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GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

TO: Heads of Federal Agencies


SUBJECT: Protection of Personnel and Fiscal Records for Emergency Use

An important element in preparing plans for assuring the availability of records of the Federal Government essential for its operation in an emergency has been the development of a Government-wide program for the protection of personnel and fiscal records common to all agencies. Many individual agencies have asked for information about Government-wide plans for these records.

The head of each agency is responsible for ensuring that his agency will be able to operate under emergency conditions, but because many personnel and fiscal records are common to many or all agencies it has seemed advisable to develop a program for their protection on a Government-wide basis. Representatives of the Civil Service Commission, the General Accounting Office, the Budget Bureau, and the General Services Administration have accordingly developed the attached "Recommended Program for the Protection of Personnel and Fiscal Records for Emergency Use."

Circumstances within individual agencies may make it possible for an agency to ignore these suggestions; in other cases agencies may find it necessary to develop more elaborate programs to fit their own needs. Unless heads of agencies are entirely satisfied that their measures for protecting such records are adequate, however, it is suggested that careful consideration be given to putting this recommended program into effect as rapidly as possible.

Inquiries concerning these recommendations may be referred to E. G. Campbell (Room 104, National Archives Building, Telephone Code 151, extension 5185) of the staff of the National Archives and Records Service.


JESS LARSON
Administrator

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GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

November 16, 1951

Recommended Program for the Protection of
Personnel and Fiscal Records for Emergency Use

1. General. The program set forth below deals with records relating to civilian employees of the Federal Government and with fiscal records, insofar as the records are concerned with functions common to many or all agencies. This program is based on two underlying assumptions: (1) that special protective measures can practicably be undertaken only for the minimum core of documents necessary to protect the legal rights of citizens and of the Government, and (2) that in most cases decentralization and dispersal to scattered storage locations offer the best and most practicable measures for the protection of records.
2. Personnel Records. The Civil Service Commission, the Bureau of the Budget, the General Accounting Office, and the General Services Administration have studied jointly what special protective measures are required. As a result, the following special precautions are being taken by these agencies or are recommended to protect the personnel records of all agencies:
 - a. Forms 2806 showing service and deduction data:
 - (1) The forms covering separated, transferred, and retired employees are in the Retirement Division of the Civil Service Commission. Funds have been appropriated for protecting the essential information in these files.
 - (2) The forms covering personnel currently employed are physically dispersed in more than 2,000 locations. It is believed that for the most part the present dispersal furnishes adequate protection. However, it is recommended that agencies located in target areas adopt either of two possible methods of protecting the data on the forms: (1) if individual earning record cards (Standard Form 1127 or its equivalent) covering all service of employees are available, those earning cards that have been closed out should be transferred to a decentralized location (see paragraph c(3) below); (2) if no such individual earning records are available, agencies should duplicate their Forms 2806 by microfilming them and transferring the microfilm copies to a decentralized location.

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RESTRICTEDb. Personal history files showing service data:

- (1) The Service Records Division of the Civil Service Commission has skeleton files on all employees. Decentralization was suggested for these records but funds were not provided. Duplication is not practical. Hence, for the time being, reliance will be placed on the information in the official personnel folders and the Civil Service Commission register cards or certification files in case of total destruction of the Commission's service record file.
- (2) The official personnel folders are currently dispersed in more than 2,000 locations and, in view of the summary information available in the Forms 2806 and in Forms 7 (Service Record Card), this dispersion seems to afford adequate protection.

c. Primary pay records showing service and deduction data:

- (1) The Comptroller General has made arrangements providing that copies of periodic payrolls received by the General Accounting Office with accounts of the Treasury Department disbursing officers (including Washington) will be sent to decentralized locations, where they will be retained as security copies.
- (2) It is expected that the Comptroller General will complete necessary arrangements for the transfer from possible target areas to a relatively safe location of all comprehensive payrolls which are subject to site audit and therefore normally remain in the custody of individual agencies.
- (3) It is recommended that all agencies having individual earning record cards (Standard Form 1127 or its equivalent) closed out by April 1, 1951, in coastal metropolitan areas, including Washington, transfer them to decentralized locations, and that thereafter future cards be transferred to the same points annually three months after the close of the year.
- (4) In order to protect the records showing balances of accumulated and current accrued annual leave to the credit of employees it is recommended that the leave record cards (Standard Form 1130 or its equivalent), covering the final pay period of each calendar year, be associated with the individual earning record cards (Standard Form 1127 or its equivalent) before such cards are forwarded to records centers or field offices.

Storage facilities for records to be decentralized will be furnished by the General Services Administration at Federal Records Centers for any agency not having appropriate space available in its own field offices. Special arrangements for shipping the records to Federal Records Centers may be made with the Records Management Division, National Archives and

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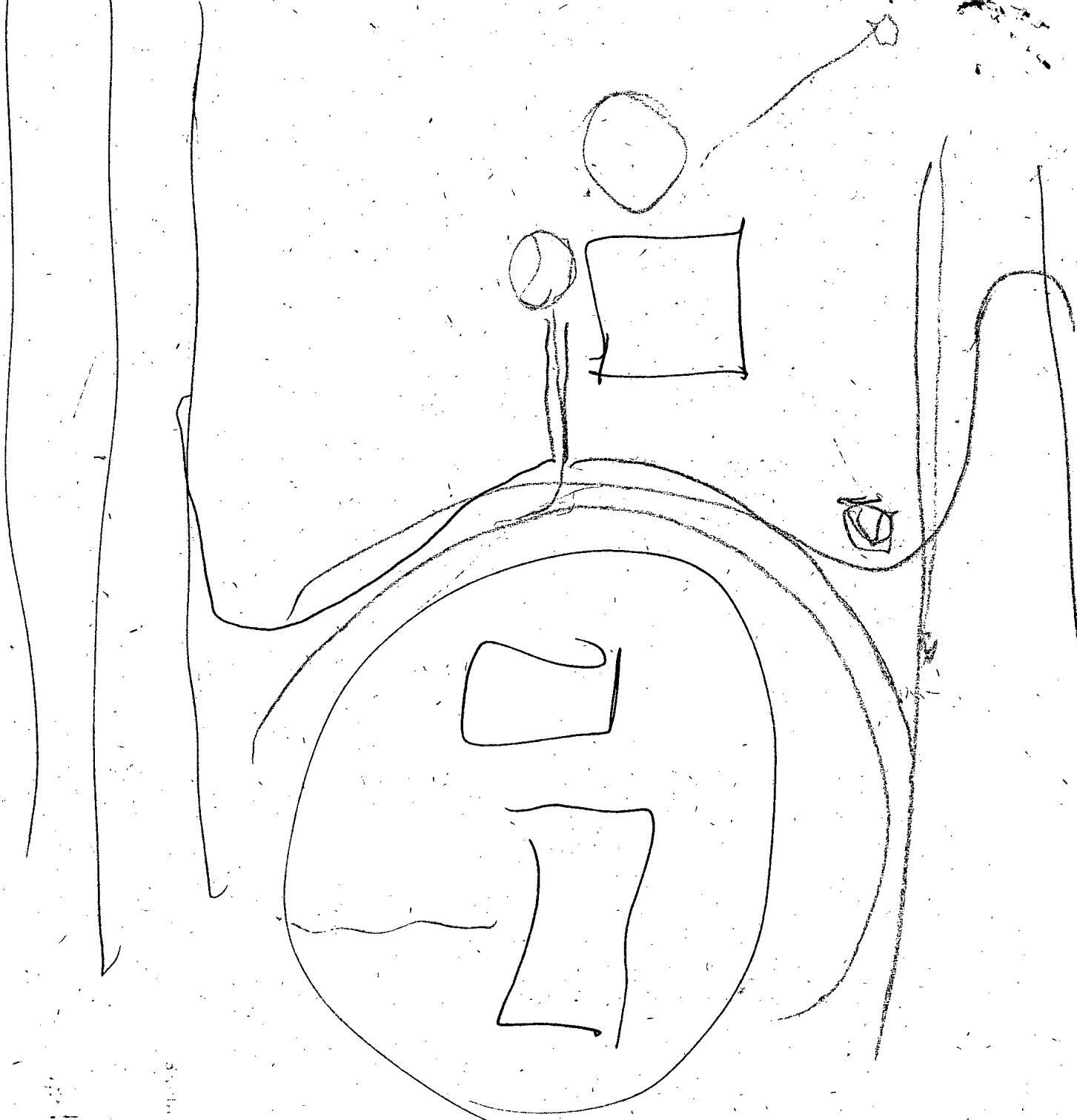
Records Service (Code 151, extension 5183).

3. Fiscal Records. The General Accounting Office and the General Services Administration have collaborated in considering needs for the protection of accounting, procurement, and other financial records. Included in this category (in addition to those relating to employees' pay) are the records that make up the accounts transmitted by the various agencies to the General Accounting Office in Washington and to its decentralized locations, as well as those being held by the agencies for site audit purposes.

Essential accounting, procurement, and other documents which are forwarded to the General Accounting Office in Washington ordinarily could be reconstructed from copies of contracts, vouchers, schedules, and related papers normally retained in originating agencies. It is believed that the risk must be taken that this duplication will afford adequate protection for necessary accounting information.

In the case of agencies located in Washington and in the case of agencies with records being held for site audit purposes, it is recognized that both the original and duplicate copies of these fiscal papers will in many cases be maintained in a possible target area. There are so many such possible target areas, however, that it is doubtful whether dispersal of extra copies of these records could be sufficiently coordinated to the point where such a program would be satisfactory from an operating point of view. After careful consideration of all the factors involved, it is the feeling of the Comptroller General, in which the Administrator of General Services concurs, that, because of the volume, nature, and widely dispersed locations of the subject records and the excessive costs that would be involved in reproducing, transporting, storing, and servicing them, a calculated risk of their loss must be accepted and that, with the exception of the pay records noted above, no change in the present policy maintaining and protecting these classes of records in the various agencies should be made at this time.

In considering the classes of fiscal records that agencies should protect in order to continue emergency operations under emergency conditions, the Comptroller General recommends that special attention be given those documents that are utilized to insure the constant flow of revenue into the Treasury and those involving, generally, the Government's credit, since the availability of funds is basic to the continuation of operations under any conditions. These classes of records are not common to all agencies, however, and should be included in the protection plans of the several agencies concerned.



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