



United States
Office of Government Ethics
1201 New York Avenue, NW., Suite 500
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February 22, 1999
DO-99-007

MEMORANDUM

TO: Designated Agency Ethics Officials

FROM: Stephen D. Potts Director

SUBJECT: Publication of Disposition Instructions On Agency Copies of Semiannual Expense Reports for Non-Federally Funded Travel and Related Records

The Office of Government Ethics (OGE) is pleased to announce the publication of disposition instructions by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) on the management of agency copies of Semiannual Expense Reports for Non-Federally Funded Travel and related records. The publication of this guidance marks the culmination of a collaborative effort initiated by OGE and NARA in 1996 for the purpose of providing General Records Schedule (GRS) instructions on the retention of semiannual expense report records. The GRS provides mandatory disposition instructions for temporary administrative records common to many departments and agencies.

During last year's Annual Government Ethics Conference, OGE shared the results of this collaborative effort with the Federal ethics community in the panel session on managing ethics records. The announcement was well received by the session attendees, who expressed an interest in seeing similar initiatives in the future. On December 21, 1998, NARA published the guidance in the latest version of GRS 9 (Travel and Transportation Records). The instructions read as follows:

GRS 9

Item 6. Non-Federally Funded Travel.

a. Agency copies of Semiannual Expense Reports for Non-Federally Funded Travel submitted by all Executive Branch agencies to the Office of Government Ethics. Reports summarize payments made to the agency from non-Federal sources for travel, subsistence, and related expenses for an employee who attends a meeting or similar function relating to official duties.

Destroy when 4 years old.

b. Statements, forms, and other records used to compile Semiannual Expense Reports for Non-Federally Funded Travel.

Destroy 1 year after submission of report to the Office of Government Ethics.

Item 6.a. specifically covers agency copies of semiannual travel reports prepared under 31 U.S.C. 1353 in accordance either with instructions provided in 41 C.F.R. 304-1.9(a) of the General Services Administration (GSA) regulations or on the two standard reporting forms GSA recently issued (after prior OGE comment), the SF 326, "Semiannual Report of Payments Accepted from a Non-Federal Source" and the SF 326A, continuation sheet. As a precaution, ethics officials should first consult with their agency's records manager(s) before destroying any copies of Semiannual Expense Reports for Non-Federally Funded Travel or related records in accordance with the new NARA disposition instructions.

OGE has sought to assist ethics officials in their daily activities by helping develop simple and definitive guidance on managing ethics records. In addition to the recently released guidance found in GRS 9, Item 6, ethics officials can also find disposition instructions (with a general 6 year retention period) for the care of financial disclosure reports in GRS 1 (Civilian Personnel Records), Item 24. OGE will be recommending updates to GRS 1, Item 24 in the near future. OGE recognizes that by promoting the use of sound recordkeeping practices, we can help to simplify the job of agency ethics officials and ensure the effective operation of ethics programs. We look forward to collaborating with NARA and other agencies on future records management projects concerning ethics program records and welcome your suggestions in this area. If you have any questions or comments regarding this DAEOgram, you may contact the following OGE staff member:

Michael J. Lewandowski Records Management Officer Phone #: 202-208-8000, ext. 1185

A copy of the latest version of GRS 9 has been posted by NARA on its Web site at <http://ardor.nara.gov/grs/grs09.html>.