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ADS Chapter 511

Essential Records Program

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ADS 511 – Essential Records Program
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ADS 511 – Essential Records Program

511.1 OVERVIEW

Effective Date: 12/12/2019

Essential Records are the records needed to continue operations and protect the legal and financial rights of the government and those affected by its activities during a national security emergency or other emergency conditions. The Essential Records Program is an important element of the Agency's Continuity of Operations Program (COOP).

USAID must identify and protect records that specify how its' organizations will operate in case of an emergency and must identify and have readily accessible those records essential to the continued operation of the Agency. The objectives of the USAID Essential Records Program are to:

- Ensure that emergency operating records critical to the continuity of essential USAID activities during a national emergency are available at the Emergency Relocation Sites (ERS);
- Safeguard rights and interests records essential to the preservation of the legal rights and interests of individual U.S. citizens and the Federal Government;
- Ensure that records are evaluated on the basis of whether they are essential in the conduct of emergency operations or in the protection of the rights and interests of citizens and the Federal Government;
- Ensure that records are easily retrievable and that they are maintained in usable condition;
- Ensure that the current inventory of records located at the relocation sites is readily accessible; and
- Inform Agency personnel of their responsibilities under the Essential Records Program.

511.2 PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

Effective Date: 07/01/2020

a. The **Administrator** is responsible for creating and preserving records that contain adequate and proper documentation of the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures and essential transactions of USAID and for ensuring the continuity of essential functions in a national security emergency. The records management functions are delegated to the Director, Bureau for Management, Office of Management Services (M/MS).

- b. The **Director, Bureau for Management, Office of Management Services (M/MS/OD)** develops and implements the Agency-wide program for management of the Agency's Essential Records.
- c. The **Chief, Bureau for Management, Office of Management Services, Information and Records Division (M/MS/IRD)** is responsible for the overall management of the Agency's Essential Records Program.
- d. The **Bureau for Management, Office of the Chief Information Officer (M/CIO)** maintain computer operations at the Emergency Relocation Site (ERS), including access to the network drives that contain electronic Essential Records and computer equipment for use by Continuity of Operations (COOP) officials.
- e. **Assistant Administrators, Independent Office Directors, and Mission Directors** designate a Records Liaison Officer (RLO), or equivalent, within the Bureau/Independent Office (B/IO) or Mission and ensure that Essential Records functions are implemented to accomplish the objectives outlined in this chapter.
- f. **Emergency Operating Offices** are those offices that immediately mobilize in the event of a national emergency. These offices are responsible for having organized and sufficient records to continue critical functions for a maximum of 30 days.
- g. **Rights and Interests Offices** are those offices responsible for records required to protect the legal and financial interests of the Agency and those affected by its activities. These offices must have organized and sufficient records to assist in returning to normal operations when the emergency is over.
- h. **Records Liaison (RL) in B/IOs and Missions** coordinate the completion and submission of the Annual Records and Personally Identifiable Information Inventory form (AID form 502-4 available via Service Now) within the required timeframe to M/MS/IRD. **File Custodians** and **Administrative Assistants** work with the RL to ensure all active Essential Records are accounted for and that the annual report is submitted to M/MS/IRD.
- i. **USAID Employees** identify and protect Essential Records.

511.3 POLICY DIRECTIVES AND REQUIRED PROCEDURES

Effective Date: 12/12/2019

USAID must establish and maintain an Essential Records Program to ensure the continuity of critical functions and to protect the legal and financial rights of the Agency and individuals affected by its actions under national emergency conditions. The Essential Records Program enables the Agency to resume normal operations after an emergency. Essential Records are divided into the following categories:

- a. **Emergency Operating Records:** Records that are essential to the continued operation of the Agency during and after an emergency. In the event of an emergency these records should be accessible within the first 24 hours. These records are necessary to mobilize and protect material and manpower resources, services, and systems, and to perform critical functions. Emergency Operating Records are divided into two groups:
- 1) **Emergency Operating Records – Group 1:** Records that define the basic organization of the Agency, its employees, directives, regulations, and emergency procedures, *e.g.*, the Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP), Information Systems Security Continuity of Operations Plan (ISS COOP), and the Automated Directives System (ADS).
 - 2) **Emergency Operating Records – Group 2:** Records that show the current status of the USAID programs and administrative functions, *e.g.*, selected program records, critical functions of offices, emergency operating plans, and partner contact lists.
- b. **Rights and Interests Records:** Records that are essential to preserve the legal rights and interests of individual citizens and the Federal Government, *e.g.*, accounts receivable records, payroll records, personnel security files, official personnel files, and acquisition and assistance records.

511.3.1 Emergency Operating Offices

Effective Date: 07/01/2020

Every USAID Bureau/Independent Office (B/IO) and Mission is designated an Emergency Operating Office. Emergency Operating Offices immediately mobilize when a COOP is activated. Each Emergency Operating Office must have organized and sufficient records to continue operating in an emergency for up to 30 days. They must identify the most critical functions of their organization and provide the records required to support these functions. In addition, the Emergency Operating Offices work closely with M/CIO to ensure:

- 1) The appropriate system access and equipment requirements have been submitted to M/CIO; and
- 2) The most current Essential Records have been updated on the B/IO/Mission folder located in the Agency network Essential Records (V-drive). The Records Liaison must replace and purge any dated record/information on the V-drive on an annual basis (at a minimum) at the time of the annual essential records report submission. Missions that cannot access the V-drive may store digital versions of Essential Records on the P drive or in ASIST. If the P drive is used, the office storing the record must ensure the security of the Essential Record according to [ADS Chapter 508, Privacy Program](#). If the records cannot be converted to digital format (*e.g.*, pictures, maps, architectural drawings), they must be provided in hard copy to the M/MS/IRD Records Depository, Room B2.6C,

Ronald Reagan Building (RRB), 1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20523-2701, c/o USAID Essential Records Officer.

511.3.2 Rights and Interests Offices

Effective Date: 07/01/2020

Rights and Interests Offices are those offices responsible for records required to protect the legal and financial interests of the Agency after an emergency. These offices must provide organized and sufficient records to assist in rebuilding the Agency. The Rights and Interests Offices must identify the most critical functions and the records required to support these functions. In addition, the Rights and Interests Offices work closely with M/CIO to ensure:

- 1) The appropriate system access and equipment requirements have been submitted to M/CIO; and
- 2) The most current essential records have been updated on the B/IO/Mission folder located in the Agency network Essential Records (V-drive). The Records Liaison must replace and purge any dated record/information on the V-drive, **P drive, or ASIST** on an annual basis (at a minimum) at the time of the annual Essential records report submission. If the records cannot be converted to digital format (e.g., pictures, maps, architectural drawings), they must be provided in hard copy to USAID COOP site in Leesburg, VA prior to annual COOP exercise. Notify USAID Essential Records Officer prior to sending.

The following offices are designated Rights and Interests Offices:

USAID/Washington

- 1) Bureau for Management, Office of the Chief Financial Management Officer (M/CFO);
- 2) Bureau for Management, Office of Acquisition and Assistance (M/OAA);
- 3) Office of Human Capital and Talent Management (HCTM);
- 4) Office of the General Counsel, Assistant General Counsel for Litigation and Enforcement (GC/LE);
- 5) Office of Inspector General (OIG); and
- 6) Office of Security (SEC).

Missions

- 1) Office of the Controller,

- 2) Regional Legal Officer (RLO),
- 3) Executive Office, and
- 4) Contracting Office or Regional Contracting Office.

511.3.3 Annual Records and Personally Identifiable Information Inventory

Effective Date: 07/01/2020

The RLs in USAID/W and field Missions must submit an Annual Records and Personally Identifiable Information Inventory. The Annual Records and Personally Identifiable Information Inventory is available via Service Central. The RLs in USAID/W and field Missions must ensure the form includes:

- 1) **Inventory of Emergency Operating Records**, identified by office, which lists the Essential Records needed immediately in an emergency situation. These records must support the B/IO or Mission's most critical functions in the first 12-48 hours of the activation of a COOP. Copies of records (except for electronic versions) identified on the form must be included in the submission.
- 2) **Inventory of Rights and Interest Records**, identified by B/IO or Mission office, that are required to preserve the rights and interests of U.S. citizens, USAID employees, and the Federal Government, including those that limit or prohibit disclosure.
- 3) RLs must ensure when submitting the report that updates and revisions from previous reports have been provided.

The electronic records identified in the inventory must be stored in the B/IO/Mission folder located in the Agency network Essential Records (V-drive) along with any additional electronic records required to continue operations for up to 30 days (see **511.3.1(2)** and **511.3.2(2)**).

The RL in USAID/W must **complete the Annual Records and Personally Identifiable Information Inventory**. The RL should transfer hard copies of the Essential Records to the emergency relocation (also known as COOP) site or another designated records storage facility.

The RL in USAID Missions must **complete the Annual Records and Personally Identifiable Information Inventory**. The RL must store the hard copies of Essential Records at the Mission's local offsite storage facility or designated safe haven where they can be readily accessed in the event of an emergency.

511.3.4 Disaster Recovery Plans

Effective Date: 07/01/2020

M/CIO assists system users in developing a Disaster Recovery Plan. The Disaster Recovery Plan must address how to recover or restore loss of service or data processing installations and must include a listing of the organizational units' digital Essential Records and any other electronic systems necessary to support the units' critical functions. This includes any systems that have been reported to M/CIO as being needed at the relocation COOP site. The COOP Office Coordinator must provide a copy of the Disaster Recovery Plan to the USAID Essential Records Officer (see [ADS 545, Information Systems Security](#)).

a. M/CIO also:

- 1) Identifies the processing requirements necessary to support digital essential records and alternate methods and procedures (*i.e.*, suspending processing, using manual or personal computer procedures, or processing on a backup computer);
- 2) Maintains a list of offices with approved disaster recovery plans; and
- 3) Ensures that electronic retrieval procedures for digital Essential Records require only routine effort to locate needed information (as defined by the application system owners), especially since individuals unfamiliar with the records may need to use them during an emergency or disaster.

b. The System User:

- 1) Ensures that all electronic Essential Records systems, whether Emergency Operating or Rights and Interest-Related, are reported to M/CIO for transfer or duplication for the emergency relocation or COOP site. M/CIO only accepts electronic systems that support critical functions. Other systems will be accepted at the discretion of M/CIO.
- 2) Ensures that the digital Essential Records are current and updated at appropriate intervals as indicated on the essential records forms (*i.e.*, weekly, monthly, quarterly) in relation to the purpose they serve.
- 3) Ensures that instructions, as defined by the system owner, required to operate the system and access the records are available at the emergency relocation or COOP site.
- 4) Ensures that digital and hard copy versions of Essential Records are maintained per [FEMA Continuity Essential Records Management](#).

511.4 MANDATORY REFERENCES

511.4.1 External Mandatory References

Effective Date: 07/01/2020

- a. [36 CFR 1223, Managing of Essential Records](#)
- b. [Essential Records and Records Disaster Mitigation and Recovery: An Instructional Guide](#)
- c. [Executive Order 12656, Assignment of Emergency Preparedness Responsibilities, November 18, 1988](#)
- d. [FEMA Continuity Essential Records Management](#)

511.4.2 Internal Mandatory References
Effective Date: 07/01/2020

- a. [ADS 502maf, Form 502-4 Detailed Instructions](#)
- b. [ADS 530, Emergency Planning Overseas](#)
- c. [ADS 531, Continuity of Operations \(COOP\) Program](#)
- d. [ADS 545, Information Systems Security](#)

511.4.3 Mandatory Forms
Effective Date: 07/01/2020

- a. [AID 502-4, Annual Records and Personally Identifiable Information \(PII\) Inventory](#)

511.5 ADDITIONAL HELP
Effective Date: 07/01/2020

- a. [ADS 511saa, Essential Records Most Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- b. [ADS 511sab, Examples of Essential Records](#)
- c. [NARA Essential Records Guide](#)
- d. [NARA Important Records Emergency Information](#)

511.6 DEFINITIONS
Effective Date: 12/12/2019

See the [ADS Glossary](#) for all ADS terms and definitions.

Contingency Plan

A written plan of actions to be taken to safeguard assets and provide reasonable continuity of support should normal operations be disrupted due to the occurrence of an emergency situation or other undesirable event. (**Chapters 511, [562](#), [563](#)**)

Contingency Planning

Instituting policies and essential procedures to mitigate the effects of potential emergencies or disasters on an agency's operations and records. (**Chapter [502](#), 511**)

Continuity

To go on with selected USAID programs in an actual state of contingency operating conditions. (**Chapter [502](#), 511**)

Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)

A contingency action plan which provides the capability for a department or agency to continue operations during a crisis which renders the organization's headquarters unusable. (**Chapter 511, [531](#)**)

Cycling (cycle)

The periodic removal of obsolete copies of essential records and their placements with copies of current essential records. This may occur daily, weekly, quarterly, annually, or at other designated intervals. (**Chapter [502](#), 511**)

Digital Essential Record

When we refer to digital essential records, we mean records that you can view on a computer screen, whether a desktop, laptop, tablet or mobile phone screen. Digital records exist either because a digital version has been made from the paper record or because they were 'born-digital'. USAID requires that essential record copies be maintained in both the hard copy and digital format. (**Chapter 511**)

Disaster

An unexpected occurrence, manmade or natural, that causes loss of life, health, property or livelihood, inflicting widespread destruction and distress and having long-term, adverse effects on Agency operations. It is distinguished from an accident by its magnitude and by its damage to the community infrastructure or the resources required for recovery. (**Chapters [502](#), 511, [530](#)**)

Disaster Recovery Plan (DRP)

The document that defines the resources, actions, tasks and data required for managing the business recovery process in the event of a business interruption. The plan is designed to assist in restoring the business process within the stated disaster recovery goal. (**Chapter 511**)

Emergency

A situation or an occurrence of a serious nature, developing suddenly and unexpectedly, and demanding immediate action. This is generally a short duration, for

example, an interruption of normal Agency operations for a week or less. It may involve electrical failure or minor flooding caused by broken pipes. (Chapter [502](#), [511](#))

Emergency Operating Records

The type of essential records essential to the continued functioning or reconstitution of an organization during and after an emergency. (Chapter [502](#), [511](#))

Emergency Relocation Site (ERS)

The site containing the Agency's Emergency Operating facility. Executive Order 12656 requires all Federal departments and agencies to establish plans, programs, equipment and facilities to ensure the continuity of essential functions. (Chapter [511](#), [531](#))

Essential Records

Essential records are agency records that are needed to meet operational responsibilities and to protect the legal and financial rights of the government and those affected by government activities during a national security emergency or disaster. (Chapter [502](#), [511](#))

Recovery

To restore USAID programs/activities from a contingency state to their usual state under normal operating conditions (the rebuilding phase). (Chapter [502](#), [511](#))

Rights and Interest Records

Records essential to the preservation of the legal rights and interests of individual citizens and the Federal Government. Examples are legal proceedings, payroll, and retirement records. (Chapter [502](#), [511](#))

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