

CHAPTER 1. PURPOSE, BACKGROUND AND AUTHORITIES

- 1-1. PURPOSE. The purpose of the Vital Records Program is to ensure the selection and protection of that core of records necessary to the Department in performing its essential functions in a national emergency.
- 1-2. BACKGROUND. Under the "Continuity of Government" program, a concept initiated in 1952 by Executive Order 10346, each Federal department and agency is responsible for being prepared to carry out its essential functions under all national emergency conditions including a nuclear attack on the United States.
- a. More specifically, HUD, under guidance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is required to have the capability to accomplish its essential emergency National level functions without interruption from any one of three geographic locations, and its essential emergency Regional level functions from either of two geographic locations in each region.
 - b. Towards the fulfillment of the requirements in a. above, HUD has established three National level emergency operating facilities: one at the Headquarters building; one at HUD's National Relocation Site; and one at the FEMA Special Facility. Similarly each HUD Regional Office has two emergency operating facilities: one at the Regional Office building and the other at the FEMA Federal Regional Center (FRC). (Almost all of HUD's Vital Records are readily available in the Headquarters and Regional Office buildings. It is therefore primarily for the emergency operating facilities other than those in the Headquarters and Regional Office buildings for which Vital Records need to be identified and stored.)
- 1-3. AUTHORITIES.
- a. Executive Order 11490 directs the departments and agencies to develop such plans and take such actions as necessary to continue as a viable part of the Federal Government during any emergency that might conceivably occur. These include plans for maintaining the continuity of essential functions through programs concerned with, among others, safekeeping of Vital Records. Executive Order 11490 also directs the General Services Administration to provide instructions and advice on appraisal, selection, preservation, storage, and salvage of essential records needed for the operation

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- 1-3. of the Federal Government after attack, on an emergency basis, including a decentralized system. The General Services Administration has provided such guidance in its publication, "Federal Archives and Records Centers" (1979).

- b. Executive Order 12148 specifies that FEMA shall develop policies and plans to assure the continuity of essential Government activities through a variety of programs, including the safekeeping of essential records.
- c. FEMA Federal Preparedness Circular No. 11 requires that "Safeguarding of essential records is to be performed in accordance with policy guidance from FEMA and with program guidance from the National Archives and Records Service, General Services Administration." (The guidance provided in this HUD Handbook is in accordance with this requirement.)