

## Office of Information Affairs

# Departmental Records Management Exit Procedures Quick Guide

### 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 and information without proper approval. With approval, only personal papers with no USDA information can be removed.

### What is a Record?

Recorded information, in any format:

- Created in the course of government 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?

Private materials belonging to individuals, that do not relate to, or have an effect upon, the conduct of USDA business and activities.

### Who owns Agency Information?

Records created or acquired in the course of conducting Government business are the property of the United States Government.

### What about Senior Officials and Political Appointee 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 (NARA).

### Where can you find additional information?

We are here for you! 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 at: [USDADepartmentalRecords@usda.gov](mailto:USDADepartmentalRecords@usda.gov).

[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 [Departmental Regulation \(DR\) 3099-001, Records Management Policy for Departing Employees, Contractors, Volunteers and Political Appointees](#).

## Exit Procedures

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

Before leaving the USDA, you 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 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 personal materials that can be destroyed? Personal 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.
- Forward texts and electronic messages from your Government Furnished Device to your official USDA email account.
- 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 or other accounts, you must forward those emails, texts, and electronic messages to your official USDA email account.

## Documentation to Complete Before Departure

- In accordance with [DR 3099-001](#), 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 3099-001](#), and have not removed documentary materials upon separation. **Submission of USDA Form AD-3001 is required of all departing USDA personnel.**