

Departmental Records Management

Exit Procedures Quick Guide

Definitions

What are “Exit Procedures”?

Prior to terminating employment at USDA, employees must complete a set of clearance actions before departure.

How does this relate to records?

Employees cannot remove USDA records without proper approval. Only non-record materials or personal papers can be removed.

What is a record?

Recorded information, in any format, that is:

- created in the course of business
- received for action, or
- needed to document USDA activities.

What are non-record materials?

Informational materials that do not meet the definition of a record. Examples include but are not limited to extra copies of documents kept only for reference and stock publications.

What are personal papers?

Materials belonging to individuals that are not used to document USDA activities.

What about Senior Officials or Political Employees records?

Records of USDA senior officials or political appointees are especially important because they document Agency policy and important decisions. Many records of these individuals are considered “permanent” – i.e. subject to preservation by the National Archives and Records Administration.

For More Information

For assistance with records identification, permanent records, personal papers, records disposition schedules and additional information regarding records management, please contact the [Departmental Records Management Office](#).

[Alexis Graves](#), Director, Office of Information Affairs, 202-690-3318
[Beatriz Collazo](#), Departmental Records Officer, 202-923-5012

Introduction

Federal records may not be removed from Government custody, nor may they be destroyed except in accordance with approved USDA Records Schedules. The unlawful removal or destruction of Federal records is illegal and is punishable by law ([18 U.S.C. 2071](#)).

Records are the property of the Government and cannot be taken with you. There is a process for taking non-records or copies of records and you must obtain the proper permissions or approvals per [Directive \(DR\) 3090-001, Records Management Policy for Departing Employees, Contractors, Volunteers and Political Appointees](#).

Exit Procedures

Plan ahead! Departing employees must be sure to allow enough time to complete the exit procedure process before they leave the USDA.

Before leaving the USDA, the employee will work with the Agency Records Officer to:

- Identify all Federal records in the employee’s possession and ensure they are left with the USDA
- Identify all extra copies of documents to be maintained for personal reference or non-record materials that the employee plans to remove (AD-3001 – see information below)
- Ensure all personal papers have been separated and removed
- Return any records checked out from Federal Records Center storage
- Ensure all electronic records have been transferred from the “desktop” and hard drive to the shared drive in a file that can be accessed by authorized staff
- Provide exact location or link of all electronic records on AD-3001 and checklist to an authorized career employee
- Delete all transitory emails, personal emails, and personal documents from the computer

Things to Consider

- Do any records need to be returned to a central file, or returned/newly transferred to Federal Records Center storage?
- Are there any non-record materials that can be destroyed? Non-record materials with PII must be shredded.
- Who will be the new custodian for the materials that the departing employee leaves behind? Be sure the next custodian is able and authorized to access these inherited materials.
- Electronic Messaging - our policy is to not use personal email for official business except in an emergency. However, if you did conduct official business through your personal email, you must forward those emails to your official USDA email account.

Documentation to Complete Before Departure

- In accordance with [DR 3090-001](#), regardless of the type/duration of your appointment or employment, a records management exit interview, must be scheduled with your agency records officer.
- Departing employees named in an active litigation hold and/or FOIA request, those records, regardless of media must be preserved in their native format and must be identified in the required exit interview.
- During the exit interview, you will provide formal acknowledgement on USDA Form AD-3001, *Documentary Materials Removal/Non-Removal Certification and Non-Disclosure Agreement*, that you have followed the instructions within [DR 3090-001](#), and have not removed documentary materials upon separation. Submission of USDA Form AD-3001 is required of all departing USDA personnel.