

**Department of Transportation**  
**Office of the Secretary**  
**Washington, D.C.**

**ORDER**

DOT 1324.2

7-15-75

**SUBJECT:** DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION RECORDS RETENTION AND  
DISPOSITION PROGRAM

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1. PURPOSE. This order establishes a Records Retention and Disposition Program for the Department of Transportation (DOT), sets forth records disposition policies and procedures, and establishes authorities and responsibilities for the disposition and preservation of all DOT records. The Program is in accordance with statutory and regulatory requirements, and assigns responsibility for the proper administration of the Program.
2. CANCELLATION. DOT 1320.8, DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION RECORDS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM, of 7-5-68.
3. AUTHORITY. The provisions of the following laws, regulations and issuances are mandatory and all DOT personnel shall comply with them:
  - a. Title 44 U.S.C., "Public Printing and Documents," 82 Stat., of 10-22-68, as amended.
  - b. Federal Property Management Regulations (FPMR) (41 C.F.R., Part 101-11.4, Disposition of Federal Records).
  - c. DOT 1210.5, DOT Public Affairs Management Manual, of 2-6-74.
  - d. DOT 1640.1, Control and Protection of "For Official Use Only" Information, of 12-27-71.
  - e. DOT 1640.4, Classification, Declassification, and Control of National Security Information, of 12-12-72.
4. DEFINITIONS.
  - a. Records - Title 44 U.S.C. defines the term "records" as applied to the disposition of records, to include all books, papers, maps, photographs, or other documentary materials, regardless of physical form or characteristics, made or received by any agency of the United States Government under Federal Law or in connection with the transaction of public business, and preserved or appropriate for preservation by that Agency or its legitimate successor, as

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evidence of its organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations, or other activities of the Government, or because of the informational value of the data contained therein.

- b. Noncurrent Records - These are files which have been searched or referred to less than one time per file drawer per month.
- c. Nonrecord - Papers having no administrative, fiscal, legal, or historical value are considered nonrecord material. The following are examples of nonrecord material:
  - (1) Extra copies or documents reserved only for convenience or reference. This group includes "reading file" copies, if their use is temporary.
  - (2) Carbon or "hot" copies of informational memoranda and incoming transmittal letters which do not affect or aid in determining the action to be taken on the documents transmitted.
  - (3) Preliminary drafts or worksheets that do not represent significant steps in the preparation of other documents.
  - (4) Stocks of blank forms, publications and processed documents.
  - (5) Surplus copies of mimeographed, multilithed, dittoed, printed or processed circulars, memoranda or forms.
  - (6) Shorthand and other notes, tapes and dictation records that have been transcribed.
  - (7) Routine requests for publications and acknowledgements.
  - (8) Library and museum material made or acquired and preserved solely for reference or exhibition purposes.
  - (9) Memoranda or other papers that do not serve as the basis of official actions; e.g., Red Cross or Community Chest appeals or notices of activities of associations or unions.
- d. Disposition - The term "disposition" pertains to methods of effecting a change of custody or the elimination of records and includes the disposal, transfer or retirement of Department of Transportation records.
- e. Disposal - Disposal means the destruction, sale or salvage, or donation for preservation and use of records which have outlived their usefulness, by methods as outlined in the Federal Property Management Regulations (FPMR), Part 101-11.408, Methods of Disposal.

- f. Files Cut Off - To discontinue placing papers in an existing file and to establish a new file.
- g. General Services Administration (GSA) General Records Schedules - Those schedules developed by GSA to cover retention and disposition of records common to several or all Government agencies.
- h. DOT Records Management Program Officer (RMPO) - That person designated to establish and oversee policy for the DOT Records Management Program.
- i. Records Management Officer (RMO) - That person designated to act for the Office of the Secretary or the head of an operating administration, in applying standards, procedures and techniques designed to improve the management of records, promote the maintenance and security of records deemed appropriate for preservation and facilitate the segregation and disposal of records no longer of value.
- j. Records Liaison Officer (RLO) - That person in a unit of the Office of the Secretary or an operating administration who has control over files management personnel within his particular jurisdiction. He is the unit, branch, or division coordinator who assists the RMO in the records disposition function.
- k. Operating Official - That person on the operational or functional level who is directly concerned with files operations and maintenance.
- l. Records Control Schedules - General lists of all records which are to be retained as well as those that are to be disposed of, together with the disposal period applicable to each item. These schedules are compiled by each Secretarial office and operating administration and approved by NARS and GAO (when required). After approval by NARS, the schedules become a mandatory document for retention and disposition of all records within that organizational element.
- m. Federal Records Centers - Section 2907, Title 44 U.S.C. authorizes the Administrator of General Services to establish, maintain and operate records centers for the storage, processing and servicing of records for Federal agencies. Such centers are known as Federal Records Centers. In addition, a National Personnel Records Center is maintained for designated records of the Department of Defense and the U.S. Civil Service Commission and for other designated records pertaining to former Federal civilian employees. Complete information may be found in GSA Handbook "Federal Records Centers," dated June 1967, FSN 7610-298-6904. (Locations of Federal Records Centers are listed in the Federal Property Management Regulations.)

## 5. RETENTION AND DISPOSITION POLICIES.

- a. It shall be the policy of the Department of Transportation to promote a continuing program of prompt and orderly reduction in the quantity of records maintained internally.
- b. Records created or received by the Department of Transportation under Federal Law or in connection with operational and administrative activities of DOT, are the property of the United States Government. As such, they shall not be removed, destroyed or otherwise disposed of, except by the procedures and instructions prescribed in this order.
- c. To safeguard records of the DOT against removal or loss, all officials or employees having custody of any records shall, upon change of position or termination of service, turn over all such records to their supervisor.
- d. No records created or accumulated by OST or any administration of DOT will be transferred to OST or another administration within DOT, or other agency of the Federal Government, or to any public or private corporation, institution, or individual, except as provided by the procedures and instructions contained in this Order; nor will any formal negotiations for such transfers be conducted, except through the DOT Records Management Program Officer (RMPO).
- e. Noncurrent records shall be withdrawn from active files at regular intervals and systematically retired, transferred to other locations or disposed of in accordance with disposition instructions. To effect economies in the use of office space and filing equipment, only the minimum volumes needed in the daily operations of an office to support current business shall be retained in the active office space.
- f. Additional instructions regarding the protection, destruction, and transfer or dissemination of classified records and of sensitive unclassified records are set forth in DOT 1640.4, Classification, Declassification, and Control of National Security Information, of 12-12-72, and DOT 1640.1, Control and Protection of "For Official Use Only Information," of 12-27-71, respectively.

## 6. DEPARTMENT-WIDE RESPONSIBILITIES.

- a. The OST Director of Management Systems has primary staff responsibility for the Department of Transportation Records Management Program. Under his general direction:

- (1) The Departmental Records Management Program Officer (RMPO) (TAD-232) shall be responsible for planning and directing a continuing and effective Records Disposition Management Program within the DOT by:
  - (a) Developing basic policies governing records evaluation and disposition.
  - (b) Maintaining liaison with the National Archives and Records Service (NARS), GSA.
  - (c) Providing advice to the OST and each operating administration's Records Management Officer.
  - (d) Evaluating the effectiveness of the Departmental system.

7. OST OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATIONS' AND OPERATING ADMINISTRATIONS' RESPONSIBILITIES.

- a. The Director of Administrative Operations and the Heads of all Operating Administrations shall:
  - (1) Designate and appoint in writing a Records Management Officer. The Records Management Officer (RMO) shall be responsible for:
    - (a) Developing plans and procedures for the proper organization, efficient maintenance and timely disposal of records throughout the OST or operating administration as the case may be.
    - (b) Arranging for the transfer to, and the retrieval of information or records from the Federal Records Centers and the National Archives and Records Service.
    - (c) Serving as sources of information and technical assistance within the OST or his operating administration as the case may be for the implementation of the DOT Records Disposition Program.
    - (d) Determining the need for and making provisions for the training of personnel in the retention and disposition of records.
    - (f) Controlling all equipment and supplies used for records keeping.

- (g) Developing procedures for and technically supervising the prompt retirement and disposal of records in accordance with current disposition authorities and instructions, and furnishing required reports to the DOT RMPO.
  - (2) Be responsible for assuring that records retention and disposition activities are carried out in an economical and efficient manner within their organizations.
  - (3) Institute and implement records retention and disposition activities to carry out the provisions of DOT policy as outlined in this Order.
- b. The head of each office, or the equivalent, within each Secretarial office and operating administration shall designate a Records Liaison Officer (RLO) for his unit in writing to the appropriate RMO. The name, title, organization and location shall be forwarded to the RMO of OST or his operating administration, as the case may be.
- c. RLO's, subject to supervision of heads of their respective offices but under the staff and technical direction of the Records Management Officer, shall specifically be responsible for, but not limited to:
- (1) The implementation of such plans and activities in the records retention and disposition area as the OST or operating administration RMO, as the case may be, may require.
  - (2) The preparation and submission of revisions of the Records Control Schedules to his RMO, whenever necessary.
  - (3) The preparation of records for transfer to a records storage area.
  - (4) The preparation and submission of such records data and reports as may be required by the RMO to provide program leadership and evaluation.
- d. Operating officials within their respective areas shall acquaint themselves with pertinent laws, regulations, and directives cited herein and carry out an effective records management program utilizing their RLO's or the RMO, whichever is appropriate, to the end that unnecessary and unauthorized records shall not be maintained within their offices and that when they have been authorized to retain certain records in their offices, they shall be maintained in the prescribed manner.

8. DEVELOPMENT OF RECORDS CONTROL SCHEDULES.

- a. The Office of Administrative Operations and each operating administration shall compile and maintain on a current basis Records Control Schedules for all major groups of records in its custody having importance in terms of content, bulk, or space and equipment occupied. Records Control Schedules shall:
  - (1) Be developed on Standard Form 115, "Request for Records Disposition Authority," and Standard Form 115a, "Continuation Sheet". Preparation instructions appear on the reverse side of the form.
  - (2) Clearly identify and describe the series of records covered, and shall contain instructions that, when approved, can be readily applied.
  - (3) Take into account the actual filing arrangements in existence, so that disposition of records can be physically accomplished in the largest blocks possible.
- b. Nonrecord materials, such as described under DEFINITIONS (par 4c) shall not be incorporated in official files. To the maximum extent possible, material not required for record purposes shall be disposed of; it should not be sent to file.
- c. The provisions of Records Control Schedules are mandatory. Records shall be reviewed at least once a year, and action taken to dispose of those eligible for disposal in accordance with approved schedules. Changes necessary to maintain currency of Records Control Schedules shall also be effected at this time.
- d. Special Disposal Lists shall be compiled for the disposal or retirement of records which have accumulated as the result of special studies, terminated projects, noncurrent files, etc. These lists shall be generated using the SF 115 as a one time request authorizing disposition of the records in question. A statement shall be noted on the SF 115 that the records are not on any existing Records Control Schedules and that the SF 115 is a one time request.

9. APPROVAL OF RECORDS CONTROL SCHEDULES.

- a. All SF 115s "Request for Records Disposition Authority," shall be reviewed, approved and signed by the OST or operating administrations' RMO, as the case may be. The SF 115s shall be rejected by the RMOs

if the forms fail to meet prescribed standards. If rejected, they shall be returned to the responsible Records Liaison Officer with notations as to reasons for rejection. If approved by the RMO, a copy of the SF 115 shall be forwarded to the DOT RMPO for his information and the remaining SF 115s shall be forwarded to NARS for approval. One copy of the approved SF 115 shall be returned to the RLO after receipt by NARS. This copy shall constitute the disposal authority which is mandatory.

b. Fiscal Records.

- (1) Lists or schedules (SF 115s) covering the disposition of fiscal records shall be approved by the organizational element RMO. Upon approval, the RMO will forward one copy to the DOT RMPO for his information and the remaining SF 115s shall be forwarded to the Chief, Records Management and Services Branch, U.S. General Accounting Office, Washington, D.C. 20548. This approval by GAO must be obtained prior to or concurrent with approval by NARS.
- (2) Secretarial offices and operating administrations are not required to prepare additional disposal schedules covering the records itemized in the GSA General Records Schedules after obtaining the approval of the GAO to apply the standards established therein. Once obtained, the authority to apply such standards remains in effect and the disposal of records under the GSA schedules may be made on a continuing basis.
- (3) If changes in the GSA schedules are desired, approval must be obtained from GAO and NARS. (See 10 below.)

10. APPLICATION AND REVISION OF RECORDS CONTROL SCHEDULES.

- a. Each operating official shall be responsible for the application of the appropriate provisions of the Records Control Schedules to all files under his supervision.
- b. Each operating official shall also be responsible for initiating revisions of the Records Control Schedules as often as necessary to maintain the accuracy of the descriptions of files and the validity of the retention period appearing in the Records Control Schedules.
- c. Operating officials shall submit SF 115s covering all such revisions to their RMOs in the same manner as they submit original Records Control Schedules. RMOs will perform the same function concerning revisions to SF 115s as they do with regard to original SF 115s.

- d. The OST and the operating administrations' RMO shall submit a copy of the SF 115s covering all such revisions to the DOT RMPO for his information.
11. GENERAL RECORDS SCHEDULES. Where appropriate or applicable, Records Management Officers shall utilize the GSA Records Schedules as established by the Administrator of General Services. These schedules are available at the Office of Federal Records Centers, National Archives and Records Service, GSA. GSA General Records Schedules are mandatory in their provisions for all components of DOT (if specific Records Control Schedules have not been developed). The retention periods as indicated on the GSA general schedules may be revised as outlined in paragraph 10. Where files created by DOT are covered by the schedules, operating administrations are not required to prepare additional disposal schedules for these files but they may do so if they wish. Records Control Schedules need only account for those items not listed in current GSA Schedules.
  12. DISPOSITION PROCEDURES.
    - a. All Department of Transportation RMOs and RLOs are required to follow regulations issued by GSA governing the methods for use in disposing of records. Only the methods set forth in the Federal Property Management Regulations and this Order shall be used.
    - b. Transfer of records to GSA Federal Records Center shall be accompanied by Standard Form 135, "Records Transmittal and Receipt" and Standard Form 135A, "Continuation Sheet," in quadruplicate. Procedures for the transfers are outlined in FPMR 101-11.410, "Transfer of Records to Federal Records Centers."
    - c. Disposal clearances - No records of a Federal agency shall be disposed of by NARS except with the concurrence of the agency concerned. Checking "yes" in Block 8 of the SF 135 automatically grants that concurrence authorizing NARS to dispose of the records without further clearance of the agency.
    - d. Cut-off Procedures - Files shall be cut-off or terminated at regular intervals, usually at the end of the calendar or fiscal year, and a new file established at the beginning of the following year. This procedure permits the disposal and retirement of records in blocks in an orderly and systematic basis. Cut-off and disposition procedures are established for each file category. Active project files which have not been completed will be brought forward at the beginning of the year.

- e. Storage of Records in Washington, D.C., Hqtrs Bldgs. Staging Areas.
- (1) The Chief, Facilities Management Branch, TAD-443, under the direction of the Chief, Support Services Division, OST, TAD-44, is designated as the coordinator of DOT records temporarily stored in the holding areas prior to transfer to the Washington National Records Center. He will be responsible for such storage and turnover of those records to NARS at points of pickup. Pickup of records shall be at the loading dock.
    - (a) All DOT components located within these buildings may temporarily store records (except classified records whose integrity must be maintained in the OST or operating administration until turned over to NARS) to be transferred to NARS in the staging area. When such storage is required, records may be turned over at any time.
    - (b) Prior to turning over the records, all material will be packed and labelled for retrieval purposes in appropriate Federal Records Center boxes.
    - (c) All copies of SF 135s necessary for the transfer of the records must be completed, signed and accompany the records. A receipted copy will be returned to the appropriate RMO. The Facilities Management Branch will arrange for transfer of stored records to the Federal Records Center.
    - (d) Each organizational element RMO shall maintain a log of all record holdings disposed of or retired to a Federal Records Center or the National Archives and Records Service. This log shall serve as the master file for the operating administration or OST.
    - (e) The Facilities Management Branch shall be contacted when records are ready for transfer to the holding area. Movement of records to storage shall be accomplished by the element transferring the records.
    - (f) A member of the Facilities Management Branch will provide access to the holding area.
    - (g) Once the records are released to the Support Services Division, control of the records will be assured by the division. Records will not be accepted unless all requirements stated above are complied with.

13. REQUESTS FOR RECORDS OR INFORMATION FROM FEDERAL RECORDS CENTERS.

- a. Records transferred to any Federal Records Center may be recalled for use or Federal Records Center personnel may be requested to search records for information. Optional Form No. 11, "Reference Request - Federal Records Centers" shall be used for this purpose. Any operating unit desiring records or information from a Records Center shall submit its requests to the appropriate RMO who shall procure the material or information for them. When operating units have finished with records loaned from a Center, they shall return the material to the appropriate RMO. If an information search is requested, enough information must be supplied to the Center to enable NARS personnel to find the particular box in which the files are stored.
- b. Location numbers of the requested records must be included in the request unless alternative requesting procedures for certain active series of records are in effect or are negotiated in advance for future transfers.
- c. Official Personnel folders stored at the National Personnel Records Center (Civilian Personnel records), St. Louis, Missouri, shall be requested by Standard Form 127, "Request for Official Personnel Folder (separated employee)."
- d. Requests for records of separated military personnel, including U.S. Coast Guard stored at the National Personnel Records Center (Military Personnel records), St. Louis, Missouri, shall be requested by Standard Form 180, "Request Pertaining to Military Records."
- e. The RMO shall assure that when requested material is sensitive, it is afforded appropriate protection as specified in DOT 1640.1 and DOT 1640.4, including the controlling of any classified materials through the classified control point servicing the request.

14. REPORTING.

- a. The Records Management Officer of the OST and each operating administration shall:
  - (1) Submit to the DOT RMPO a completed SF 136, "Annual Summary of Records Holdings," within 20 days after the close of each fiscal year.

- (2) Submit four (4) copies to the DOT RMPO of each directive, order, or other issuance (including the text of schedules as issued) affecting his organization's records disposition program upon promulgation of the issuance. Two copies shall be forwarded to NARS by the DOT RMPO.
- (3) Submit one copy to the DOT RMPO of the issuance designating the OST and operating administration RMO and a copy of any issuance changing the RMO. This shall include the name, location, mail stop, and telephone number of the RMO, plus an alternate to be contacted during the RMO's absence.
- (4) Submit any additional information that the DOT RMPO may require other than that mentioned above.

15. SUGGESTIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS. A continuing effort shall be made at all levels to devise ways and means for further improvement of any of the responsibilities, policies, procedures and concepts of the program as set forth in this directive. Suggestions or recommendations regarding such matters are encouraged and should be forwarded to the DOT RMPO.

16. FORMS AVAILABILITY. All forms required for retention and disposition of records are available in the GSA retail store or warehouse.

FOR THE SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION:



William S. Heffelfinger  
Assistant Secretary  
Administration