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|  | <p align="center">Department of Human Services Online Directives Information System</p> | <p align="center">Index: Revised: Next Review:</p> | <p align="center">POL 1952 9/02/2021 9/02/2023</p> |
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SUBJECT: Retention of Investigative Records

POLICY:

The policy of the Department of Human Services (DHS) Office of Inspector General (OIG) Internal Investigations Unit (IIU) is the retention of case files to support the investigation from the original allegation to the final disposition. Closed administrative investigation files will be maintained per established agency guidelines.

Maintenance and Storage

When not in use, all investigative reports and attached exhibits/evidence will be secured in locked cabinets within a controlled access area. The area is restricted to authorized OIG personnel in the performance of their official duties.

Any records related to criminal investigations, including final copies of the report, exhibits, and evidence should be kept in a secure area indefinitely.

With the exception of the final report and exhibits/evidence, all investigative files related to administrative investigations shall be maintained for 90 days AFTER the final report has been accepted and approved. Hard copies of case notes/documents and/or digital copies of files or emails received, sent, and/or archived that are related to the case shall also be PURGED at that time. After deletion of the digital administrative files, the recycle bin and all temporary and cache files shall be cleared.

The destruction of investigative files related to administrative cases shall be coordinated by the Chief Investigator and the Senior Investigator assigned to the case. The approved method of destruction is shredding.

Files related to administrative investigations are maintained for 90 days AFTER the report has been accepted and approved. Everything, including all hard copies of documents and/or emails received, sent and/or archived should be purged. All records related to criminal investigations should be kept indefinitely.

Protection of Records during a Natural or Man-made Disaster

In the event of a natural or man-made disaster, the Chief Investigator and/or appointed designee will have the following responsibilities regarding the security of IIU's records:

Ensure that copies of all ongoing and final investigative records maintained by the unit are secured and not in danger of being damaged or destroyed during civil unrest or natural disaster.

Ensure that all ongoing and investigative records remain secured on site and/or are removed to another location where they can be secured until such time the records can be returned safely to the secured area within the OIG office.

Immediately notify the Inspector General (IG) and/or Deputy Inspector General of any potential threat to the safety and security of the investigative reports.

When possible, ensure that an authorized OIG staff member is stationed in the area to secure the records until further instructions are received from the IG or Deputy IG.

A. Authority

[O.C.G.A. § 49-2-1 et seq.](#)

[O.C.G.A. § 49-2-4 et seq.](#)

B. References

None

C. Applicability

This policy is applicable to all divisions and offices of DHS.

D. Definitions

None

E. Responsibilities

1. The OIG Internal Investigations Unit Chief Investigator is responsible for oversight of POL 1952.
2. The OIG Internal Investigations Unit Chief Investigator develops, issues and updates procedures to implement this policy.

F. History

Replaces POL 1952, last reviewed 04/05/2019

G. Evaluation

The OIG Internal Investigations Unit Chief Investigator evaluates this policy by:

1. Completing an annual internal review to confirm accuracy of the established guidelines.
2. Passing any review(s) with no findings.