

Records and Information

PART 261—RECORDS AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

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AUTHORITY: 39 U.S.C. 401.

§ 261.1 Purpose and scope.

As a result of the Postal Reorganization Act, 39 U.S.C. 410, the U.S. Postal Service is no longer subject to the provisions of the Federal Records Act of 1950, or any of its supporting regulations which provide for the conduct of records management in Federal agencies. The objective of Parts 261 through 268 is to provide the basis for a Postal Service-wide records and information management program affecting all organizational components having the custody of any form of information and records.

[40 FR 45721, Oct. 2, 1975; 40 FR 48511, Oct. 16, 1975]

§ 261.2 Authority.

(a) 39 U.S.C. 401(5) states that the Postal Service has the power to acquire property it deems necessary or convenient in the transaction of its business and to hold, maintain, sell, lease or otherwise dispose of such property.

(b) 39 CFR 224.1(f) assigns to the Postal Service Records Office, located under Finance responsibility for the retention security and privacy of Postal Service records and the power to authorize the disclosure of such records and to order their disposal by destruction or transfer. Included is the authority to issue records management policy and to delegate or take appropriate action if that policy is not adhered to or if questions of interpretation of procedure arise.

[40 FR 45721, Oct. 2, 1975, as amended at 44 FR 51223, Aug. 31, 1979; 60 FR 57344, Nov. 15, 1995]

§ 261.3 Policy.

It is the policy of the Postal Service:

(a) To, as appropriate, create, preserve, protect and disclose records which contain adequate and proper

documentation of the organization, functions, policies, decisions, operations, procedures, activities and transactions of the Postal Service,

(b) To reduce to an absolute minimum the records holdings of the Postal Service by strict adherence to established records retention schedules.

[40 FR 45721, Oct. 2, 1975, as amended at 44 FR 51223, Aug. 31, 1979]

§ 261.4 Responsibility.

(a) The manager, Administration and FOIA, under the Chief Financial Officer and Senior Vice President, administers the Postal Service release of information and privacy of information programs with the assistance of FOIA coordinators in the finance function of area and district offices.

(b) The manager, Corporate Accounting, under the Vice President, Finance, Controller, administers the Postal Service records maintenance and disposition program.

(c) Postal Service managers are responsible for administering records and information management policies and for complying with all handbooks, directives, and instructions in support of this policy.

[64 FR 41290, July 30, 1999]

PART 262—RECORDS AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT DEFINITIONS

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AUTHORITY: 5 U.S.C. 552, 552a; 39 U.S.C. 401.

SOURCE: 49 FR 30693, Aug. 1, 1984, unless otherwise noted.

§ 262.1 Purpose and scope.

This part contains the official definition of those basic records and information management terms that are frequently used throughout Postal Service regulations and directives.

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§ 262.2 Officials.

(a) *Records Custodian.* The postmaster or other head of a facility such as an area vice president, district manager, or head of a postal installation or department who maintains Postal Service records. Vice presidents are the custodians of records maintained at Headquarters. Senior medical personnel are the custodians of restricted medical records maintained within postal facilities.

(b) *Manager, Administration and FOIA.* The official responsible for the issuance of policy on the protection of privacy and the release of Postal Service records with the power to authorize the disclosure of such records and to delegate or take appropriate action if that policy is not adhered to or if questions of interpretation or procedure arise.

(c) *Information System Executive.* The Postal Service official who prescribes the existence of and the policies for an information system; usually this is a Vice President.

(d) *Manager, Corporate Accounting.* The official responsible for the issuance of policy on the maintenance and disposition of Postal Service records and information, and to delegate or take appropriate action if such policy is not adhered to or if questions of interpretation or procedure arise.

[49 FR 30693, Aug. 1, 1984, as amended at 51 FR 26385, July 23, 1986; 60 FR 57344, Nov. 15, 1995; 63 FR 6481, Feb. 9, 1998; 64 FR 41290, July 30, 1999]

§ 262.3 Information.

Data combined with the knowledge of its context and having the potential to serve a Postal Service use.

(a) *Sensitive information.* Information which has been identified by the USPS as *restricted* or *critical*.

(1) *Critical information.* Information that must be available in order that the Postal Service effectively perform its mission and meet legally assigned responsibilities; and for which special precautions are taken to ensure its accuracy, relevance, timeliness and completeness. This information, if lost, would cause significant financial loss, inconvenience or delay in performance of the USPS mission.

(2) *Restricted information.* Information that has limitations placed upon both its access within the Postal Service and disclosure outside the Postal Service consistent with the Privacy and Freedom of Information Acts.

(i) *Restricted mandatory.* Information that has limitations upon its internal access and that may be disclosed *only* in accordance with an Executive Order, public law, or other Federal statute and their supporting postal regulations.

(ii) *Restricted discretionary.* Information that has limitations upon its internal access and that *may* be withheld from external disclosure solely in accordance with postal regulations, consistent with the Freedom of Information Act.

(b) *Classified information (National Security).* Information about the national defense and foreign relations of the United States that has been determined under Executive Order 12356 to require protection against unauthorized disclosure and has been so designated.

§ 262.4 Records.

Recorded information, regardless of media, format, or physical characteristics, including electronic data, developed or received by the Postal Service in connection with the transaction of its business and retained in its custody; for machine-readable records, a collection of logically related data treated as a unit.

(a) *Permanent record.* A record determined by the office of Corporate Accounting or the National Archives and Records Administration as having sufficient historical or other value to warrant continued preservation. (All other records are considered temporary and must be scheduled for disposal.)

(b) *Corporate records.* Those records series that are designated by the office of Corporate Accounting as containing information of legal, audit, obligatory or archival value about events and transactions of interest to the entire corporate body of the Postal Service. Corporate records are distinguished from operational records, which have value only in their day-to-day use, and from precedential files, which have value only as examples.

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(c) *Active record.* A record that contains information used for conducting current business.

(d) *Inactive record.* A record that contains information which is not used for conducting current business, but for which the retention period has not yet expired.

(e) *Vital records.* Certain records which must be available in the event of a national emergency in order to ensure the continuity of Postal Service operations and the preservation of the rights and interests of the Postal Service, its employees, contractors and customers. There are two types of vital records: Emergency Operating Records and Rights and Interests Records.

(1) *Emergency operating records.* Certain vital records necessary to support essential functions of the Postal Service during and immediately following a national emergency.

(2) *Rights and interest records.* Certain vital records maintained to ensure the preservation of the rights and interests of the Postal Service, its employees, contractors and customers.

[49 FR 30693, Aug. 1, 1984, as amended at 51 FR 26385, July 23, 1986; 60 FR 57344, Nov. 15, 1995; 63 FR 6481, Feb. 9, 1998; 64 FR 41290, July 30, 1999]

§ 262.5 Systems (Privacy).

(a) *Privacy Act system of records.* A Postal Service system containing information about individuals, including mailing lists, from which information is retrieved by the name of an individual or by some identifying number or symbol assigned to the individual, such as a Social Security Account Number.

(b) *Individual (record subject).* A living person. Does not include sole proprietorships, partnerships or corporations. A business firm identified by the name of one or more persons is not an individual.

(c) *Computer matching program.* A “matching program,” as defined in the Privacy Act, 5 U.S.C. 552a(a)(8), is subject to the matching provisions of the Act, published guidance of the Office of Management and Budget, and these regulations. The term “matching program” includes any computerized comparison of:

(1) A Postal Service automated system of records with an automated system of records of another Federal agency, or with non-Federal records, for the purpose of:

(i) Establishing or verifying the eligibility of, or continuing compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements by, applicants for, recipients or beneficiaries of, participants in, or providers of services with respect to, cash or in-kind assistance or payments under Federal benefit programs, or

(ii) Recouping payments or delinquent debts under such Federal benefit programs;

(2) A Postal Service automated personnel or payroll system of records with another automated personnel or payroll system of records of the Postal Service or other Federal Agency or with non-Federal records.

(d) *Other computer matching activities.* (1) The following kinds of computer matches are specifically excluded from the term “matching program”:

(i) Statistical matches whose purpose is solely to produce aggregate data stripped of personal identifiers.

(ii) Statistical matches whose purpose is in support of any research or statistical project.

(iii) Law enforcement investigative matches whose purpose is to gather evidence against a named person or persons in an existing investigation.

(iv) Tax administration matches.

(v) Routine administrative matches using Federal personnel records, provided that the purpose is not to take any adverse action against an individual.

(vi) Internal matches using only records from Postal Service systems of records, provided that the purpose is not to take any adverse action against any individual.

(vii) Matches performed for security clearance background checks or for foreign counterintelligence.

(2) Although these and other matching activities that fall outside the definition of “matching program” are not subject to the matching provisions of the Privacy Act or OMB guidance, other provisions of the Act and of these regulations may be applicable. No matching program or other matching activity may be conducted without the

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prior approval of the office of Administration and FOIA.

[49 FR 30693, Aug. 1, 1984, as amended at 59 FR 37160, July 21, 1994; 60 FR 57344, Nov. 15, 1995; 64 FR 41290, July 30, 1999]

§ 262.6 Retention and disposal.

(a) *Records control schedule.* A directive describing records series that are maintained by components of the Postal Service; it provides maintenance, retention, transfer, and disposal instructions for each series listed, and serves as the authority for Postal officials to implement such instructions.

(b) *Disposal (records).* The permanent removal of records or information from Postal Service custody; included are:

- (1) Transfer to the National Archives.
- (2) Donation to the Smithsonian Institution, local museums or historical societies.
- (3) Sale as waste material.
- (4) Discarding.
- (5) Physical destruction.

(c) *Retention period.* The authorized length of time that a records series must be kept before its disposal, usually stated in terms of months or years, but sometimes expressed as contingent upon the occurrence of an event; usually the retention period refers to the period of time between the creation of a series and its authorized disposal date; however, in some cases it refers to the length of time between the cutoff point and the disposal date.

§ 262.7 Non-records.

(a) *Non-record material.* Includes blank forms and surplus publications, handbooks, circulars, bulletins, announcements, and other directives as well as any material not directly associated with the transaction of Postal Service business.

(b) *Personal papers.* Those materials created or received during an individual's period of employment with the Postal Service which are of a purely private or nonofficial character, or which were neither created nor received in connection with Postal Service business.

PART 263—RECORDS RETENTION AND DISPOSITION

Sec.

263.1 Purpose and scope.

263.2 Policy.

263.3 Responsibility.

263.4 Records disposal.

263.5 Inquiries.

AUTHORITY: 39 U.S.C. 401.

SOURCE: 40 FR 45722, Oct. 2, 1975, unless otherwise noted.

§ 263.1 Purpose and scope.

This part contains the policy and general regulations pertaining to the retention and disposition of records and information throughout all organizational levels and components.

§ 263.2 Policy.

It is the policy of the U.S. Postal Service to establish and maintain schedules specifying the retention periods required for all official and duplicate record copies. Furthermore, it is the policy that all duplicate record copies and non-record material will be disposed of as soon as they have served their purpose.

§ 263.3 Responsibility.

(a) *Records Office.* The office of Corporate Accounting has the responsibility for providing for the establishment of retention schedules and has the authority to approve them. Furthermore, that office has the authority to dispose of Postal Service records by transfer or destruction.

(b) *Custodians.* Custodians are responsible for the retention and prompt disposal of records in their custody and for delegating in writing, persons to perform these duties.

[40 FR 45722, Oct. 2, 1975, as amended at 60 FR 57344, Nov. 15, 1995; 64 FR 41290, July 30, 1999]

§ 263.4 Records disposal.

All disposals of records containing sensitive information, i.e. transfers to records storage centers, destruction, transfers external to the USPS, and