

Office of Personnel Management

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handling procedures invoked) to the records, in whatever format they are maintained, by the employee or a designated representative;

(k) Ensure that a knowledgeable official determines that all appropriate long-term occupational medical records are in an EMF prior to its transfer to another agency, to the NPRC, or to another office within the same employing agency;

(l) Ensure that all long-term occupational medical records an agency receives in an EMF are maintained, whether in that same EMF or by some other agency procedure, and forwarded to a subsequent employing agency or to NPRC;

(m) Ensure that, if occupational medical records are to be physically located in the same office as the Official Personnel Folder (OPF), the records are maintained physically apart from each other;

(n) Sets forth a policy that distinguishes, particularly for purposes of records disclosure, records in the nature of physician treatment records (which are generally not appropriate for disclosure to non-medical officials) from other medical reports properly available to officials making management decisions concerning the employee;

(o) Provide guidance that distinguishes records properly subject to this part from those (e.g., Postal Service or Foreign Service employee medical records) subject to different rules, particularly in Privacy Act and Freedom of Information Act matters;

(p) Ensure that guidance regarding the processing of Privacy Act matters is consistent with Office regulations implementing the Privacy Act at 5 CFR parts 293 and 297; and

(q) Ensure that no security classification is assigned to an EMF by including therein any occupational medical record that has such a classification. In this regard, the agency creating the classified medical record is required to retain it separately from the EMF while placing a notice in the EMF of its existence and describing where requests for this record are to be submitted.

§ 293.504 Composition of, and access to, the Employee Medical File System.

(a) All employee occupational medical records (which exclude employee assistance/counseling, patient, non-personal, and epidemiological records) whether they are maintained in an automated, microform, or paper mode, and wherever located in the agency, are part of the EMFS. The records maintained in the EMFS are part of a Governmentwide Privacy Act system of records established by the Office. Agencies have the responsibility to ensure that such documents are maintained in accordance with the Office's Privacy Act regulations in part 297 of this chapter, with the agency's instructions implementing those regulations, and with the retention schedule for employee medical records stipulated in § 293.511. While non-occupational/patient records pertaining to an employee are not required to be included as a record within the EMFS, under certain conditions to be discussed in subsequent OPM guidance, copies of such records are occupationally-related and, in those cases, may be included in the system.

(b) Agencies must provide employees access to their own EMFS records consistent with Office regulations contained in § 297.204(c) of this chapter. When unexcepted access can be provided directly to the employee, such unexcepted access must also be provided to any representative specifically designated in writing by the employee to receive the record. Disclosure of an employee's occupational medical records to agency officials (both medical and non-medical) will be granted only when the specific information sought is needed for the performance of official duties.

(c) Other agencies for employee occupational medical records made to the custodian of the records must be processed in accordance with the disclosure provisions of the Privacy Act (5 U.S.C. 552a(b)) and the Office's regulations at part 297 of this chapter.

(d) Processing of a Privacy Act request for amendment of any EMFS record must be consistent with the Office's regulations contained in part 297

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of this chapter regarding amendment of records.

[51 FR 33235, Sept. 19, 1986, as amended at 66 FR 66709, Dec. 27, 2001]

§ 293.505 Establishment and protection of Employee Medical Folder.

(a) As required by these rules, agencies must establish an EMF when the employee leaves the employing agency and occupational medical records for that employee exist; agencies may also establish an EMF (if none presently exists) for active employees if the agency chooses. An agency must request the transfer of an existing EMF (and maintain that EMF as received) at the same time it requests the transfer of an employee's OPF using the procedures contained in § 293.306.

(b) Neither the original occupational medical record nor duplicates are to be retained in the OPF. Prior to the establishment of an EMF for a separating employee, when such records are created, they must be maintained physically apart from the OPF, although they may be kept in the same office.

(c) Records in an EMF, whether or not located in an office other than where the OPF is maintained, must be properly safeguarded using procedures ensuring equal or greater levels of protection as those in § 293.106. Disclosures must be made only to those authorized to receive them, as described in § 293.504(b), and employees must be able to ascertain from agency implementing instructions the location of all of their medical records. An EMF must be under the control of a specifically designated medical, health, safety, or personnel officer as prescribed in the agency's implementing internal procedures.

§ 293.506 Ownership of the Employee Medical Folder.

The EMF of each employee in a position subject to civil service rules and regulations is part of the records of the Office. When the EMF also contains occupational medical records created during employment in a position not subject to the civil service (e.g., with the Postal Service), the EMF is then part of the records of both the Office and the employing agency.

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§ 293.507 Maintenance and content of the Employee Medical Folder.

The agency head must maintain all appropriate employee occupational medical records in the EMFS. When an EMF is established for an employee, as required in § 293.504, the agency's EMFS must be searched to obtain all records designated for retention in the EMF.

§ 293.508 Type of folder to be used.

Each agency must use a folder that (a) has been specifically identified as the EMF and issued through Federal Supply Service contracts (Standard Form 66 D); (b) has been authorized as an exception to this form by the Office for use by a specific agency; or (c) in the case of an EMF containing records under joint control of the Office and another agency, an exception to the use of this form that has been jointly authorized.

§ 293.509 Use of existing Employee Medical Folders upon transfer or reemployment.

The requirements of § 293.306, regarding the use of existing OPFs, apply to the use of existing EMFs upon the employee's transfer to or reemployment in a new employing agency.

§ 293.510 Disposition of Employee Medical Folders.

(a) When an employee transfers to another Federal agency, the EMF must be transferred to the gaining agency at the same time as the employee's OPF. The EMF is to be addressed only to the gaining agency's designated manager (medical, health, safety, or personnel officer, or other designee) of the EMFS.

(b) When an employee is separated from the Federal service, the EMF must be forwarded to the NPRC with the OPF, using the instructions in § 293.307 of this part.

(c) When a former Federal employee is re-employed by an agency, and that agency believes that an EMF exists, either at the last employing agency or at the NPRC, the agency will request the EMF, but no sooner than 30 days after the date of the new appointment. No EMFs will be routinely retrieved during the initial review process (as is done with the OPF) except when authority exists for the agency to require