

NARA Bulletin 2006-04

July 12, 2006

TO: Heads of Federal agencies

SUBJECT: Scheduling Electronic Copies of E-mail and Word Processing Records

EXPIRATION DATE: July 31, 2009 (per NARA Bulletin 2007-01)

1. What is the purpose of this bulletin? This bulletin directs agencies to use General Records Schedule (GRS) 20, Item 13 as disposition authority for electronic copies of records created using word processing applications that are not the copies maintained in a recordkeeping system, and GRS 20, Item 14 as disposition authority for electronic copies of e-mail records that are also not maintained in a recordkeeping system. This bulletin also announces a change in procedure for submitting an SF 115, Request for Records Disposition Authority (i.e., records schedule).

2. When you say recordkeeping system, does this mean an electronic recordkeeping system? No, the recordkeeping system can be for electronic, paper or microform records.

3. What are the procedures for submitting records schedules to the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) for new or revised series that contain e-mail or word processing records? Agencies should submit records schedules to NARA that provide only for the disposition of the word processing or e-mail copies that are saved and maintained in a recordkeeping system. The copies maintained in the recordkeeping system may be electronic, paper or microform.

4. What disposition authority do I use for the electronic copies of email and word processing records that are not maintained in the record keeping system? You may use GRS 20, items 13 and 14, for the disposal of electronic word processing and e-mail copies of records that reside on the "live" computer system, where the records themselves have been transferred to and are maintained in the recordkeeping system. It is no longer necessary to submit separate schedule items for these copies as temporary records.

5. Why is NARA making these changes? NARA is clarifying its guidance to agencies regarding the scheduling of copies of electronic documents created using word processing applications, and copies of e-mail records maintained on "live" e-mail systems. NARA's experience over the past eight years in processing schedules with these items indicates that the requirement that agencies include e-mail and word processing copies when

they schedule permanent series or submit schedules changing the retention period of previously scheduled temporary series has resulted in no adverse comment or revision to such schedules, but in at least some cases has delayed the approval of such schedules since notice must be published in the Federal Register. That is, if agencies are not required to schedule electronic copies of e-mail and word processing records as temporary records, Federal Register publication would not be needed for any remaining scheduled record series proposed for permanent retention. Removing the requirement for submitting separate schedule items for electronic copies of e-mail and word processing files will reduce the scheduling burden for agencies. It will also accelerate the approval process while still providing for adequate and proper documentation of government activities.

6. Whom do I contact for additional information?

1. NARA's Life Cycle Management Division provides assistance and advice to agency records officers of agencies headquartered in the Washington, DC, area and the Records Management staff in NARA's regional offices provides assistance and advice to agency records officers of agencies headquartered in the field. Your agency's records officer may contact the NARA appraiser or records analyst with whom your agency normally works for support in carrying out this bulletin. A list of the appraisal and scheduling work group and regional contacts is posted on the NARA web site at <http://www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/appraisal/>.
2. The Records Management staff in NARA's regional offices provides assistance to agency records officers across the country. A complete list of NARA regional facilities may be found at <http://www.archives.gov/locations/index.html>.
3. If you need more general information about the contents of this bulletin, please contact Laurence Brewer, Director of the Life Cycle Management Division at Laurence.Brewer@nara.gov or on 301-837-1539.

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