-and-white negative
MBP Motion picture film, black-and-white positive
MCN Motion picture film, color negative
MCP Motion picture film, color positive
MDN Microfilm, diazo negative
MDP Microfilm, diazo positive
MIC Microfilm, unspecified
MON Microfilm, other negative
MOP Microfilm, other positive
MPF Motion picture film, unspecified
MSN Microfilm, silver halide negative
MSP Microfilm, silver halide positive
MVN Microfilm, vesicular negative
MVP Microfilm, vesicular positive
MYL Mylar sheets
PBN Photographs, black-and-white negative
PBO Photographs, black-and-white other
PBP Photographs, black-and-white prints
PCN Photographs, color negatives
PCO Photographs, color other
PCP Photographs, color prints
PHA Photographs, aerial
PHO Photographs, unspecified
PRM Printed material
ROX Rock, core, and petrographic samples
SEI Seismograms
SRC Sound recordings, tape cassette
SRD Sound recordings, disc
SRE Sound recordings, 8-track cartridge
SRF Sound recordings, 45 rpm
SRL Sound recordings, LP
SRO Sound recordings, other
SRT Sound recordings, open tape (reel to reel)
SRU Sound recordings, unspecified
TEX Textual
TRN Transparencies
VDB Video recordings, Beta format tape cassette
VDP Video recordings, "professional" tape cassette
VDV Video recordings, VHS format tape cassette
VID Video recordings, unspecified
XRA X rays

Permanent Electronic Records. The detailed folder-title listing must include information about tape format and size. Permanent electronic records must be either on open-reel magnetic tape or on tape cartridges, and must distinguish

between the two. Open-reel magnetic tape must be on 1/2-inch 7- or 9-track tape reels recorded at 800, 1,600, or 250 bpi.

Permanent Microforms. The detailed folder-title listings must include information identifying the NIH and organization; the title of the records; the number or identifier for each unit of film; the security classification, if any; and the inclusive dates, names, or other data identifying the records. Any finding aids relevant to the microforms that are not contained in the microforms, as well as the inspection log forms and inspection reports, must be attached to the SF 135.

6g ("Restriction") Use the codes which are defined on the back of the form to indicate any restrictions identified in 6f. Code "W" should be used for Privacy Act system records.

6h Enter GRS or Chapter 1743 (NIH Manual) and give the number of the item in either the GRS or the NIH RCS which applies to the records in the accession.

6i Calculate the month and year in which the records must be destroyed or offered to the NARA, from the disposition instruction in the GRS or the NIH RCS, and the most recent dates of the records in the accession.

Disposable Records. Because disposal is accomplished in quarterly cycles, you may advance the date to the beginning of the next calendar quarter (for example, 1/05, 4/05, 7/05, 10/05) to obtain the actual date of disposal.

Permanent Records. Permanent records are offered to NARA on an annual basis; enter the month of January (01), the offer year, and place a "P" after the offer year (01/2025P).

6 j-m Leave blank.

b. **Box List**. For each accession, prepare a detailed folder-title listing for each box. If the records are boxed according to a straightforward filing order, such as alphabetical or numerical, the box list should simply identify the first and last file in each box. (For example, "Box 1: Adams to Casey," or "Box 10: Grant No. 1R01-22-8888 to 1R01-22-9999.")
c. **Clearances and Copies**. Send the original SF 135 and box list electronically to your IC Records Officer. The IC Records Officer will review and forward the SF 135 and the box list to the NIH RMO via e-mail. The IC Records Officer is responsible for maintaining a record of all IC accessions sent to the WNRC.

6. **Preparing Records for Transfer:**

a. Remove and destroy all duplicates, routing slips, unofficial notes and other non-record materials from the files before packing them for transfer.
b. **Packing the Records:**

(1) Pack the records in the same order in which they were originally filed.

(2) Place letter-size material in the box facing the end of the carton, or place legal-size material in the box facing the side of the carton.

(3) Arrange undersized records, such as cards or papers 3" x 5", 4" x 6", 5" x 8", etc. in small “packages” and bind with heavy rubber bands or tie with string. Arrange the packages in rows within the cartons and place cardboard dividers between the layers.

(4) An accession must fill a box (3/4 full) to be accepted by the Records Center.

(5) Close the box by interlocking the top flaps. Do not seal the top of the box.

c. **Marking the Boxes**. Mark boxes on the front (12" x 9-1/2") end with black felt pen or equivalent. Accession number and box number must be at least 1 ½ inches high and written directly onto the box, so that they can be easily read. Do not use "paste-on" labels; write directly on the box. An example is shown in Appendix 2.

(1) Place box numbers in the upper right corner, showing the box number and the total boxes in the accession. Begin with box number 1, and include the total number in the accession, such as 1/10, 2/10, and so forth.

(2) Place accession numbers assigned by the NIH Records Officer in the upper left corner. The numbers stand for the record group (443), a fiscal year (05) and the four-digit sequence number (e.g., 443-05-0010). Place the record group and fiscal year (443-05) on the first line and the accession number directly under the record group and fiscal year on the second line.

7. **Shipment of Records:** ICs are responsible for arranging the actual shipment of the records within 90 days after receipt of the approved SF 135. It is recommended that ICs use NIH Transportation to pick up and deliver boxes to the WNRC.

a. After the receipt of the approved SF 135 from the WNRC, which authorizes shipment of the boxes, the NIH RMO will provide the IC with a copy of the approved SF 135 to be placed in the first box of each accession to be transferred.
b. Once the IC receives the approved SF 135 for transfer, they should call the NIH Transportation Branch at 301-496-1546 and provide the following information to the NIH Transportation Management Branch:

Name
Location of Boxes (Bldg./Rm)
CAN No. x-xxxxxxx
Accession Number: (443-xx-xxxx)
Volume: xx
Address of WNRC: Washington National Records Center

4205 Suitland Road
Suitland, MD 20746-8001

c. The WNRC will return a copy of the SF 135 to the NIH RMO, annotated with a location number, as a receipt after the records have been shelved. The NIH RMO will forward a copy to both the IC RMO and the originating office.

NOTE: Boxes may also be sent by mail, United Parcel Service (UPS), or other common carriers on pallets (portable wooden platforms without wheels). An example is shown in Appendix 3. Call the WNRC for questions concerning these and other options at 301-778-1550.

F. Withdrawal of Records from WNRC

Any office which has a need to retrieve records from WNRC may do so by using either a Reference Request Form (OF 11) or through an emergency request, as explained in Section F.2. Records may be retrieved by accession, by box(es) within an accession or by file folder(s) within a box.

1. **Preparing a Reference Request Form (OF 11):**

   a. **Obtaining Forms.** Forms are available from the NIH Records Officer on 301-496-4606, GSA, or on-line: http://forms.cit.nih.gov./adobe/misc/OF11.PDF . An example of the OF 11 is found in Appendix 4.
   b. **Completing the OF 11-Instructions apply to OF 11, dated 7/87:**

      (1) Use a separate form for each non-consecutive item requested. Complete Section I and Section III.

      (2) Under “Accession Number,” enter the numbers from 6.a., 6.b. and 6.c. of the SF 135 (443-05-0010).

      (3) Under “Agency Box Number,” enter the box or boxes desired. If more than one box is requested, the boxes can be ordered on the same OF 11, provided the boxes are in consecutive order, i.e., 1-3 of 15. If only folders will be retrieved, enter the box number that contains the folder.

      (4) Under “Records Center Location Number,” enter the location from the receipted copy of the SF 135.

      (5) Under “Description of Records,” briefly identify the record, include number and title. Only one record can be requested per one OF 11, unless the records are filed in consecutive order in the same accession and box.

      (6) Under “Remarks” , Request that the records be transferred to you via Federal Express and provide your Federal Express account number.

(7) Under “Nature of Service,” check Temporary Loan of Records if the records will be returned to WNRC after they are used.

If the records will be altered by substantial additions to or deletions from an accession, check “Permanent Withdrawal.” Records permanently withdrawn may later be returned to WNRC as a new accession.

If the records are close to the authorized disposal date, check “Permanent Withdrawal” and keep the records until the disposal date.

(8) In Section III, under “Name of Requester,” “Telephone No.,” and “Date,” the requester identified on the OF 11 should be the same as the organization identified at the top of 6f on the SF 135.

(9) Under “Name and Address of Agency,” the requester should provide NIH IC organization and address. Ordinarily it would be the agency contact official identified in item 3 of the SF 135.

c. **Sending the OF 11**. Fax the OF11 directly to the Washington National Records Center, 301-778-1561.

Records will be returned directly from WNRC to the requester.

2. **Emergency Withdrawal of Records from WNRC:**

a. Any office which has an emergency request to retrieve records from WNRC should complete and send/fax a copy of the OF 11 to the IC RMO and provide the following information:

(1) The Nature of the Emergency. The WNRC will only accept emergency requests pertaining to congressional requests, Privacy Act, Freedom of Information Act requests, and audits.

(2) Identification of Congressional Office. WNRC will send records directly to the Congressional office requesting them. However, the NIH offices must ensure that the specific disclosure to Congress is authorized for any records subject to the Privacy Act before directing WNRC to send the records to a Congressional office.

(3) Mail-outs. The requester will need to supply its IC Federal Express number for express mail services.

(4) Courier. Whether a courier service or an NIH employee, a notation to that effect must be made in the “REMARKS” section of Section 1 of the OF 11.

3. **Returning Loaned Records to WNRC:**

   Records which have been withdrawn from WNRC as a "Temporary Loan of Records" may be returned to WNRC when no longer needed. Records returned must have the original accession number, box number(s) and location clearly identified. A copy of the OF 11 should be included with the records with the instruction "RETURN TO WNRC" in the remarks section. If only a few folders were withdrawn, they may be mailed directly to WNRC through regular mail, as follows:

   Washington National Records Center
   Accessions and Disposals Branch
   4205 Suitland Road
   Suitland, MD 20746-8001

   If one or more boxes have been withdrawn, the records must be re-packed into the original boxes before returning to WNRC. Follow the same instruction provided under E.6., Shipment of Records to arrange for return of a box(es) to WNRC.

4. **Using Records at WNRC.** Records stored at WNRC may be viewed in their reference room. The WNRC requires a letter of authorization from the agency contact in item 3 of the SF 135, or higher authority. An OF 11 identifying the records which the user is authorized to consult, must be submitted through the IC RMO to the WNRC at least one day before the user goes to the reference room. IC RMOs may fax requests to the WNRC in order to expedite short turnaround times.

G. Destruction of Records at WNRC

At least two months before the disposal date given for an accession on an SF 135, the NIH RMO will send to the originating office, through the IC RMO, a memorandum stating that the records in the accession are scheduled for destruction. If the originating office has no objection to the destruction, the IC RMO returns the signed memorandum to the NIH RMO authorizing destruction.

NOTE: ICs will continue to be charged for storage of “frozen ”records stored at the Federal Records Center (FRC) that have exceeded their authorized disposal date. ICs that wish to extend the disposal date of inactive records stored at the FRC must provide the NIH RMO with the required information, as indicated on the disposal memorandum, i.e., name and address of IC official authorized to execute the reimbursable agreement with NARA.

The destruction of records on the authorized disposal date is required by law unless the originating office identifies a program or administrative need for the records, or unless the records are required for litigation. In either case, the reason for not destroying the records should be stated on the memorandum and returned to the NIH RMO at 6011 Executive Blvd., Rm. 601, MSC 7669.

H. Records Retention and Disposal

All records (e-mail and non-e-mail) pertaining to this chapter must be retained and disposed of under the authority of NIH Manual 1743, "Keeping and Destroying Records, Appendix 1, "NIH Records Control Schedule," Item 1700-B-1.

NIH e-mail messages (messages, including attachments, that are created on NIH computer systems or transmitted over NIH networks) that are evidence of the activities of the agency or have informational value are considered Federal records. These records must be maintained in accordance with current NIH Records Management guidelines. Contact your IC RMO for additional information.

All e-mail messages are considered Government property, and, if requested for a legitimate Government purpose, must be provided to the requester. Employees' supervisors, NIH staff conducting official reviews or investigations, and the Office of Inspector General may request access to or copies of the e-mail messages.

E-mail messages must also be provided to members of Congress or Congressional committees if requested and are subject to Freedom of Information Act requests. Since most e-mail systems have back-up files that are sometimes retained for significant periods of time, e-mail messages and attachments may be retrievable from a back-up file after they have been deleted from an individual's computer. The back-up files are subject to the same requests as the original messages.

I. Internal Controls

CONTROLS: This chapter describes how to transfer inactive records from NIH to the Washington National Records Center (WNRC) for storage, how to retrieve records stored at WNRC, and how to arrange for disposal of records stored at WNRC.

The NIH RMO, Division of Management Support, Office of Management Assessment is accountable to ensure that these processes are implemented and working, as applicable. The method used to maintain oversight and a system of internal controls ensuring effective implementation and compliance with the guidelines/instructions will be regular on-going feed-back from the WNRC on NIH compliance. Any policy compliance issue that can not be resolved with the IC, will be reported to the NIH Deputy Director for Management.

Appendix 1

Samples of SF 135, Records Transmittal and Receipt

Records not subject to the Privacy Act

Records subject to the Privacy Act

Appendix 2

Sample of Correct Box Identification and Assembly

Appendix 3

Sample of a Properly Loaded Skid and Pallet

Appendix 4

Sample of OF 11, Reference Request – Federal Records Centers