



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

**Records of Prime Contracts Awarded by the Military Service
and Agencies (Defense Contract Action Data System (DCADS)),
7/1/1975 – 9/30/2006
Record Group 330**

Updated May 15, 2020

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1. What information is in these records?

This series contains information about contracts for goods and services between the private sector and the military services and agencies of the Department of Defense. Department of Defense (DD) Forms DD 350 and DD 1057 are the sources of the data. There is a record for each contract with information derived from DD Form 350, the Individual Contracting Action Report. The DD 350 is used in every fiscal year (FY). The DD 1057, the Monthly Summary of Contracting Actions, provides information on the total number of contracting actions and total number of dollars by month for each of the military services and agencies. There is a record for each of the contract categories listed in the DD 1057. The use of the DD 1057 began in FY 1984 and is included in every subsequent FY.

From FY 1976 to 1983, the records encompass armed forces procurement contracts with a value of \$10,000 or larger. Beginning in FY 1983, the records encompass military contracts with a value of \$25,000 or more.

The specific information collected on DD Form 350, and thus represented in these records, varied somewhat over time. Each contract record potentially provides information about the following topics involved in defense spending: system administration; reporting dates; the government purchasing or contracting office, the business name of the government contractor, description of the military supplies, systems, or services for which contracted, and its dollar value; and type of procurement, including whether competitively bid, and whether the contract awardee was a foreign firm, minority business, small business, or women-owned business. Beginning in fiscal year 1984, the records contain more detailed data in most of the above categories.

2. Why were these records created?

The agency created the database to provide administrative and management control over military supplies and services procurements within the Department of Defense. The agency also used these data to prepare special reports to the President, the Secretary of Defense, the Congress, and to private industry.

3. Why do a number of records have only a small number of fields with data and a large number of fields with blanks?

Records with a large number of blanks contain information whose source was the Department of Defense (DD) Form 1057. The purpose of the DD Form 1057 was to provide monthly summary information and those records do not have data in all of the fields. For information about DD Form 1057 please see the scanned documentation.

4. How do these records differ from the original contracts?

For this database, the Department of Defense took information from contract documents to create each record about a contract. They did this to have a systematic source for managing information about Department of Defense contracts. Hence, these records are separate from but related to the original contracts.

5. How can I access the original contracts documented in these records?

In general, individual paper contracts are appraised as temporary records so they are destroyed after a set period of time upon completion of the contract.

Thus, in general, the National Archives does not have the original contracts as part of its holdings. What is in these electronic records is likely the only information at the National Archives about these contracts.

6. Where can I learn more about retention of contract records?

Since contracts are records common to all agencies of the Federal Government, the records retention schedule for contracts falls under the General Records Schedules instead of specific schedules per agency. General Records Schedule 1.1: Financial Management and Report Records covers contract records. You can view General Records Schedule 1.1. at <https://www.archives.gov/files/records-mgmt/grs/grs01-1.pdf>. Background information on General Records Schedules and a list of all General Records Schedules is available at: <https://www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/grs.html>.

In addition, records retention schedule (or records disposition authority) "General Administration Records Required for Routine Office Administration" (NC1-330-77-4), dated May 26, 1977, also indicates that almost all contract records in the Office of the Secretary of Defense were appraised as temporary and to be disposed of after a period of time. You can view this records

disposition authority at: https://www.archives.gov/files/records-mgmt/rcs/schedules/departments/department-of-defense/office-of-the-secretary-of-defense/rg-0330/nc1-330-77-04_sf115.pdf (see category number 208 for contracts).

7. How can I access a copy of the full files?

The raw data file, along with the associated technical documentation, may be downloaded from the National Archives Catalog at: <https://catalog.archives.gov/>. There you can search by the series name, Records of Prime Contracts Awarded by the Military Service and Agencies or using the National Archives Identifier 578589, which is the description identifier for this series.

In the results, select to view the full series description. Click on the link “file(s) described in the catalog” next to “Includes:” for a list of the file units within this series. Then select the file unit containing the records of interest to you. The file unit description will include the list of electronic records and documentation files available for viewing and/or downloading.

Additional information about downloading electronic records from the Catalog is available at: <https://www.archives.gov/research/electronic-records/access-in-catalog-faqs>.

Please keep in mind that the data file consists of the raw structured data as loaded into AAD (i.e. the coded values without meanings), but without the AAD software that displays the meanings for coded values and field titles. For more details about using files containing raw structured data, you may wish to review our "Introduction to Raw Data" at: <https://www.archives.gov/files/research/electronic-records/raw-data-intro.pdf>.