National Archives and Records Administration

§ 1236.22 What are appropriate record-keeping systems for electronic records?

(a) General. Agencies must use electronic or paper recordkeeping systems or a combination of those systems, depending on their business needs, for managing their records. Transitory e-mail may be managed as specified in §1236.22(c).

(b) Electronic recordkeeping. Recordkeeping functionality may be built into the electronic information system or records can be transferred to an electronic recordkeeping repository, such as a DoD–5015.2 STD-certified product. The following functionalities are necessary for electronic recordkeeping:

1. Declare records. Assign unique identifiers to records.

2. Capture records. Import records from other sources, manually enter records into the system, or link records to other systems.

3. Organize records. Associate with an approved records schedule and disposition instruction.

4. Maintain records security. Prevent the unauthorized access, modification, or deletion of declared records, and ensure that appropriate audit trails are in place to track use of the records.

5. Manage access and retrieval. Establish the appropriate rights for users to access the records and facilitate the search and retrieval of records.

6. Preserve records. Ensure that all records in the system are retrievable and usable for as long as needed to conduct agency business and to meet NARA-approved dispositions. Agencies must develop procedures to enable the migration of records and their associated metadata to new storage media or formats in order to avoid loss due to media decay or technology obsolescence.

7. Execute disposition. Identify and effect the transfer of permanent records to NARA based on approved records schedules. Identify and delete temporary records that are eligible for disposal. Apply records hold or freeze on disposition when required.

(c) Backup systems. System and file backup processes and media do not provide the appropriate recordkeeping functionalities and must not be used as the agency electronic recordkeeping system.

§ 1236.22 What are the additional requirements for managing electronic mail records?

(a) Agencies must issue instructions to staff on the following retention and management requirements for electronic mail records:

1. The names of sender and all addressee(s) and date the message was sent must be preserved for each electronic mail record in order for the context of the message to be understood. The agency may determine that other metadata is needed to meet agency business needs, e.g., receipt information.

2. Attachments to electronic mail messages that are an integral part of the record must be preserved as part of the electronic mail record or linked to the electronic mail record with other related records.

3. If the electronic mail system identifies users by codes or nicknames or identifies addressees only by the name of a distribution list, retain the intelligent or full names on directories or
§ 1236.24 What are the additional requirements for managing unstructured electronic records?

(a) Agencies that manage unstructured electronic records electronically must ensure that the records are filed in a recordkeeping system that meets the requirements in §1236.10, except that transitory e-mail may be managed in accordance with §1236.22(c).

(b) Agencies that maintain paper files as their recordkeeping systems must establish policies and issue instructions to staff to ensure that unstructured records are printed out for filing in a way that captures any pertinent hidden text (such as comment fields) or structural relationships (e.g., among worksheets in spreadsheets or other complex documents) required to meet agency business needs.

§ 1236.26 What actions must agencies take to maintain electronic information systems?

(a) Agencies must maintain inventories of electronic information systems and review the systems periodically for conformance to established agency procedures, standards, and policies as part of the periodic reviews required by 44 U.S.C. 3506. The review should determine if the records have been properly identified and described, and if the schedule descriptions and retention periods reflect the current informational content and use. If not, agencies must submit an SF 115, Request for Records Disposition Authority, to NARA.

(b) Agencies must maintain up-to-date documentation about electronic information systems that is adequate to:

either store them in a format and on a medium that conforms to the requirements concerning transfer at 36 CFR part 1235 or maintain the ability to convert the records to the required format and medium at the time transfer is scheduled.

(f) Agencies that maintain paper recordkeeping systems must print and file their electronic mail records with the related transmission and receipt data specified by the agency's electronic mail instructions.