



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Series: Records of Prime Contracts Awarded by the Military Service and Agencies (Military Prime Contract Files (MPCF)), 7/1/1965 – 6/30/1975

Record Group 330

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1. What information is in these records?
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1. What information is in these records?

This series contains information about contracts for goods and services with a value of \$10,000 or more between the private sector and the military services and agencies of the Department of Defense. There is a record for each contract with information derived from Department of Defense Form 350, the Individual Contracting Action Report. Records include information on the dates of contract action, estimated completion, and reporting; a code identifying the reporting department within the Department of Defense; the business names of the government contractors and contracting offices, including city, county, and state or country of the contractor; description of the defense spending involved in the purchase of the military supplies, systems, or services, and its dollar value; and type of procurement, including the extent of competition, type of contract, whether the contract related to foreign military sales, and whether it was awarded to a large or small business, a nonprofit institution, or for work outside the U.S. and its possessions. For prime contracts of \$200,000 or more during fiscal years 1966 through 1974, the records also document whether the contract was in support of the U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War.

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. 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.

4. 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.

5. 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).

6. How can I access a copy of the full file?

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 Services and Agencies, or using the National Archives Identifier 606901, 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>.