



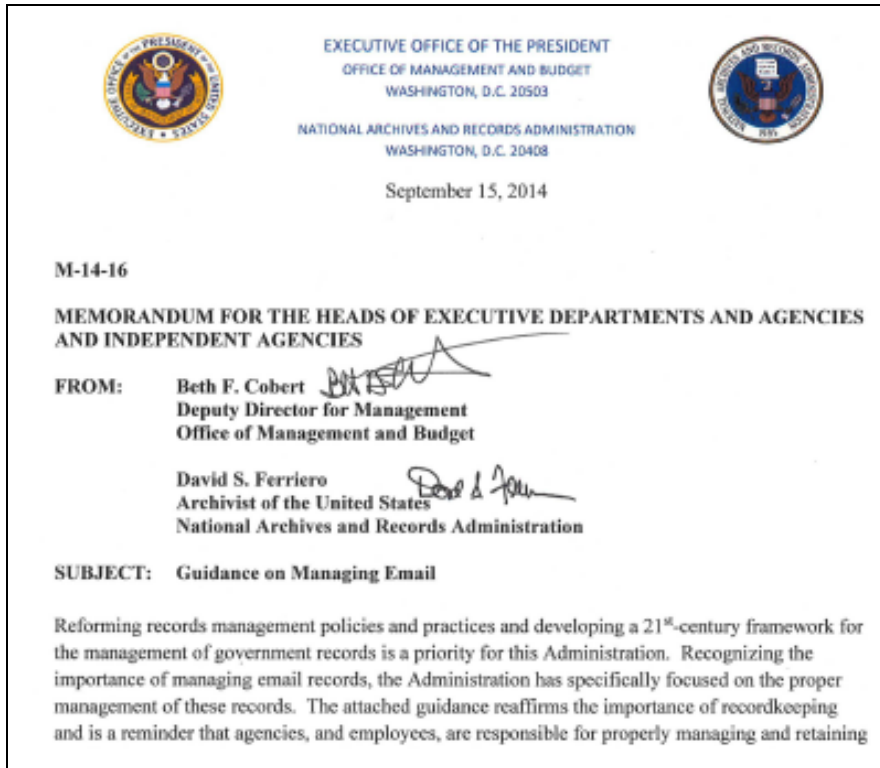
# Pacific Currents

Newsletter of the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration

Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada, American Samoa & Trust Territory of the Pacific  
Facilities and staff in San Bruno, Laguna Niguel, and Riverside, California  
[archives.gov/san-francisco](http://archives.gov/san-francisco) [archives.gov/records-mgmt](http://archives.gov/records-mgmt) [archives.gov/riverside](http://archives.gov/riverside)

October 2014

Volume 14, Issue 1



## Remembering the 1973 St. Louis Records Center Fire



The 1,596,332 square foot building had no sprinkler system

Catastrophic wildland fires in California in recent weeks remind us that our records can be vulnerable to damage and loss due to natural and human-caused disasters.

There is no greater example of this than the 5-day fire at the National Military Personnel Records Center in St. Louis, MO, July 12-16, 1973.

Since its early days, the Federal Government has experienced heavy loss of records due to fire, including the Department of War in 1800, the burning

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## OMB and NARA Issue Guidance on Email

On September 15, the Office of Management and Budget and the National Archives released a [Memorandum](#) to federal agencies on Guidance for Managing Email. The Memorandum also includes [NARA Bulletin 2014-06](#). Both documents reinforce the importance for each agency to manage its email properly and the need for all Federal employees to be aware of their responsibilities for managing email records.

As we all know, this has been an important issue for Congress and the Administration over the last few months. It is also an animating issue as we continue to work towards the goal in the [Managing Government Records Directive](#) (OMB M-12-18) *that all email be managed electronically by the end of 2016*.

Our Bulletin 2014-06 reminds agency heads of existing NARA guidance and resources to assist in managing email. This includes our [Capstone Bulletin](#) and other resources located [here](#).

**Records Management Training Schedule for FY 2015, page 2-3**

# Records Management Training, Fiscal Year 2015

## By Course Name (for training by location, see next page)

To register go to [archives.gov/records-mgmt/training/](http://archives.gov/records-mgmt/training/) or email our training registrar at [laguna.workshops@nara.gov](mailto:laguna.workshops@nara.gov)  
For more information on our workshops, go to <http://nara.learn.com/recordsmanagement-training>

### Records Transfer and Reference Service

#### FRC **Free** Half-Day Workshops

November 6, 2014, San Bruno, California  
January 26, 2015, Seattle, Washington  
February 18, 2015, Oakland, California  
April 29, 2015, Sacramento, California  
June 8, 2015, Seattle, Washington

### Records Management Overview

(Knowledge Area 1)

January 25, 2015, Las Vegas, Nevada  
February 23, 2015, Honolulu, Hawaii  
April 6, 2015, Broomfield (Denver), Colorado  
August 16, 2015, San Diego, California

### Records Scheduling (Knowledge Area 3)

January 28-29, 2015, Las Vegas, Nevada  
January 28-29, 2015, Seattle, Washington  
February 26-27, 2015, Honolulu, Hawaii  
April 9-10, 2015, Broomfield (Denver), Colorado  
June 11-12, 2015, Seattle, Washington  
August 19-20, 2015, San Diego, California

### Asset and Risk Management

(Knowledge Area 5)

February 4-5, 2015, Las Vegas, Nevada  
February 4-5, 2015, Seattle, Washington  
March 4-5, 2015, Honolulu, Hawaii  
May 20-21, 2015, Broomfield (Denver), Colorado  
June 17-18, 2015, Seattle, Washington  
September 16-17, 2015, San Diego, California

### Electronic Records Management

March 9-10, 2015, Honolulu, Hawaii

### Emergency Preparedness

March 12, 2015, Honolulu, Hawaii  
March 26, 2015, San Diego, California

### Basic Records Operations

October 8, 15, 22, 29, 2014 - Online  
January 7, 14, 21, 28, 2015 - Online  
February 2, 9, 16, 21, 2015 - Online  
February 19, 2015, Oakland, California  
March 9, 16, 23, 30, 2015 - Online  
March 24, 2015, San Diego, California  
April 8, 15, 22, 29, 2015 - Online  
April 30, 2015, Sacramento, California  
June 9, 16, 23, 30, 2015 - Online  
September 4, 9, 16, 23, 30, 2015 - Online

### Creating and Maintaining Agency Business Information

(Knowledge Area 2)

January 27-28, 2015, Las Vegas, Nevada  
January 27-28, 2015, Seattle, Washington  
February 24-25, 2015, Honolulu, Hawaii  
April 7-8, 2015, Broomfield (Denver), Colorado  
June 9-10, 2015, Seattle, Washington  
August 17-18, 2015, San Diego, California

### Records Schedule Implementation

(Knowledge Area 4)

February 2-3, 2015, Las Vegas, Nevada  
February 2-3, 2015, Seattle, Washington  
March 2-3, 2015, Honolulu, Hawaii  
May 18-19, 2015, Broomfield (Denver), Colorado  
June 15-16, 2015, Seattle, Washington  
September 14-15, 2015, San Diego, California

### Records Management Program Development (Knowledge Area 6)

February 6, 2015, Las Vegas, Nevada  
February 6, 2015, Seattle, Washington  
March 6, 2015, Honolulu, Hawaii  
May 22, 2015, Broomfield (Denver), Colorado  
June 19, 2015, Seattle, Washington  
September 18, 2015, San Diego, California

### Vital Business Information

February 4, 11, 18, 25, 2015 - Online  
March 11, 2015, Honolulu, Hawaii  
March 25, 2015, San Diego, California  
August 10, 17, 24, 31, 2015 - Online

# Records Management Training, Fiscal Year 2015

## By Location (for listing by course name, see previous page)

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For more information on our workshops, go to <http://nara.learn.com/recordsmanagement-training>

### Broomfield (Denver), Colorado

Records Management Overview (KA1), April 6, 2015  
Creating and Maintaining Agency Business Information (KA2), April 7-8, 2015  
Records Scheduling (KA3), April 9-10, 2015  
Records Schedule Implementation (KA4), May 18-19, 2015  
Asset and Risk Management (KA5), May 20-21, 2015  
Records Management Program Development (KA6), May 22, 2015

### Las Vegas, Nevada

Records Management Overview (KA1), January 26, 2015  
Creating and Maintaining Agency Business Information (KA2), January 27-28, 2015  
Records Scheduling (KA3), January 29-30, 2015  
Records Schedule Implementation (KA4), February 2-3, 2015  
Asset and Risk Management (KA5), February 4-5, 2015  
Records Management Program Development (KA6), February 6, 2015

### Sacramento, California

Records Transfer and Reference Service - FRC **Free** Half-Day Workshop, April 29, 2015  
Basic Records Operations, April 30, 2015

### San Diego, California

Basic Records Operations, March 24, 2015  
Vital Business Information, March 25, 2015  
Emergency Preparedness, March 26, 2015  
Records Management Overview (KA1), August 3, 2015  
Creating and Maintaining Agency Business Information (KA2), August 4-5, 2015  
Records Scheduling (KA3), August 6-7, 2015  
Records Schedule Implementation (KA4), September 14-15, 2015  
Asset and Risk Management (KA5), September 16-17, 2015  
Records Management Program Development (KA6), September 18, 2015

### Honolulu, Hawaii

Records Management Overview (KA1), February 23, 2015  
Creating and Maintaining Agency Business Information (KA2), February 24-25, 2015  
Records Scheduling (KA3), February 26-27, 2015  
Records Schedule Implementation (KA4), March 2-3, 2015  
Asset and Risk Management (KA5), March 4-5, 2015, 2015  
Records Management Program Development (KA6), March 6, 2015  
Electronic Records Management, March 9-10, 2015  
Vital Business Information, March 11, 2015  
Emergency Preparedness, March 12, 2015

### Oakland, California

Records Transfer and Reference Service - FRC **Free** Half-Day Workshop, February 18, 2015  
Basic Records Operations, February 19, 2015

### Online

Basic Records Operations, October 8, 15, 22, 29, 2014;  
January 7, 14, 21, 28, 2015; February 2, 9, 16, 21, 2015; March 9, 16, 23, 30, 2015; April 8, 15, 22, 29, 2015; June 9, 16, 23, 30, 2015; September 4, 9, 16, 23, 30, 2015  
Vital Business Information (Online)  
February 4, 11, 18, 25, 2015; August 10, 17, 24, 31, 2015

### San Bruno, California

Records Transfer and Reference Service - FRC **Free** Half-Day Workshop, November 6, 2014

### Seattle, Washington

Records Transfer and Reference Service FRC Free Half-Day Workshop, January 26, 2015  
Creating and Maintaining Agency Business Information (KA2), January 27-28, 2015  
Records Scheduling (KA3), January 29-30, 2015  
Records Schedule Implementation (KA4), February 2-3, 2015  
Asset and Risk Management (KA5), February 4-5, 2015  
Records Management Program Development (KA6), February 6, 2015  
Records Transfer and Reference Service FRC Free Half-Day Workshop, June 8, 2015  
Creating and Maintaining Agency Business Information (KA2), June 9-10, 2015  
Records Scheduling (KA3), June 11-12, 2015  
Records Schedule Implementation (KA4), June 15-16, 2015  
Asset and Risk Management (KA5), June 17-18, 2015  
Records Management Program Development (KA6), June 19-20, 2015

# 1973 St. Louis Personnel Records Center Fire

*Continued from page 1*

of Washington, DC, by the British in 1814, Patent Office fires in 1836 and 1877, and the Department of Commerce fire in 1921, which led to the destruction of the 1890 Census.

The Military Personal Records Center — now known as the National Personnel Records Center — was a huge building. Hailed as an architectural wonder when it was built in 1956, the building was 1,596,332 square feet, second only to the Pentagon in size at the time. Two football fields would fit comfortably within each of its six floors. But it had no sprinklers or smoke-venting equipment and few firewalls. This was a recipe for disaster.

The fire burned uncontrolled for 22 hours. The smoke and heat were so intense that fire crews were unable to enter the structure — the source of the fire was never found. Instead, 55 engines poured water on the burning building for 5 days. 381 fire personnel were directly involved in fighting the fire, logging over 5700 on-duty hours, and uncounted additional volunteer and off-duty service. Several fire fighters were taken to local hospitals, treated for smoke inhalation, broken bones, or puncture wounds.

Although the fire was officially declared “out” on July 16, fire fighters would remain on site for the next several weeks. Water stood on every floor of the building. Records could be seen among the debris of the collapsed roof. But the problems and implications of the scale and damage

## FREE TRAINING: RECORDS TRANSFER AND REFERENCE SERVICE

This free half-day Federal Records Center training includes

- How to transfer records to your Federal Records Center
  - How to make an online request for reference services
- ▶ November 6, 2014, San Bruno, CA
  - ▶ February 18, 2015, Oakland, CA
  - ▶ April 29, 2015, Sacramento, CA

To register by email:

[sanbruno.transfer@nara.gov](mailto:sanbruno.transfer@nara.gov)

Or call Michael Frush (650) 238-3472

to the building and the records were still sinking in.

A huge effort began shortly thereafter to salvage damaged records — an effort that continues to this day. Nonetheless, over 18 million individual military service records were lost forever, including Army records for all personnel discharged between 1912 and 1960 and Air Force records for all personnel discharged between 1947 and 1964.

This event had many lasting consequences and implications. First, thousands of living veterans experienced extended delays while their service records were reconstructed from other sources.

Perhaps just as important was the impact the fire had on fire protection and building construction standards. The St. Louis records center was built without an automatic sprinkler system because consensus on the efficacy of such equipment was absent within the Department of Defense: those managers who opposed the installation of sprinklers in records repositories had won the debate in

this case, arguing that the damage caused by water was more significant than that caused by fire.

But this fire settled the debate. It led to the creation of new standards mandating sprinklers, fire walls and doors, smoke-venting systems and other improvements. Perhaps most dramatically, the National Fire Protection Association standard on records protection cites the St. Louis fire by name when it asserts that “no known method of construction can withstand the effects of an uncontrolled records center fire.”

Today, our NARA records facilities reflect many of these upgrades. For example, the Federal Records Center in San Bruno has a very robust sprinkler system, with ceiling sprinkler heads placed every ten feet throughout the facility.

*This article is based partly on a Prologue Blog post by Sara Holmes, supervisory preservation specialist at NARA St. Louis.*

## San Bruno marks the fourth anniversary of its deadly pipe line explosion and fire

On the night of September 9, 2010, a catastrophic explosion and fire swept through a San Bruno neighborhood, killing eight people, injuring many more, and destroying 38 homes.

At this time of year (and throughout the past four years) our thoughts are with all of those impacted by this terrible event.