

## Office of Personnel Management

## § 293.106

greatest extent practicable, be collected directly from the individual concerned. Factors to be considered in determining whether to collect the data from the individual concerned or a third party are when:

(1) The nature of the information is such that it can only be obtained from another party;

(2) The cost of collecting the information directly from the individual is unreasonable when compared with the cost of collecting it from another party;

(3) There is virtually no risk that information collected from other parties, if inaccurate, could result in a determination adverse to the individual concerned;

(4) The information supplied by an individual must be verified by another party; or

(5) There are provisions made, to the greatest extent practicable, to verify information collected from another party with the individual concerned.

### § 293.105 Restrictions on collection and use of information.

(a) First Amendment. Personnel records describing how individuals exercise rights guaranteed by the First Amendment are prohibited unless expressly authorized by statute, or by the individual concerned, or unless pertinent to and within the scope of an authorized law enforcement activity. These rights include, but are not limited to, free exercise of religious and political beliefs, freedom of speech and the press, and freedom to assemble and to petition the government.

(b) Social Security Number.

(1) Agencies may not require individuals to disclose their Social Security Number unless disclosure would be required;

(i) Under Federal statute; or

(ii) Under any statute, Executive order, or regulation that authorizes any Federal, State, or local agency maintaining a system of records that was in existence and operating prior to January 1, 1975, to request the Social Security Number as a necessary means of verifying the identity of an individual.

(2) Individuals asked to voluntarily (circumstances not covered by para-

graph (b)(1) of this section) provide their Social Security Number shall suffer no penalty or denial of benefits for refusing to provide it.

### § 293.106 Safeguarding information about individuals.

(a) To ensure the security and confidentiality of personnel records, in whatever form, each agency shall establish administrative, technical, and physical controls to protect information in personnel records from unauthorized access, use, modification, destruction, or disclosure. As a minimum, these controls shall require that all persons whose official duties require access to and use of personnel records be responsible and accountable for safeguarding those records and for ensuring that the records are secured whenever they are not in use or under the direct control of authorized persons. Generally, personnel records should be held, processed, or stored only where facilities and conditions are adequate to prevent unauthorized access.

(b) Personnel records must be stored in metal filing cabinets which are locked when the records are not in use, or in a secured room. Alternative storage facilities may be employed provided they furnish an equivalent or greater degree of security than these methods. Except for access by the data subject, only employees whose official duties require access shall be allowed to handle and use personnel records, in whatever form or media the records might appear. To the extent feasible, entry into personnel record storage areas shall be similarly limited. Documentation of the removal of records from storage areas must be kept so that adequate control procedures can be established to assure that removed records are returned on a timely basis.

(c) Disposal and destruction of personnel records shall be in accordance with the General Record Schedule issued by the General Services Administration for the records or, alternatively, with Office or agency records control schedules approved by the National Archives and Records Service of the General Services Administration.