

## CHAPTER 3. REFERENCE SERVICE

### Section 1. General

#### 3-1 Access to Files.

- A. Access to files in a file station should be limited to the file custodians) only. Do not allow any others to remove or refile material.
- B. Coordinate with HUD's space management personnel on how best to arrange office equipment and furnishings for files security. For example, file cabinets might be used to form a partition and the file custodian's desk placed for a clear view of the files and persons entering the file area.

#### 3-2 Requests. Requests for file material may be made by telephone, in writing, or personally. The file custodian should ask the requester to furnish all information needed to identify the record (e.g., case or project number, date, name of addressee, writer, subject content, and the program to which it refers).

#### 3-3 Release of Records to Sources Outside HUD. The decision to release or not to release information to a source outside the Department is governed by the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and the Privacy Act.

- A. Records shall be released to an outside source if approved by the head of the organization having primary responsibility for the program or activity concerned (or that individuals designee) and the release is made under the provisions of the FOIA.
- B. Release of records containing personal information shall be made only by the Privacy Act Officer, except if the release is required by the FOIA.
- C. Before releasing any information to outside sources, consult HUD Handbooks 1325.1 , Privacy Act Handbook, and 1327, Freedom of Information.
- D. Par. 1-6I of this Handbook describes the Privacy Act responsibilities of all HUD employees.

3-1

#### 3-4 Materials Marked "FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY"

- A. Release materials marked "FOR OFFICIAL USE" only to:
  - 1. The writer of the record.
  - 2. The addressee of the record.
  - 3. Anyone named to receive a copy.

- B. If this type of record is requested by other than those listed, obtain the approval of the official who restricted the record (or his/her successor) before releasing it.

3-5 Searching. Searching is looking for specific records or types of records at an official file station. Records that have been properly classified and filed can be found with a minimum of effort.

- A. The first step in conducting a search is to understand clearly what is wanted. Obtain all information needed to identify the record (e.g., project number, date, name of addressee, writer, subject content, and program to which it refers).
- B. To find the papers in the files, check (as appropriate):
  - 1. Office subject outline, if the subject is uncertain.
  - 2. Subject index.
  - 3. Alphabetic name index.
  - 4. Logical subject or project folder.
  - 5. Folder before and after the folder in which the material should be filed.
  - 6. Similar names or numbers.
  - 7. Chargeout records.
  - 8. Unfiled material.
  - 9. Originator/originating office to be sure the records were forwarded for filing.
  - 10. Mail control records.

### 3-2

3-6 Chargeout Systems. A method of keeping track of loaned records.

- A. Under this system, a chargeout card replaces material removed from the files each time it is charged out. The material charged out can be an entire folder or only one document (e.g., the official record copy of an outgoing letter, a card from a card file, a plan, or a microform). Using a chargeout card every time is vital, especially when files are loaned to anyone outside HUD.
- B. Don't keep a chargeout card in each file folder continuously in case it may be needed someday. This

wasteful practice increases the size of the files, requires buying more cards than needed, and hinders following up on chargeouts.

3-7 Chargeout Forms. The chargeout forms listed are authorized for use in HUD official file stations. The Optional Forms (OF's) are available from the local General Services Administration (GSA) stores. The HUD form is available from warehouse stock.

- A. OF 23, "Chargeout Record." This 8" x 10", chargeout card is used for letter- and legal-size records stored in standard file cabinets. Most HUD offices will use this form. See Exhibit 3-1.
- B. OF 24, "Shelf File Chargeout Record (Letter-Size)." This standard chargeout card for letter-size shelf files measures 8-3/4" x 13" plus a 1" tab. See Exhibit 3-2.
- C. OF 25, "Shelf File Chargeout Record (Legal-Size)." This standard chargeout card for legal-size shelf files measures 3" x 5" with 1/2" tab at the top. See Exhibit 3-2.
- D. OF 231, "Chargeout Card." This form was designed to charge out 3" x 5" cards from card files. It measures 3" x 5" with a 1/2" tab at the top. See Exhibit 3-3.
- E. OF 282, "Microfiche Chargeout Record." This Chargeout record can be used with all standard microfiche measuring 148 by 105 mm. It is printed on acid-free stock for use with silver microfiche. This form measures 4-1/2" x 6". See Exhibit 3-3.

3-3

- F. Form HUD-29, "Chargeout Suspense Record." This 3" x 5" two-part form is used for chargeout and suspense purposes for program and project files, files charged out to persons outside HUD, or other files where the time and cost of keeping a suspense file is warranted. See Figure 3-1.

Figure 3-1

FORM HUD-29, CHARGEOUT SUSPENSE RECORD

(Click Here or type Alt-p for PDF FILE OF FIGURE 3-1, FORM HUD-29, CHARGEOUT SUSPENSE RECORD.)

## Section 2. Procedures for Using Chargeout Cards Alone

3-8 Scope. This section contains procedures for using chargeout cards where the time and cost of setting up a suspense file is not warranted, such as for routine housekeeping files

charged out by a HUD employee.

- A. The term "chargeout card" is used in this section to refer to any of the forms listed in pars. 6-9A through E used by the office.
- B. Section 3 has procedures for setting up a suspense file for chargeouts, where warranted, using Form HUD-29.
- C. Always use the procedures in this section when charging out microfiche.

#### 3-4

3-9 How to Fill Out and File Chargeout Card. Fill out a chargeout card each time material is removed from the files.

- A. Chargeout cards should be written, not typed. The chargeout card should briefly, but adequately, identify the material being removed from the files, the person borrowing it and the date of the chargeout. See Exhibit 3-1.
- B. Place the chargeout card in the file in the exact location of the document or folder it replaces.
  - 1. Place chargeout cards for shelf files so the tabs extend out from the side of the files.
  - 2. Place all other chargeout cards in a vertical position so they extend above the rest of the files in the drawer.

3-10 How to Prepare Files for Loan

- A. When only one or two documents are being charged out: Fasten the documents inside an empty file folder with staples, fasteners, or binder clips.
- B. When an entire folder is being charged out: Fasten any loose material to the folder.
- C. Stamp or mark the identity of the file station (e.g., name of organization, correspondence code, room number, and telephone number) on each folder charged out.

3-11 How to Charge Out Microfiche: Place microfiche in a plain acid-free envelop designed for microfiche storage. Stamp or mark the identity of the file station (e.g., name of organization, correspondence code, room number, and telephone number) on the envelope before inserting the microfiche.

3-12 Restrictions. Never allow the index copies of files to be removed from the file station. Only the official record copies can be charged out.

3-13 Refiling. When loaned material is returned for refiling:

- A. Check it for completeness and proper arrangement.
- B. Place the material in its proper location in the file and remove the chargeout card.

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- C. Draw a line through the chargeout information to show that the material was returned. See Exhibit 3-1.

3-14 ReRequests for Loaned Material. When someone requests material which has been charged out of the files.

- A. Check the chargeout card to identify the person who has the material. Contact that person and ask that the material be returned as soon as possible.
- B. When the material is returned, revise the chargeout card to reflect the new borrower before giving that person the material.

3-15 Transferring Loaned Material. Charged-out material can be transferred from one employee to another directly, without routing it through the file custodian. However, the file custodian must be notified of the transfer so the chargeout card can be corrected. The material remains the responsibility of the employee who first charged it out if the file custodian is not notified.

3-16 Follow-up. Periodically, the file custodian should check the chargeout cards in the files to follow up on any loaned material kept longer than allowed. Note followup calls on the chargeout card.

### Section 3. Procedures for Using Suspense File for Chargeouts

3-17 Scope. This section contains procedures for setting up a suspense file for chargeouts, using Form HUD-29, where the time and cost involved are warranted. In general, suspense files are warranted for program and project files or for files charged out to persons outside HUD.

- A. The term "chargeout card" is used in this section to refer to any of the forms listed in pars. 3-9A through D used by the office.
- B. See paragraph 3-11 for procedures to use when charging out microfiche.

3-6

3-18 How to Fill Out Form HUD-29. When the file material requested warrants a suspense record, fill out (written or typed) the two-part Form HUD-29, "Chargeout Suspense Record" as follows:

- A. Identify the material being removed, the date of release, the person charging it out, and the file station where it should be returned.
- B. Assign a due date for the material's return in the upper right corner of the form.
- C. Ask the person borrowing the material to sign the form in the lower left corner. See Figure 3-1. When someone outside HUD requests file material, that person must sign the form without exception.

### 3-19 Filing Chargeout Card and Form HUD-29

- A. After signature, staple the bottom copy of the form to a chargeout card. Place the chargeout card in the file in the exact location of the document or folder it replaces:
  - 1. Place chargeout cards for shelf files so the tabs extend out from the side of the files.
  - 2. Place all other chargeout cards in a vertical position so they extend above the rest of the files in the drawer.
- B. In a 3" x 5" card file, file the originals of the Form HUD-29 by due date, with the most recent in front.

### 3-20 How to Prepare Files for Loan

- A. When only one or two documents are being charged out: Fasten the documents inside an empty file folder with staples, fasteners, or binder clips.
- B. When an entire folder is being charged out: Fasten any loose material to the folder.
- C. Stamp or mark the identity of the file station (e.g., name of organization, correspondence code, room number, and telephone number) on each folder charged out.

### 3-7

3-21 Restrictions. Supply requested material promptly, subject to restrictions on the release of the material. Never allow the index copies of files to be removed from the file station. Only the official record copies can be charged out.

3-22 Refiling. When loaned material is returned for refiling:

- A. Check it for completeness and proper arrangement.
- B. Place the material in its proper location in the file and remove the chargeout card.
- C. Destroy the original and duplicate copy of the Form

HUD-29.

- 3-23 Requests for Loaned Material. When someone requests material which has been charged out of the files:
- A. Check the Form HUD-29 to identify the person who has the material. Contact that person and ask that the material be returned as soon as possible.
  - B. When the material is returned, prepare a new Form HUD-29 to reflect the new borrower before giving that person the material.
- 3-24 Transferring Loaned Material. Material charged out using a Form HUD-29 cannot be transferred from one person to another directly. Instead, the material must be returned to the file station so the file custodian can prepare a new Form HUD-29 to reflect the new borrower. The new borrower should sign the form before receiving the material. Material not transferred in this way remains the responsibility of the person who originally charged it out.
- 3-25 Followup. Once a week, the file custodian should check the forms HUD-29 in the card file box for chargeouts which are overdue:
- A. Contact the borrower and ask that the material be returned. If the borrower still needs the material and no one else has requested it, a short extension can be granted.
  - B. Note the date of the followup and the new due date on the Form HUD-29 and refile it by the new due date.