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*Issued by the EPA Chief Information Officer,
Pursuant to Delegation 1-19, dated 07/07/2005*

VITAL RECORDS PROCEDURES

1. PURPOSE

This procedure identifies specific requirements, processes and supporting documents that EPA uses to manage vital records.

2. SCOPE AND APPLICABILITY

This procedure covers all vital records and applies to all EPA Headquarters Programs, Regions, Laboratories and other Offices.

3. AUDIENCE

The audience for these procedures includes all EPA organizations, officials, employees, contractors and grantees.

4. BACKGROUND

Every federal agency is required by regulation to establish and maintain a vital records program. The vital records program is one element of the Agency's emergency management and disaster preparedness and records management functions. EPA must identify and protect those records that specify how EPA organizations will operate in case of an emergency or disaster and those records essential to the continued operations of the Agency.

5. AUTHORITY

- 36 CFR Part 1236 – Management of Vital Records
 - U.S. EPA – Records Management Policy (CIO 2155.1)
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6. PROCEDURES

The steps required for establishing and maintaining a vital records program are as follows:

- A. Identify vital records and prepare a vital records inventory.
 - B. Develop and implement a plan for protecting the vital records.
 - C. Update the inventory at least annually.
 - D. Update vital records, as needed, and remove and destroy outdated copies.
 - E. Certify the inventory and send the certification through senior management (e.g., AA, RA) to the Agency Records Officer by October 1st of each year.
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F. Participate in COOP exercises and report results to management.

7. RELATED DOCUMENTS

- [Continuity of Operations \(COOP\) Policy \(2030.1A\)](#)
 - [Developing and Maintaining a Vital Records Program](#)
 - [National Security Emergency Preparedness Policy \(2040.1A1\)](#)
 - [Records Management Manual](#)
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8. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of:

- The Agency Records Officer to coordinate the Agency's vital records program.
 - Assistant Administrators, Chief Financial Officer, General Counsel, Inspector General, Regional Administrators, and Laboratory/Center/Office Directors to designate a Records Liaison Officer (RLO) who will implement a vital records plan within their organization.
 - RLOs to coordinate the identification, protection, certification and updating of vital records for their organization.
 - COOP planners to work with RLOs to protect vital records and systematically review and test the plan and ensure vital records are accessible at designated COOP sites.
 - EPA employees, contractors and grantees, and others operating on behalf of EPA, to identify and protect vital records.
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9. DEFINITIONS

- Vital records: Records essential to the continued functioning or reconstitution of an organization during and after an emergency and also those records essential to protecting the legal and financial rights of that organization and of the individuals directly affected by its activities.
 - Vital records inventory: A list identifying the records designated as vital or essential. It includes other identifying information such as where the records are located, who is responsible for them, when they are updated, and similar information.
 - Vital records program: The policies, plans and procedures developed and implemented and the resources needed to identify, use, and protect the essential records needed to meet operational responsibilities under national security emergencies or other emergency or disaster conditions or to protect the Government's rights or those of its citizens.
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10. WAIVERS

Does not apply.

11. RELATED POLICIES, STANDARDS AND GUIDANCE

- [Continuity of Operations \(COOP\) Policy \(2030.1A\)](#)
 - [Developing and Maintaining a Vital Records Program](#)
 - [National Security Emergency Preparedness Policy \(2040.1A1\)](#)
 - [Records Management Manual](#)
 - Records Management Policy – CIO 2155.1 - <http://intranet.epa.gov/oei/imitpolicy/policies.htm>
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12. MATERIAL SUPERSEDED

Vital records Order (Order 2160.1)

13. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For questions about these procedures, please contact the Office of Information Collection, Office of Environmental Information, (202) 566-1630.



*Linda A. Travers, Acting Assistant Administrator
and Chief Information Officer
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