



Office of the Chief
Records Officer for the
U.S. Government

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October 29, 2024

Gwendolyn Sanderlin
Department of Defense
Office of Inspector General
4800 Mark Center Dr.
Alexandria, VA 22311

Dear Ms. Sanderlin:

Thank you for notifying the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) about the loss of email records maintained in the Department of Defense Office of Inspector General's (DODOIG) Secret Internet Protocol Router Network (SIPRNET) and Joint Worldwide Intelligence Communications System (JWICS) environments.

DODOIG has reported that email accounts of departed employees between 2022 and 2024 were disposed of without authorization, and the lost email records were covered by the General Records Schedule (GRS) 6.1 items 010, 011, and 012.

This report further indicates that the records were destroyed because of a “gap in the implementation of protocols” for email retention. It was also reported that DODOIG could not determine the volume of lost records or recover them. DODOIG confirmed with NARA that the gap in protocols that permitted the loss of records had been identified and fixed by implementing new system retention rules and creating a backup retention server.

NARA requests that DODOIG respond to the following questions:

1. Please provide more details regarding the “gap in the implementation of protocols.” What does this mean, and how did this gap influence the loss of email records?
2. How did the DODOIG conclude that the error resulting in email loss is limited to DODOIG only? NARA is aware that several other entities use SIPRNET and JWICS, and we would like to ensure that the reported loss of emails is not a broader issue. NARA will be raising this matter at the department level to ensure no potential loss of emails by other SIPRNET and JWICS users.
3. The report asserts that in response to this loss of email records, the DODOIG has “applied the General Records Schedule (GRS) 6.1 (Capstone) to all existing accounts and provided enhanced training for all administrative personnel to reinforce the importance and proper execution of email retention procedures.” Please describe how the DODOIG

applied Capstone GRS 6.1 before this loss and identify what changes were made after this loss of email records.

4. NARA accepts that DODOIG cannot determine the exact number or volume of lost email records and does not have technical means to recover them. However, since the time frame in which the records were lost is known and the problem only affected departed employees, please identify how many email accounts of departed employees were lost and whether any of those employees were assigned to positions holding permanent email accounts.

Please respond within 30 calendar days of the date of this letter. I appreciate your attention to this matter. If you have any questions or wish to discuss this further, please contact the Records Management Oversight and Reporting Program by email at UnauthorizedDisposition@nara.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William Fischer". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

WILLIAM FISCHER
Chief Records Officer
for the U.S. Government (Acting)