

MANAGEMENT IMPROVEMENT POLICY

TREASURY BOARD CIRCULAR NO. MI-3-68

T. B. 679645, May 2, 1968

SUBJECT: PERSONNEL RECORDS - TRANSFER,  
STORAGE AND DESTRUCTION

Contents

1. OBJECTIVE
2. BACKGROUND
3. DEFINITIONS
4. TRANSFERS OF RECORDS
  - A. Categories of Transfers
  - B. Purpose of Transfer
  - C. Responsibility for Transfer of the Personnel Records
  - D. Security Records - Non-transferable
  - E. Leave Application Forms
  - F. Efficiency Rating Forms and Related Documents
  - G. Superannuation Documents
5. STORAGE AT PUBLIC ARCHIVES RECORDS CENTRE, OTTAWA -  
RETIRED OR SEPARATED EMPLOYEES' FILES
  - A. Department Retention Period
  - B. Movement to the Public Archives Records Centre, Ottawa
  - C. Security Records
  - D. Personnel Records Not Filed Individually
  - E. Departments which have NOT Previously Retired or Separated Employees'  
Official Personnel Files for Storage
6. DESTRUCTION OF OFFICIAL PERSONNEL FILES
  - A. By Departments
  - B. By the Public Archives Records Centre, Ottawa
  - C. Destruction of Collective Type Records
  - D. Personnel Pay Records
  - E. Physical Form of Destruction of Official Personnel Files
  - F. Destruction of Indices of Transferred Official Personnel Files
7. HISTORICAL PERSONNEL RECORDS
  - A. Action by Departments
  - B. Action by Public Archives Records Centre, Ottawa
8. FILE STRIPPING
  1. OBJECTIVE

This Policy supersedes Management Improvement Policy MI-10-66 dated August 19, (TB 658171) and all previous instructions issued by Treasury Board concerning the transfer, storage and destruction of personnel records.

## 2. BACKGROUND

This new Policy Statement has been occasioned by the issuance of the Second Edition, 1968 "General Records Disposal Schedules of the Government of Canada". Those portions of MI-10-66 which made reference to sections of the First Edition, "General Records Disposal Schedules", have been changed, and these portions are indicated by a vertical line at the side of the page.

## 3. DEFINITIONS

"Department" has the same meaning as in the Financial Administration Act and includes Agencies.

"Personnel records" include the official departmental personnel file and all documents and records of earnings, service and leave related to the career, or person, of any employee of the Crown, that are made or received by the department in which that employee is employed. The official personnel file does NOT include security clearances and related documents which are required to be filed separately.

A "centralized personnel record system" is one where official personnel files are located in headquarters of the department, and final responsibility for decisions in matters of personnel administration falling within the responsibility of the department are made at headquarters.

A "decentralized" personnel record system is one where official personnel files are located in the various regional or field offices of the department and where authority for personnel administration has been delegated by the Deputy Head to the officer in charge of each region or field office.

## 4. TRANSFERS OF RECORDS

### A. Categories of Transfers

- (i) from the headquarters office of one department to the headquarters office of another department (normally in the Ottawa area);
- (ii) from the headquarters office to the field offices of the same department;
- (iii) from the field offices to the headquarters office of the same department;
- (iv) from the headquarters office of one department to a field office of another department;
- (v) from a field office of one department to the headquarters office of another department; and
- (vi) from a field office of one department to a field office of another department.

### B. Purpose of Transfer

When an employee is transferred from one department to another department, or is separated from the public service, the official departmental personnel records of that employee shall:

- (i) on transfer, be forwarded to the receiving department; or
- (ii) on separation, be forwarded to the Public Archives Records Centre in Ottawa.

The prime purpose for the transfer of the personnel records is to avoid the creation and retention of duplicate records by more than one department. The practice whereby duplicate personnel records are retained by a department both at its headquarters and its regional or field offices should be discontinued.

C. Responsibility for Transfer of the Personnel Records

(i) Centralized Records - (At Headquarters)

When an employee is transferred or re-assigned from one department to another and both departments have centralized personnel record systems, it shall be the responsibility of the receiving department to ensure that the personnel records of that employee are transferred with him or shortly thereafter.

(ii) Decentralized Records - (Personnel transferred to, from, and between regional or field offices)

When an employee is transferred or re-assigned from one department to another and the records are decentralized, i. e., the official personnel file is maintained at the field office level for field office employees, it shall be the responsibility of the receiving department to ensure that the personnel records of that employee are transferred as appropriate, e. g. :

- (a) to the field office if the receiving department's records are also decentralized; or
- (b) to the headquarters office if the receiving department's records are not decentralized.

(iii) Field Office Duplicate Records

If decentralization of personnel records is in a transitional stage (duplicate personnel files still temporarily maintained in regional or field offices) only original documents and correspondence with more than transitory significance should be forwarded to the receiving department. All other material should be destroyed.

D. Security Records - Non-transferable

Personnel Security records of an employee shall NOT be transferred between departments.

When an employee is transferred, loaned, or seconded from one department to another, security records shall NOT be transferred. However, information relevant to security status shall on request be sent to the security officer of the receiving department. The minimum information provided should include the date the file was set up, and the date of the field investigation, (if any), the date of fingerprint check, the investigating department's subject file and the level of clearance granted.

E. Leave Application Forms

Leave application forms shall not be placed on individual official personnel files. Such forms shall NOT be transferred but shall be destroyed in accordance with the appropriate schedule of the "General Records Disposal Schedules of the Government of Canada", Second Edition.

F. Efficiency Rating Forms and Related Documents

Efficiency rating forms older than the period specified in the "General Records Disposal Schedules of the Government of Canada" Second Edition, shall NOT be transferred, but shall be destroyed in accordance with this schedule.

G. Superannuation Documents

In the case of transfers between departments, superannuation documents shall be completed and certified in accordance with the instructions issued from time to time by the Superannuation Branch, and shall be placed on the official personnel file of the transferred employee. These documents shall show the complete record of service and salary of the employee.

5. STORAGE AT PUBLIC ARCHIVES RECORDS CENTRE, OTTAWA -  
RETIRED OR SEPARATED EMPLOYEES' FILES

A. Departmental Retention Period

- (i) The official personnel file of a retired or separated employee shall be retained by the department with which he was last employed for one year from the date of retirement or separation.
- (ii) The official personnel file of a retired or separated employee who dies within this one-year retention period shall be treated in accordance with paragraph 6 A. (ii) below.

B. Movement to the Public Archives Records Centre, Ottawa

- (i) The official personnel files of retired or separated employees shall be kept in alphabetical sequence. At the end of the one-year retention period, such files shall be forwarded to the Public Archives Records Centre in Ottawa at a time to be arranged with the staff of the Ottawa Records Centre.
- (ii) As a means of assisting the Records Centre in indexing, and the relevant departments in identifying ex-employees later, the birth date of the employees should be shown on the official personnel files, top right, or lower left hand corner of the file face. An abbreviated month-year indication will suffice, e. g., "12/20" for December, 1920.
- (iii) Where the personnel records have been decentralized, the official personnel files may, at the discretion of the department, be shipped from field offices directly to the Records Centre, Ottawa.
- (iv) If the personnel records are in a transitional stage to being decentralized, and duplicate personnel files are still maintained in field offices, ONLY original documents and correspondence of more than transitory significance should be sent to the Records Centre, Ottawa. Other material should be destroyed.

C. Security Records

Security records concerning a retired or separated employee shall NOT be transferred to a Records Centre. Such records should be destroyed in accordance with the appropriate Schedule of the "General Records Disposal Schedules of the Government of Canada", Second Edition.

D. Personnel Records Not Filed Individually (i. e., Collective-Type Records)

- (i) Personnel records not kept separately for each employee may also be transferred to the Records Centre. For example, revenue postmaster's records that have not been placed in individual folders but have been filed with other documents about the respective post offices, contain personnel information for a group of persons who were successively appointed at one location. Such records and any others of a like nature may be transferred under special arrangements with the staff of the Records Centre.
- (ii) In future, to avoid the difficulty mentioned in (i) above, the personnel records should be filed on an official personnel file. Where it is desirable to maintain additional subject files, the record of such subject files can be completed by placing copies of the personnel information on these subject files.

E. Departments which have NOT previously transferred Retired or Separated Employees' Official Personnel Files for Storage

Departments which have not previously transferred the official personnel files of retired or separated employees to the Ottawa Records Centre should make immediate arrangements to do so.

## 6. DESTRUCTION OF OFFICIAL PERSONNEL FILES

### A. By Departments

#### (i) At Seventy Years

Departments are authorized to destroy the official personnel file of any ex-employee whose recorded birth-date shows that the ex-employee has reached the age of 70 years provided that:

(a) The ex-employee has been out of the public service for at least one year and there is no reason to believe that the ex-employee may be re-engaged in the public service; and

(b) the records are not likely to be of historical value as outlined in Section 7 below.

#### (ii) One Year after Death

Departments are also authorized to destroy the official personnel file one year after the death of any ex-employee who:

(a) dies while in the public service; or

(b) dies within the one year retention period specified in Section 5. A. (ii) above; provided that:

(c) no further action is pending or is expected that would require retention of the records for a longer period; and

(d) the records are not likely to be of historical value as outlined in Section 7 below.

### B. By the Public Archives Records Centre, Ottawa

The Public Archives Records Centre is authorized to destroy progressively the official personnel files of ex-employees whose recorded birth dates show that the ex-employees have reached the age of 70 years, without reference to departments. The criteria at paragraph 6. A. (i) (a) above and Section 7. below also apply.

### C. Destruction of Collective-Type Records

Collective-type records which have not been kept separately for individuals shall be retained by the Public Archives Records Centre until the personnel involved have attained the age of 70 years or for a lesser period on submission by the department concerned.

### D. Personnel Pay Records

Firm and comprehensive retention periods have been established by the Comptroller of the Treasury for the destruction of Treasury pay records of employees. These are shown in the appropriate schedule of the "General Records Disposal Schedules of the Government of Canada", Second Edition.

Since the Comptroller of the Treasury maintains collective pay lists of employees, e.g., salary lists, duplicate records of the same type should NOT be kept by personnel or administrative offices beyond the retention periods stated in the appropriate schedule of the "General Records Disposal Schedules of the Government of Canada", Second Edition.

### E. Physical Form of Destruction of Official Personnel Files

The method of destruction for official personnel files shall be by means of shredding, pulping or burning. The files shall NOT be disposed of by sale as waste or salvage.

F. Destruction of Indices of Transferred Official Personnel Files

Departments which have organized any type of index control for the official personnel files transferred to another department or transferred to the Public Archives Records Centre in Ottawa may destroy such indices two years after the date of the transfer. This includes cards, covering letters and receipts.

7. HISTORICAL PERSONNEL RECORDS

A. Action by Departments

- (i) Personnel and records officers having knowledge of former employees who have attained distinction within the public service, or some special distinction or status beyond the bounds of duty, or outside the public service, can assist the Public Archives greatly by tagging the official personnel files of such employees or of employees who have attained any of the ranks listed under B. below.
- (ii) If any doubt exists about a particular official personnel file, it shall NOT be destroyed within the department but shall be suitably tagged and transferred to the Ottawa Records Centre for further historical assessment.

B. Action by the Public Archives Records Centre, Ottawa

To ensure the preservation of the official personnel file of employees who may be of interest to historians, the Ottawa Records Centre will examine for permanent retention the files of employees of the following ranks or their equivalents:

1. Deputy Ministers
2. Associate and Assistant Deputy Ministers
3. Commissioners
4. Chairmen of Boards
5. Comptrollers or Directors General
6. Agents General
7. Directors of Branches and Divisions
8. Deputy Superintendents of Indian Affairs
9. Dominion Astronomers
10. Surveyors General
11. Masters of the Mint
12. Dominion Hydrographers
13. Dominion Geodesists
14. Chief Oceanographers
15. Chief Geologists
16. Chief Architects
17. Chief Engineers
18. Dominion Land Surveyors
19. All Surveyors and Engineers in charge of Public Works, Railways and Canals
20. Captains of Vessels serving Hudson Bay and Northern Posts
21. Clerks of the Crown in Chancery
22. Commissioners, Deputy and Assistant Commissioners and other Officers of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police including Inspectors and above

23. Ambassadors
24. High Commissioners
25. Heads of Missions
26. Consuls General
27. Senior Officials outside Canada
28. Senior Members of the Judiciary, i. e. , Chief Justices and Justices of the Supreme, Exchequer and other Courts
29. Officers of Parliament including the Sergeant-at-Arms, Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod, Clerk of the House, Law Clerks and Others.

8. FILE STRIPPING

There should be no file stripping as a matter of course; this practice is not economical. However, during daily references to personnel files, ephemeral material can and should be removed from the files by the staffs of personnel offices. Records dealing specifically with disciplinary matters may be disposed of in accordance with the appropriate schedule of the "General Records Disposal Schedules of the Government of Canada, Second Edition".

\* Note:-

Treasury Board Circular No. 1970-33 (T. B. 679645) of February 19, 1970 supplements Directive MI-3-68 and confirms that the policies contained therein apply to personnel files of separated overseas employees, locally engaged and locally paid, and not subject to Canadian conditions of employment. The files of such personnel are to be forwarded to Ottawa.