

# U.S. OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

## OPERATING MANUAL UPDATE

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Washington, DC 20415  
October 31, 2000

### The Guide to Personnel Recordkeeping

Update 6

Summary of Changes

#### NOTE TO USERS

**The Guide to Personnel Recordkeeping** is in electronic format only, and is **no longer printed** and distributed by the U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO). A complete and current copy of The Guide can be found on OPM's website, at <http://www.opm.gov/feddata/guidance.htm>, by selecting Personnel Recordkeeping Guide.

For the convenience of those who are maintaining the GPO printed copies of The Guide, we have attached not only the pages we have changed but also the pages that were printed on the front or back of those pages. For example, we changed page 1-12 but we've attached pages 1-11 and 1-12 because page 1-11 was printed on the front of page 1-12.

Remove		Insert	Explanation of Changes
Page	Identification	Page	
1-11 thru 1-12	Update 4 October 31, 1997	1-11 thru 1-12	Corrects mailing address and adds email address for the Assistant Director for Workforce Information. (page 1-12)
2-3 thru 2-4	Update 4 October 31, 1997	2-3 thru 2-4	Removes specific instructions for Federal Aviation Administration records. (page 2-4)
3-13 thru 3-14	Update 3 July 31, 1997	3-13 thru 3-14	Includes substitute agency form for the SF 144-A. (page 3-14)

The Guide to Personnel Recordkeeping (2)

Summary of Changes - continued

Remove		Insert	Explanation of Changes
Page	Identification	Page	
3-19 thru 3-20	Update 5 December 31, 1998	3-19 thru 3-20	Adds Nuclear Materials Couriers to the list of positions under Retirement Coverage Determinations. (page 3-19)
3-27 thru 3-28	Update 5 December 31, 1998	3-27 thru 3-28	Reworded language on excluding awards and bonuses from long-term retention. (page 3-27)
4-1 thru 4-2	November 30, 1994	4-1 thru 4-2	Remove reference to ATraining Records® and corrects telephone number for Retirement Operations Center. (pages 4-1 and 4-2)
6-3 thru 6-8	Update 4 October 31, 1997	6-3 thru 6-8	Updates addresses for requesting copies of or amendments to separated employees' Folders. (pages 6-4, 6-5, and 6-8)
7-5 thru 7-6	Update 5 December 31, 1998	7-5 thru 7-6	Removes reference to the Federal Aviation Administration. (page 7-6)
7-11 thru 7-12	Update 5 December 31, 1998	7-11 thru 7-12	Updates information on requesting copies of separated employees' Folders. (page 7-11)

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**Storing Official Personnel Folders in Media Other than Paper**, Continued

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**Exclusions**

The following documents must always be retained in paper:

- RI 76-10, Assignment of Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance
  - Standard Form 2823, Designation of Beneficiary Under the Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance Program
  - Standard Form 3102, Federal Employees Retirement System Designation of Beneficiary
  - Statement of Selective Service Registration Status
  - Ethics Pledge
  - ALL paper documents in a Merged Records Personnel Folder covering periods of employment not under the Office of Personnel Management's recordkeeping authority.
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**Storing Official Personnel Folders in Media Other than Paper**, Continued

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**Microforms**

The Office of Personnel Management may approve requests to create microform Official Personnel Folders both for storage while the employee is serving with the office that creates the microform and for transfer to the next employing office or the National Personnel Records Center. (Note: the forms listed under Exclusions may not be part of the microform Folder.)

Microform Official Personnel Folders must meet the National Archives and Records Administration standards for microform records. These standards are found in [part 1230 of title 36, Code of Federal Regulations](#).

Offices planning to maintain microform Official Personnel Folders should obtain a copy of the Guidelines and Control Requirements for Microform Official Personnel Records. These Guidelines include information on the format, organization, and maintenance of microform records. Address requests to:

Assistant Director for Workforce Information  
Office of Merit Systems Oversight and Effectiveness, Room 7439  
Office of Personnel Management  
1900 E Street, NW.  
Washington DC 20415-6000  
email: [owi@opm.gov](mailto:owi@opm.gov).

Offices must submit a microforms operations plan that describes how they will create and maintain microform Official Personnel Folders that meet the National Archives and Records Administration and Office of Personnel Management requirements. After the microforms operations plan is approved, the office may create microform folders but must continue to maintain paper folders for the period specified in the plan's approval. At the end of that period, the office must certify that their microform system meets all requirements in the operations plan. The Office of Personnel Management and the National Archives and Records Administration may authorize retention of the microform Official Personnel Folders as the official record. On that joint approval, the office may destroy the paper folders except for the forms listed under Exclusions. The microform folders will then be the official records.

Offices maintaining microform Official Personnel Folders as the official record will transfer those microform records just as they would transfer paper records.

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**Requesting Records for Prior Service**

**Requesting records**

The personnel office must request the personnel records for new employees with prior Federal civilian service when the employee begins work. Where and how to request prior service records depends on the type of prior service the employee had and whether he or she is currently a Federal employee.

**National Personnel Records Center**

Always contact the National Personnel Records Center to make sure all prior service records are filed together. The employee may not list all prior service in the application documents; a former employer may have failed to check for all prior service records.

Request both personnel and medical folders. Send the requests to **National Archives and Records Administration, National Personnel Records Center, 111 Winnebago Street, St. Louis, MO 63118.**

Personnel Folders	Employee Medical Folders
Send a Standard Form 127, Request for Official Personnel Folder, in duplicate, to request any personnel folder(s).	Send a Standard Form 184, Request for Employee Medical Folder, to request any medical folder(s).

Note that there are two separate forms to request both the personnel and medical folders. Performance records that are transferred from agency to agency will be on the left side of the personnel folder.

**Previous or current employer**

Records generally will be with the previous employer if the person:

- is or has been on that employer’s rolls within 90 days prior to the new appointment;
- is receiving severance pay;
- is on the previous employer’s reemployment priority list;
- was last employed in the Foreign Service and has separated within the year prior to the new appointment.

Send the previous employer a note requesting the personnel folder (including performance records) and medical folder. Include a copy of the Standard Form 50, Notification of Personnel Action, appointing the person. (If it is not available, use a copy of the Standard Form 52, Request for Personnel Action, or other approved document showing the appointment and effective date.)

**Requesting Records for Prior Service**, Continued

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**Employers using transcripts**

Some employers who are not within the Office of Personnel Management's recordkeeping authority do not transfer personnel records. These employers will provide a transcript of service and documents on benefits. The benefits documents generally include the equivalent of the Official Personnel Folder copy of health insurance, life insurance, retirement, and Thrift Savings Plan documents. If the employer has a leave system similar to the civil service, the benefits documents may include information on the employee's leave balances. Instead of requesting the personnel and medical folders from these employers, request a transcript of service, benefits documents, and leave balances.

Employers who provide transcripts of service include:

- ! Architect of the Capitol
- ! Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System
- ! Central Intelligence Agency
- ! Congressional Budget Office
- ! District of Columbia Government
- ! Federal Bureau of Investigation
- ! Tennessee Valley Authority
- ! U.S. Botanical Gardens
- ! U.S. House of Representatives
- ! U.S. Senate.

The Tennessee Valley Authority's transcript is a microfiche copy of their personnel records.

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DOCUMENT	PERSONNEL FOLDER FILING INSTRUCTIONS
<p><b>SENIOR EXECUTIVE SERVICE</b></p> <p>Appointment support specifically applicable to the Senior Executive Service includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Statement by a career appointee that he/she elects to continue under the provisions of the Senior Executive Service upon receiving an appointment by the President that requires Senate confirmation.</li> <li>● Statement of acceptance or declination of conversion to a position in the Senior Executive Service</li> <li>● The written agreement that the individual voluntarily accepts the conditions when changing from a career to a noncareer or limited appointment</li> </ul>	<p>File signed documents on the <b>right side</b>.</p>
<p><i>Table 3-B continued on next page</i></p>	

DOCUMENT	PERSONNEL FOLDER FILING INSTRUCTIONS
<p><b>STATEMENT OF PRIOR FEDERAL SERVICE</b></p> <p>The material that documents the calculation of service that is creditable for leave may include:</p> <p><b>Agency substitute</b> for Standard Form 144-A, such as a printout with the information listed in Chapter 6 of <a href="#">The Guide to Processing Personnel Actions</a></p> <p><b>Standard Form 144</b> Statement of Prior Federal Service</p> <p><b>Standard Form 144-A</b> Statement of Prior Federal Service -- Worksheet</p> <p><b>Supporting documentation</b>, such as:</p> <p>Affidavits accepted as proof of service creditable for leave;</p> <p>Agency annotated verification of prior service;</p> <p>Letters verifying active service with the Public Health Service and National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration;</p> <p>Proof of creditable military service;</p> <p>Statements showing proof of creditable volunteer service with the Peace Corps, Corporation for National Service (formerly ACTION), or Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA).</p>	<p>File these documents on the <b>right side</b>.</p> <p>NOTE: The list of supporting documentation is not exhaustive. Any material the agency accepts as proof or verification of service that is creditable for leave may be attached to the Statement of Prior Federal Service--Worksheet.</p>



Table 3-D. Benefits

DOCUMENT	PERSONNEL FOLDER FILING INSTRUCTIONS
HEALTH INSURANCE, Continued	
<p><b>INDEBTEDNESS TO HEALTH BENEFITS FUND</b></p> <p>Documentation that the employee is indebted to the health benefits fund, including election to continue coverage and the amount owed.</p>	<p>File these documents on the <b>left side until the debt is paid</b>. Once the debt is paid, the material must be removed.</p> <p>NOTE: These procedures apply to debt for pay periods that began before September 30, 1996. Debt for later periods is to the agency not to the health benefits fund and all documentation remains with the agency to which the employee is indebted.</p>
<p><b>TEMPORARY CONTINUATION OF COVERAGE</b></p> <p>Notice of eligibility for temporary continuation of health benefits coverage (signed copy or file copy with delivery receipt attached).</p>	<p>File these documents on the <b>right side</b>.</p> <p>NOTE: Information on enrollment, payments, and other correspondence on the period of continued coverage should be part of a separate health benefits file.</p>
LIFE INSURANCE	
<p><b>LIFE INSURANCE FORMS</b></p> <p>All life insurance forms must be filed in the Official Personnel Folder unless a form contains specific instructions to do something different.</p>	<p>Follow instructions on the life insurance form. In general, file these documents on the <b>right side</b>.</p> <p>Refer to the <a href="#">Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance Program Handbook for Employees, Annuitants, Compensations and Employing Offices</a>.</p>
RETIREMENT	
<p><b>COVERAGE DETERMINATIONS</b></p> <p>Determination affecting an individual's coverage as a law enforcement officer or firefighter or Nuclear Materials Courier.</p>	<p>File these documents on the <b>right side</b>.</p> <p>NOTE: This determination may be made by the agency or the Office of Personnel Management.</p>
<i>Table 3-D continued on next page</i>	

DOCUMENT	PERSONNEL FOLDER FILING INSTRUCTIONS
RETIREMENT, Continued	
<p><b>DEPOSITS FOR MILITARY SERVICE</b></p> <p><b>Applications:</b>  <b>Standard Form 2803</b>  Application to Make Deposit or Redeposit - Civil Service Retirement System</p> <p><b>Standard Form 3108</b>  Application to Make Service Credit Payment for Civilian Service - Federal Employees Retirement System</p> <p><b>Earnings:</b>  <b>RI 20-97</b>  Estimated Earnings during Military Service</p> <p><b>Election:</b>  <b>Office of Personnel Management Form 1515</b>  Military Service Deposit Election</p> <p><b>Worksheet:</b>  <b>Office of Personnel Management Form 1514</b>  Military Deposit Worksheet</p>	<p>File applications on the <b>left side</b>.</p> <p>File earnings statements on the <b>right side</b>.</p> <p>File elections on the <b>right side</b>.</p> <p>File worksheets on the <b>right side</b>.</p>
<p><b>DESIGNATION OF BENEFICIARY</b></p> <p><b>Standard Form 3102</b>  Federal Employees Retirement System Designation of Beneficiary including any authorized attachments, such as a trustee designation.</p>	<p>File these documents on the <b>right side</b>.</p> <p>NOTE: This form is sent to the Office of Personnel Management when the employee leaves Federal service.</p>
<i>Table 3-D continued on next page</i>	

**Table 3-F: Personnel Actions**

**List of documents** This table provides instructions for filing notifications of personnel actions.

<b>DOCUMENT</b>	<b>PERSONNEL FOLDER FILING INSTRUCTIONS</b>
<p><b>GRADE AND PAY RETENTION</b></p> <p>Documentation of the application of grade and/or pay retention including copy of a letter to the employee describing the circumstances warranting the grade and/or pay retention and nature of the entitlement.</p>	<p>File these documents on the <b>right</b> side.</p>
<p><b>NOTIFICATION OF PERSONNEL ACTION</b></p> <p>The Office of Personnel Management’s Operating Manual, THE GUIDE TO PROCESSING PERSONNEL ACTIONS, identifies employment events that are documented as personnel actions. <b>Only</b> those personnel actions that have long term consequences for the employee’s Federal career are filed on the right side of the Official Personnel Folder.</p> <p><b>Approved forms</b> for documenting these actions include:</p> <p><b>Standard Form 50</b>                      Notification of Personnel Action</p> <p><b>Standard Form 50-A (obsolete)</b>                      Notice of Short Term Employment</p>	<p>File these documents on the <b>right side</b>.</p> <p>Agency exceptions to the Standard Form 50 were authorized under special circumstances; most of these exceptions were rescinded in 1986.</p> <p>NOTES:                      Refer to the instructions in THE GUIDE TO PROCESSING PERSONNEL ACTIONS to determine if a particular action is to be documented on the right side of the Official Personnel Folder.</p> <p>Any of the following actions effective on or after January 1, 1999, are <b>not</b> authorized for right side retention in the Official Personnel Folder:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exception to Reduction in Force Release;</li> <li>Realignment;</li> <li>Recruitment Bonus;</li> <li>Relocation Bonus;</li> <li>All awards actions, except Senior Executive Service Rank awards.</li> </ul>
	<p><i>Table 3-F continued on next page</i></p>

**Personnel Recordkeeping**

DOCUMENT	PERSONNEL FOLDER FILING INSTRUCTIONS
<p><b>NOTIFICATION OF PERSONNEL ACTION</b>, Continued</p> <p><b>Standard Form 50</b> Notification of Personnel Action</p> <p><b>Standard Form 50-A</b> (obsolete) Notice of Short Term Employment</p>	<p>File these documents on the <b>right side</b>.</p> <p>NOTES (continued):</p> <p>If agencies choose to produce a Standard Form 50 for these actions, (for example, performance awards), these Standard Form 50s may <b>not</b> be filed on the right side of the Official Personnel Folder.</p> <p>Agencies may use an agency-issued nature of action code beginning with 9 and a Standard Form 50 to document some actions taken during an employee's career. Examples include: change in accounting code, change in ceiling slot, details to positions at the same grade level with no promotion potential. These are <b>not</b> personnel actions as defined in THE GUIDE TO PROCESSING PERSONNEL ACTIONS. Unless the action is one that is to be documented using any agency-approved form (for example, completion of supervisory/managerial probationary period), it is <b>not</b> authorized for right side retention in the Official Personnel Folder.</p>
<i>Table 3-F continued on next page</i>	

## Chapter 4

### How to Reconstruct a Personnel Folder

#### Introduction

An agency must start to reconstruct the personnel folder upon learning that the folder is lost or destroyed. Reconstruction includes:

- ! Copying all applicable documents the agency can get from the employee, personnel office files, payroll office, Social Security Administration, etc., and
- ! Documenting the reconstruction.

#### Place a notice of the reconstruction in the folder

A transcript of service serves as the notice of reconstruction. The transcript is to remain as the top document of the reconstructed portion in the personnel folder. See Chapter 7 of this *Guide* for instructions on creating a transcript of service.

#### Procedures

Use the following procedures to reconstruct the personnel folder.

Step	Action
1	<p>Copy any relevant documents the employee can furnish. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>! Applications for Federal Employment,</li> <li>! Standard Forms 50, Notifications of Personnel Action,</li> <li>! Earnings and Leave Statements.</li> </ul>
2	<p>Request a computer-generated employment history from agencies where the individual was previously employed.</p> <p>NOTE: While agencies are no longer required to keep Chronological File copies of Standard Forms 50, Notifications of Personnel Action, request copies when they may be available.</p>
<i>Continued on next page</i>	

Step	Action	
3	Request retirement records.	
	<p data-bbox="548 359 967 436"><b>If the employee made retirement contributions...</b></p> <p data-bbox="548 464 967 737">Request a copy of all Standard Forms 2806, Individual Retirement Records. Provide the employee's name, social security number, and date of birth for each Standard Form 2806 requested.</p> <p data-bbox="548 779 805 814">Send the request to:</p> <p data-bbox="548 863 967 1010">Office of Personnel Management Retirement Operations Center, P. O. Box 45 Boyers, PA 16017</p> <p data-bbox="548 1058 967 1325">Requests may also be faxed to 724-794-4668. Take care that privacy of the personal information is maintained when requesting the Standard Form 2806 be faxed to the personnel office.</p>	<p data-bbox="1000 359 1406 436"><b>If the employee made social security contributions...</b></p> <p data-bbox="1000 464 1406 695">Request that the individual get detailed earnings information from the Social Security Administration, 6401 Security Boulevard, Baltimore, MD 21235.</p> <p data-bbox="1000 743 1406 856">NOTE: Advise the employee to use Form SSA-7050-F3 to request this information. Requested information should be earnings by each employer.</p> <p data-bbox="1000 982 1406 1213">It is important that the employee know that the Social Security Administration will charge a fee for this service and that the fee is based on the number of years of earnings to be reported.</p>
<i>Continued on next page</i>		

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**Request from a Current Employee, Continued**

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**Amendment requests**

Amendment of personnel folders means:

- changing any incorrect data;
- removing records inappropriately filed in the folder;
- adding missing records that should be in the folder.

Employees should not be required to use the formal Privacy Act amendment process to have their records corrected. Agencies are responsible for ensuring that the records are accurate and for making any necessary corrections as soon as possible.

Privacy Act amendments do not take the place of other appeal procedures established by law or regulation, for example, adverse action appeals or classification appeals. Privacy Act amendment procedures are designed to ensure that the records reflect what occurred accurately, not as a method to challenge an agency's application of its personnel procedures.

Agencies have authority to process Privacy Act amendment requests from their employees as long as those requests pertain to records generated under the Office of Personnel Management's recordkeeping authority. The Office's recordkeeping authority applies to Official Personnel Folder records documenting employment in the competitive service, Senior Executive Service, or excepted service (Schedule A, B, or C). Agencies do not have authority to amend records in Merged Personnel Records Folders and Foreign Service folders that were created under another agency's employment system. Requests to amend records created under another employment system should be referred to the agency that created the record. Refer to Table 6-A for more information on this process.

Agencies may prescribe their own procedures for submitting and processing amendment requests. Responses to amendment requests should be in writing.

In processing amendment requests, the agency should ensure that any amendments comply with the Office of Personnel Management's recordkeeping procedures and regulations in [subpart C, part 297 of title 5, Code of Federal Regulations](#).

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**Request from a Current Employee**, Continued

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**Examples**

An employee files a Privacy Act amendment request to correct his or her date of birth. If the employee provides adequate documentation (for example, birth certificate), the request should be granted and the records changed.

An employee files a Privacy Act amendment request to change the nature of action on the Standard Form 50 documenting his separation from “removal” to “resignation.” The request should be denied since the individual could have challenged the personnel action through an adverse action appeal to the Merit Systems Protection Board.

An employee files a Privacy Act amendment request to add a copy of a publication he authored to the right side of the Official Personnel Folder. The request should be denied since the material to be added is not authorized for long-term retention by this *Guide*.

An employee files a Privacy Act amendment request to remove a Standard Form 50 documenting a 15 day suspension from her Official Personnel Folder. The employee submits documentation that the suspension was overturned by the Merit Systems Protection Board. The request should be granted.

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**Review of a denial of an amendment request**

When an agency denies an employee's request to amend a personnel record, the decision should notify the employee that he or she may ask for an administrative review of the decision. The request for a review should be directed to the Assistant Director for Workforce Information, U.S. Office of Personnel Management, 1900 E Street, NW., Washington, DC 20415-6000. The request for a review should include a copy of the amendment request, the initial denial, and a statement of the specific reasons why the initial denial is believed to be in error.

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## Request from a Former Employee

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**Access requests** Former employees may receive copies of their own personnel and medical folders. Requests for copies must be made in writing and should include: the full name (or names) used while employed; social security number; date of birth; year of separation; and last employing agency (if known).

Requests for individual documents or for complete copies of personnel and medical folders, should be sent to the National Personnel Records Center, Civilian Personnel Records, 111 Winnebago Street, St. Louis, MO 63118-4126.

If the folder contains documents created under an employment system outside the Office of Personnel Management's recordkeeping authority, the National Personnel Records Center will refer that portion of the request to the appropriate agency.

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**Amendment requests** Former employees submit requests to amend records created under the Office of Personnel Management's recordkeeping authority to the Assistant Director for Workforce Information, U.S. Office of Personnel Management, 1900 E Street, NW., Washington, DC 20415-6000. Requests to amend other records should be sent to the agency that created the record.

Requests to amend records should be in writing and should:

- ! include the information needed to identify the employee's records (full name, social security number, and date of birth);
- ! identify the records and data believed to be incorrect;
- ! identify any records believed missing from the folder;
- ! identify any documents believed inappropriately filed in the folder;
- ! explain why the identified items are not correct or complete; and
- ! explain what the correct content of the documents should be.

To ensure proper handling, the words "Privacy Act Amendment Request" should be on the request and on the envelope.

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## Request from a Government Official

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### Officers and employees of the agency

Personnel and medical folders are available to officials within the agency who need access to the records to perform their assigned official functions. This includes access to records in Merged Records Personnel Folders and Foreign Service folders whether those records were created under the Office of Personnel Management's recordkeeping authority or not. Agency officials include personnelists, managers, and supervisors.

An employee may authorize another employee to review his or her records. That authorization should be in writing. An employee's authorized representative should have access to the employee's records.

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### Officials outside the agency

Officials outside the agency may be authorized access to an employee's records if:

- the employee has authorized such access in writing; or
- the release is specifically authorized by [the Privacy Act](#); or
- a routine use published in the [Governmentwide system of records](#) allows disclosure of the records.

An employee may authorize officials outside his or her employing agency to review or receive copies of his or her records. Such an authorization should be in writing. An employee's records may be provided to officials of another agency with the employee's prior written consent.

Requests from officials outside the employing agency for records in a Merged Records Personnel Folder or a Foreign Service folder that were not created under the Office of Personnel Management's recordkeeping authority should be honored only if the requestor has the employee's written consent to the release of the information. All other requests should be referred to the agency that created the record.

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**Request from a Government Official**, Continued

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**Officials outside  
the agency,  
continued**

The [Privacy Act](#) authorizes the release of records to officials outside the agency under specific circumstances. Some of these include releases:

- to the National Archives and Records Administration;
- to either House of Congress;
- to the Comptroller General or his authorized representatives performing the duties of the General Accounting Office; or
- pursuant to the order of a court of competent jurisdiction.

The Office of Personnel Management has published notices for [Governmentwide systems of records](#) that cover the Official Personnel Folder (OPM/GOVT-1) and the Employee Medical Folder (OPM/GOVT-10). These notices include descriptions of routine uses that allow release of records to specific officials outside the employing agency for specific purposes without the employee's prior written consent. Some of the routine uses that apply to Official Personnel Folders allow records to be provided to:

- the Merit Systems Protection Board, Office of Special Counsel or Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in relation to appeals, investigations, and special studies;
- any Federal agency involved in a legal or administrative proceeding in which the Government is a party;
- any Federal agency in relation to hiring an employee, issuing a security clearance, conducting a security or suitability investigation;
- Federal, state, or local agencies to adjudicate a claim under any retirement, insurance, unemployment, or health benefits program.

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**When in doubt...**

Check with the agency Privacy Act or Freedom of Information Officer when unsure whether records may be disclosed.

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**Personnel Recordkeeping**

## Request From the Public

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**Introduction** Requests from the public for information from personnel and medical folders must be handled in compliance with both the Privacy Act of 1974 and the Freedom of Information Act. The Privacy Act restricts access to records in a system of records. The Freedom of Information Act establishes the public's right to information contained in Government records. Agencies are authorized to respond to requests for information from the public on all Official Personnel Folders and Employee Medical Folders in their possession.

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**Merged Records Personnel Folders and Foreign Service Folders** Merged Records Personnel Folders and Foreign Service Folders contain records that were created under employment systems outside the Office of Personnel Management's recordkeeping authority. Agencies should respond to requests for information that pertain to records created under the Office of Personnel Management's authority. The guidance in this section applies only to those records under the Office's authority. Refer any requests from the public for information on any other records in the folder to the agency that created the record. Refer to Table 6-A.

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**Requests for information on former employees** Requests from the public for information from the folder of a former employee whose folder has been sent to the National Personnel Records Center should be forwarded to the National Personnel Records Center, Civilian Personnel Records, 111 Winnebago Street, St. Louis, MO 63118-4126.

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**Employee's consent** An employee may authorize release of information to a member of the public, including an organization. That authorization must be in writing.

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## Transferring Records to Another Agency, Continued

**Preparing folders** Follow these steps to prepare the personnel and medical folders for transfer.

Step	Action
1	Check the personnel folder to make sure that it contains all the long-term documents that should be in the folder and only the long-term documents authorized in Chapter 3. Make sure that all documents are filed in chronological order.
2	Put the following documents and only those documents on the left side of the personnel folder: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Record of Leave Data (Standard Form 1150) or equivalent record of leave balances;</li> <li>• documentation of indebtedness to the health benefits fund for pay periods that began before September 30, 1996;</li> <li>• performance records. For Senior Executive Service employees, these are: ratings of record that are 5 years old or less and performance plans for each rating. For all other employees, these are ratings of record that are 4 years old or less, including the performance plan on which the most recent rating was based. Ratings of record include the evaluation of the employee's performance against the elements and standards plus the summary level, pattern, and ending date of the appraisal.</li> </ul>
3	Put long-term occupational medical records in an Employee Medical Folder, Standard Form 66-D.
4	Send the folders to the next agency.

Follow agency instructions for documents that are not transferred to the next agency.

### Records erroneously left out

When long-term documents that should have been transferred to the next agency are discovered after the folders have been mailed, send them immediately to the next agency. Attach the documents to a cover letter that identifies the employee by name, social security number, and date of birth. Reference the date the folder was originally sent.

## Personnel Recordkeeping

## Transferring Records to Another Agency, Continued

### Requests for transcripts in lieu of folders

Some employers who are outside the Office of Personnel Management's recordkeeping authority should request a transcript of service and other documents rather than personnel and medical folders. These employers are:

- ! Architect of the Capitol
- ! Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System
- ! Central Intelligence Agency
- ! Congressional Budget Office
- ! District of Columbia Government
- ! Federal Bureau of Investigation
- ! Tennessee Valley Authority
- ! U.S. Botanical Gardens
- ! U.S. House of Representatives.

The U.S. Senate sends transcripts but receives folders when employees move from employment under the Office's recordkeeping authority to the Senate.

### Preparing transcripts in lieu of folders

Take the following steps to prepare transcripts in lieu of folders.

Step	Action
1	Prepare the transcript summarizing all personnel actions processed during the employee's Federal career. Use the example in Table 7-A.
2	Copy the benefits documents if requested. Benefits documents cover retirement, health insurance, and life insurance. Send the originals with the transcript. File the copies in the folder.
3	Copy performance records, long-term medical records and a statement of leave balances if requested.
4	Send the transcript and any other requested documents to the next agency.
5	Follow the steps required to send the folders to the National Personnel Records Center.

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## **NOTICE TO SEPARATED EMPLOYEES - RETENTION OF PERSONNEL AND MEDICAL FOLDERS**

Long-term records documenting individuals' Federal careers are stored in the Official Personnel Folder. The employee received copies of these records when they were created. When an employee separates from Federal service, the last employing agency sends the Official Personnel Folder to the National Personnel Records Center for storage. Normally, the agency sends the Folder within 120 days after the employee separates. The National Personnel Records Center retains the Folders for 65 years after separation.

Former employees' requests for copies of their personnel records must be in writing and should include:

- C the full name (or names) used while employed;
- C social security number;
- C date of birth; and
- C if known, the year of separation and last employing agency.

**For Copies of Specific Documents or a Copy of the Entire Folder Write to:**

National Personnel Records Center  
Civilian Personnel Records  
111 Winnebago Street  
St. Louis, MO 63118-4126

Since 1984 the Employee Medical Folder has been used to store long-term occupational medical records that were created during an employee's Federal career. These records do not include records on claims filed under the Federal Employees' Compensation Act. There may not be an Employee Medical Folder for each employee. When an employee for whom there are long-term occupational medical records separates from Federal service, the last employing agency sends the Employee Medical Folder to the National Personnel Records Center. The National Personnel Records Center retains these Folders for 30 years after separation.

Former employees' requests for copies of their Employee Medical Folder should be in writing and include all identifying information (name, social security number, date of birth). These requests should be sent to:

National Personnel Records Center  
Civilian Personnel Records  
111 Winnebago Street  
St. Louis, MO 63118-4126

**Personnel Recordkeeping**

## Sending Records

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**Packaging** Personnel records should be securely packaged to be sure that they arrive in good condition. Transcripts or individual folders may be sent in an envelope. Folders require envelopes measuring 11 by 13 inches. The envelopes should be tightly sealed. Reinforced envelopes or those made from material similar to “Ty-Vek” are recommended.

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**Carriers** Employees may not be authorized to carry their own records to the next employer. Under the Privacy Act, employees are entitled to copies of their records but the agency is responsible for transferring the employee’s official records to the next employer.

Records may be sent by regular mail. Certified mail or a commercial package shipping service is the preferred method since these methods allow agencies to verify that the records were delivered to the addressee.

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**National  
Personnel  
Records Center**

When records are transferred to the National Personnel Records Center, they should be sent to:

National Personnel Records Center  
Civilian Personnel Records  
111 Winnebago Street  
St. Louis, MO 63118.

A small number of folders may be sent in an envelope. Larger numbers of folders should be sent in a carton. Each carton should include a list of the enclosed folders, identifying each employee by name and social security number.

Employee Medical Folders may be in the same envelope or carton as personnel folders. Medical folders should be placed after the personnel folders (Official Personnel Folders, Merged Records Personnel Folders, or Foreign Service Folders).

Agencies are not required to notify the National Personnel Records Center before sending folders. The National Personnel Records Center will **not** issue a receipt for records sent by regular mail.

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