

FSH 6209.11 - RECORDS MANAGEMENT HANDBOOK WO AMENDMENT 6209.11-96-1
EFFECTIVE 7/19/96 CHAPTER 20 - RECORDS MAINTENANCE

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20.3 - Policy. 1. Use the Forest Service filing system as the basis for management and control of storage, retrieval, and disposal of agency records. Follow legal authorities in the filing system for retention and disposal of record material for each level of the organization. 2. Manage the filing system to ensure all official records are stored and retrieved efficiently and in a timely way in compliance with the procedures in this handbook. 3. Carefully follow instructions for filing to ensure adequate standardization of filing practices at each organizational level in the Forest Service. Use only the file designations in the file plan (sec. 41) for correspondence and filing. Field units cannot publish different file designations (or retention periods) in their supplements to the directive system. Changes are coordinated through the Washington Office (WO), Information Systems Staff.

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20.5 - Definitions. Active Records. Records necessary for conducting current business, which must be maintained in the office. Case Files. Folder containing material related to a specific action, transaction, event, person, place, project, or other subject. Examples of typical Forest Service case files include title files, contracts, timber sales, and employment actions. Also called project files. Central Files. Files of several offices or organizational units physically and/or functionally centralized or supervised in one location. Document. Recorded information, regardless of medium or characteristics. File Code. Numbers used in the file designation (for example, 6230). File Designation. Classification consisting of a number (code) and subject name (title) used to classify record material (for example, 6230 Records Maintenance and Disposition). Inactive Records. Records no longer required to conduct current business, which can be placed in an archives or records center or destroyed. Nonrecord Material. Material outside the definition for records, which is kept only for convenience or reference. Official Files. Accumulation of official records documenting an action or providing valuable information. Official files include the originals of incoming correspondence and the signed or initialed copies of outgoing and interoffice correspondence; the original and action copies of reports; completed forms; maps; photographs; and other documents. Personal Papers a. Papers accumulated by an official before assuming office. b. Materials pertaining solely to an individual's private affairs, such as outside business pursuits or private political associations. c. Diaries, journals, or other personal notes which are not prepared for transacting Government business. Record Copy. Official copy or record (normally white or yellow copy), complete with enclosures or related papers. Also known as the file copy. Record Material. Official Agency materials and documents made or received by the Forest Service in conducting public business, including books, papers, maps, photographs, machine-readable material, computerized data, and other documentary material regardless of medium. Subject Files. Files arranged by subject and containing mostly general correspondence, completed forms, reports, and other documents related to a particular program activity. Also called correspondence files or general files.

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25 - SEPARATING NONRECORD FROM RECORD MATERIAL. Do not combine nonrecord material in file folders with record material. See definitions in section 20.5, paragraphs 8 and 11. If filing is necessary, place the material in separate, temporary, or transitory folders separate from official files, and, in general, dispose of them on a regular basis. 25.1 - Examples of Nonrecord Material. Some examples of nonrecord material are: 1. Information copies of correspondence and other papers not requiring administrative action. 2. Reading file copies of correspondence (normally, pink copies). 3. Tickler copies of correspondence. 4. Duplicates of documents or printed materials maintained in the official file. 5. Superseded manuals and directives outside the office responsible for retention. 6. Documents of Agency activities, such as employee welfare organizations and charitable fund drives. 7. Routing slips and transmittal sheets. 8. Working papers not needed to document project activity. 9. Drafts of reports and correspondence. 10. Blank forms. 11. Transcribed stenographic materials. 12. Materials received from an originating office or activity already required to maintain record copies. 13. Catalogs, trade journals, and other publications or papers from Government agencies, commercial firms, or private institutions not requiring action and not part of a case for which action is taken. 14. Library and museum material, extra copies of documents, and stocks of publications made or acquired for reference or exhibition purposes. 15. Correspondence and other records of short-term value. 16. Reproduction materials, such as stencils, hectograph masters, and offset plates. 17. Electronic messages of short-term interest with no documentary or evidential value which do not require administrative action. This includes messages concerning agency activities, informal messages from one employee to another, default messages, and so forth. 25.2 - Nonrecord Material Which May Acquire Record Status. Materials normally considered nonrecord (sec. 25.1) may acquire record status because they clarify a matter being documented. This includes electronic messages that have documentary or evidential value or require administrative action. Retention periods apply to electronic messages if placed in the official files (electronic or paper). Nonrecord material that acquires record status may be subject to the Freedom of Information Act or Privacy Act (FSM 6270 and FSH 6209.13) if placed in the official files (electronic or paper). 25.21 - Information Copies Which May Have Record Status. Copies circulated to other offices or Agency levels for information purposes may acquire record status when they contribute significantly to a staff in carrying out program activities or office operations. File such information copies in the official files and apply the retention period.

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32.1 - File Plan and Disposal of Records. The file plan is the sole authority for the preservation and disposal of records in the Forest Service. It provides officials with continuous authority to retire, transfer, or dispose of records according to retention periods, and enables users to conduct business while reducing the volume of files. The file plan covers both general administrative records common to all offices as well as program records of interest to certain offices. 32.11 - General Records Schedule (GRS). The GRS is a retention and disposition schedule issued by NARA covering records common to all Federal agencies. Do not use the GRS for Forest Service records. Follow the file plan and retention periods in section 41, which includes any GRS retention periods that apply to the Forest Service. 32.12 - Records Without Approved Retention Periods (Unscheduled). Obtain prior approval from NARA through the WO, IS&T, before disposing of records without approved retention periods. Disposal without NARA approval is a Federal offense (44 U.S.C.).

