Moving Your Records Safely

Guidelines and Checklists for the HA/TMA Headquarters Relocation

Records Management Support Team

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INTRODUCTION

Preparing and moving an office to a new facility can be exciting! Moving presents a unique opportunity for personnel to inventory essential day-to-day materials and discard, as appropriate, extraneous items. However, it can be difficult to continue normal daily work activities while preparing to relocate. Early preparations and strategic planning can mitigate much of the unpleasantness associated with an office move. An essential and yet often overlooked aspect of office relocations are the secure transfer of official records.

The guidelines and checklists contained within this manual provide practical advice on how to successfully plan for the secure transfer of official government records during an office relocation and includes:

- Determining which records to move and which can be archived
- Coordinating logistics around a records transfer
- Implementing transfer safeguards for records with Protected Health Information (PHI) and Personally Identifiable Information (PII)

CHECKLIST SUMMARY FOR RECORDS CUSTODIANS

As mentioned, moving records is essential to any successful office relocation. The checklist in this section outlines key records management issues to consider at the beginning of an office move, such as how to reduce the number of records that will need to be relocated to the new space. Determining which records are inactive and can be retired to the Federal Records Center (FRC) prior to the move will have a great impact on the smoothness of the relocation.

Attention to your records BEFORE the move will:

- Improve control over your information assets
- Drastically reduce the amount of records that will need to be moved and stored at the new Defense Health Headquarters
- Boost morale and lower stress

Waiting until AFTER the move can result in:

- Wasted time
- Lost, misplaced, and abandoned records
- Less productive staff
- Inadvertent destruction of official records

Use this checklist to help prepare records for a move:

- ☑ Refer to the Official File Plan to identify records
- ☑ Separate non-records from active and inactive records
- ☑ Retire inactive records to the FRC
- ☑ Determine the exact records to be sent to storage; a box must contain only one series number of records, regardless of dates or other identifiers
- ☑ Pack inactive records into boxes
- ☑ A box list must be prepared and included inside each box being shipped to the FRC

The Records Management Support Team provides assistance with identifying records and non-records, distinguishing between active and inactive records, and coordinating the shipment of records to the FRC.

RECORDS INVENTORY

The purpose of the Records Inventory checklist is to help identify the minimum information that needs to be collected about your records to plan for their transfer. An accurate records inventory is the first critical step in the relocation process.

The inventory identifies which records can be transferred to a Federal Records Center and which records require relocating to the new Defense Health Headquarters.

To conduct an inventory:

- ☑ Refer to the current year's approved Official File Plan
- ☑ Identify the locations of all documentary materials
- ☑ Check all Official File Station(s) cabinets
- ☑ In addition, check all closets, personal and common storage areas, and empty offices – check desk drawers, file cabinets, and safes for any records that may have been misplaced or lost over the years
- ☑ Use identifiers to clearly mark each drawer or shelf during the survey
- ☑ Identify records and the volume of records within each location
- ☑ Identify by title, series number, or type:
  - Title (*e.g.*, Budget -1995); 5 letter-size file drawers; Office #1
  - Series Number (*e.g.*, Series 101.01); 5 letter-sized 4-drawer safes; Office #2
  - Type (*e.g.*, Budget files); 3 lateral file drawers
- ☑ Indicate the status of the materials: record, non-record, reference, etc.
- ☑ Determine document restrictions: classified material, personally identifiable information, protected health information, etc.
- ☑ Separate records and non-records
- ☑ Personal papers, copies of publications and forms, and reference material should be separated and kept apart from official records
- ☑ Copies of records are not records and may be destroyed

Upon completion of the inventory, you will know the volume and location of all records, non-records, and any reference materials. You will also be ready to tackle the next checklist, Records Sorting and Preparation.

RECORDS SORTING AND PREPARATION

The purpose of this checklist is to provide steps to follow for sorting and preparing official records for transfer. Once the records inventory is complete, the results can be analyzed and the records sorting process can begin.

You will now be able to identify:

- Which records, if any, are permanent
- Records that are active and require being relocated to the new space
- Records that are inactive and can be retired to the FRC

Organize a clean-up day (or days) to:

- Weed out superseded or obsolete materials from reference files
- Prepare inactive record material for shipment to the FRC
- Pack active records relocating to the new facility into boxes and assign room/location numbers to each box

Complete as much of the checklist as possible; the information will assist you with future records management projects:

- ☑ What is the record retention period? (Check the file labels, guide cards, or the Administrative Instruction 15 (AI-15))
- ☑ Check the retention period against the date of the records
- ☑ Determine whether the temporary records are active or inactive (active = frequently accessed; inactive = no longer accessed)

If the records are active:

1. Prepare records for transfer to the new space
2. Ensure record boxes are clearly identified

If the records are inactive:

1. Prepare records for archiving and transfer to the FRC
2. Place the documents in a records (archives) box
3. Prepare a box list and submit via email to the Records Management Support Team at TRICARERMSupport@mcneiltech.com
4. The Records Management Support Team will assist with the shipping process

INACTIVE RECORDS: ARCHIVING TO THE FEDERAL RECORDS CENTER

Once the records inventory has been completed and the records are sorted, inactive records can be prepared for shipment to the (FRC).

Here are some helpful tips:

- Identify the inactive records to be shipped
- Separate the records according to series numbers found in the AI-15
- Separate the inactive records for each series by their retention date
- Box the records and number the boxes (1 of 20; 2 of 20; etc.)
- Prepare a box list and submit via email to TRICARERMSupport@mcneiltech.com
- The Records Management Support Team will contact you upon approval of your accession

The Records Management Support Team picks up and delivers inactive records' boxes to the Federal Records Center. Any records shipped to or being stored at the Federal Records Center can be retrieved within 24-48 hours by contacting the Records Management Support Team.

SCANNING AND DIGITIZATION

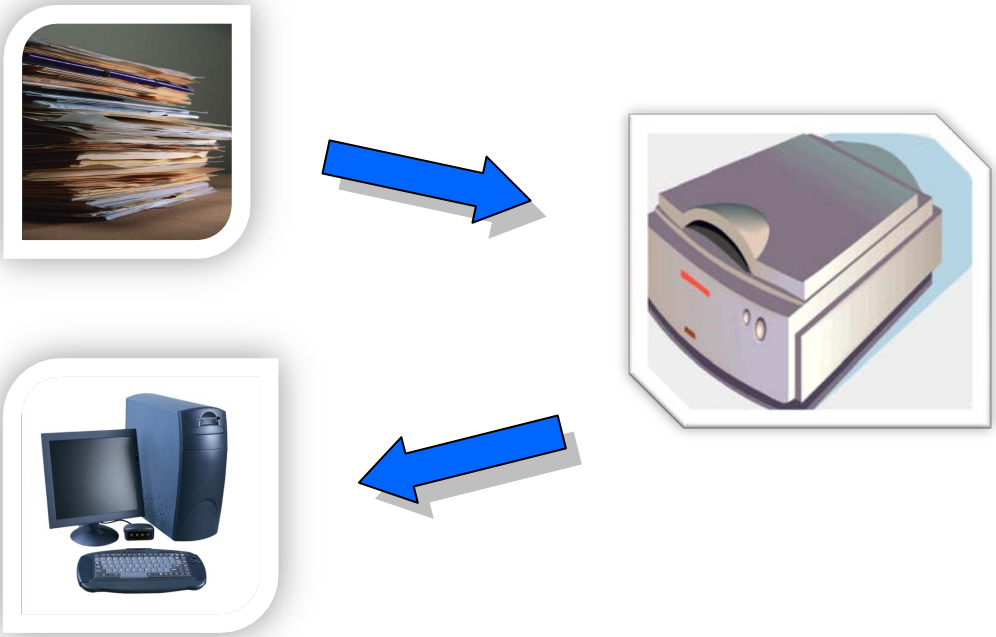
Space will be a premium for most offices at the new Defense Health Headquarters. Scanning paper records can be a viable solution to reduce the need for file cabinets and safes, which require a lot of floor space.

Offices may choose to scan their official paper records before the relocation. Only the newly digitized records will transfer to Defense Health Headquarters and will serve as an office's "working-reference copies." The original paper records shall be shipped to the FRC, which will free up space in the new facility.

For further guidance or assistance on scanning, please contact the Records Management Support Team.

PLEASE REMEMBER:

HA/TMA is under a current records freeze, NO official records can be destroyed, regardless if records have been scanned and digitized.



FACILITIES PLANNING

Once the records inventory is completed and records have been sorted to purge and retire inactive records from active ones, offices will know how much material will need to be moved to the new location.

Helpful tips to consider for effectively utilizing space for records management at the new Defense Health Headquarters include:

- Usage: who is using the records, how frequently, and for what purpose? Are there multiple users?
- Would the office benefit from having files in a centralized location?
- Centralizing records in the "right place" has the following advantages:
  - Better use of staff time
  - Better documentation
  - Streamlined operations
- For file storage areas that are centralized, determine the location of:
  - Active records
  - Inactive records
  - Reference material
  - Duplicate publications and forms
- Plan your storage space to allow for existing material plus growth
- Determine what will be maintained electronically and who will be responsible for maintenance
- Is there sufficient space for storing oversize items, such as maps, and non-paper items such as videotapes and CDs?

CONCLUSION

If you have any questions, concerns, or require further assistance related to records management, please contact the Records Management Support Team at:

TRICARERMSupport@mcneiltech.com

(P) 703-921-1648
(F) 703-778-8899