

Physical access to the AAC is generally restricted to AAC staff, VA Central Office staff, custodial personnel, Federal Protective Service and authorized operational personnel through electronic locking devices. All other persons gaining access to the computer rooms are escorted. Backup records stored off-site for both the AAC and VA Central Office are safeguarded in secured storage areas. A disaster recovery plan is in place and system recovery is tested at an off-site facility in accordance with established schedules.

#### RETENTION AND DISPOSAL:

Records will be maintained and disposed of in accordance with records disposition authority approved by the Archivist of the United States.

#### SYSTEM MANAGER(S) AND ADDRESS:

Director, Environmental Agents Service (131), Office of Public Health and Environmental Hazards, (clinical issues) and Management/Program Analyst, Environmental Agents Service (131) (administrative issues), VA Central Office, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20420.

#### NOTIFICATION PROCEDURE:

An individual who wishes to determine whether a record is being maintained in this system under his or her name or other personal identifier, or wants to determine the contents of such record, should submit a written request or apply in person to the last VA facility where medical care was provided or submit a written request to the Director, Environmental Agents Service (131), Office of Public Health and Environmental Hazards or the Management/Program Analyst, Environmental Agents Service (131), VA Central Office, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20420. Inquiries should include the veteran's name, social security number and return address.

#### RECORD ACCESS PROCEDURES:

An individual who seeks access to records maintained under his or her name may write or visit the nearest VA facility or write to the Director, Environmental Agents Service (131) or the Management/Program Analyst, Environmental Agents Service (131), VA Central Office, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20420.

#### CONTESTING RECORDS PROCEDURES:

Refer to previous item "Record Access Procedures."

#### RECORD SOURCE CATEGORIES:

VA patient medical records, various automated record systems providing clinical and managerial support to VA health care facilities, the veteran, family members, and records from the Veterans Benefits Administration, Department of Defense, Department of the Army, Department of the Air Force, Department of the Navy and other Federal agencies.

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#### DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

##### Privacy Act of 1974; System of Records

**AGENCY:** Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

**ACTION:** Notice of amendment to system of records.

**SUMMARY:** The Privacy Act of 1974 (5 U.S.C. 552a(e) (4)) requires that all agencies publish in the **Federal Register** a notice of the existence and character of their systems of records. Notice is hereby given that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is amending the system of records entitled "Ionizing Radiation Registry—VA" (69VA131) as set forth **Federal Register** 56 FR 26186 dated June 6, 1991, and last amended in the **Federal Register** 66 FR 30271-30273 dated June 5, 2001. VA is amending the system by revising the System Location, the Categories of Individuals Covered by this System, the Authority for Maintenance of the System, the Purpose(s) of the system, the Routine Uses of Records Maintained in the System, Including Categories of Users and the Purposes of Such Uses, and the Policies and Practices for Storing, Retrieving, Accessing, Retaining and Disposing of Records in the System. VA is republishing the system notice in its entirety.

**DATES:** Comments on the amendment of this system of records must be received no later than January 28, 2004. If no public comment is received, the amended system will become effective January 28, 2004.

**ADDRESSES:** You may mail or hand-deliver written comments concerning the proposed amended system of records to the Director, Regulations Management (00REG1), Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20420; or fax comments to (202) 273-9026; or e-mail comments to "OGCRegulations@mail.va.gov". All relevant material received before

January 28, 2004, will be considered. Comments will be available for public inspection at the above address in the Office of Regulations Management, Room 1063B, between the hours of 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday (except holidays).

#### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Privacy Act Officer (19F2), Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20420, (727) 320-1839.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The Ionizing Radiation Registry (IRR) program is located at the Austin Automation Center (AAC), Austin, Texas, is an automated integrated system containing demographic and medical data of registry examinations from 1981 through the current date. These data were entered manually on code sheets by VA facility staff and hard copies were sent to the AAC for entry into the IRR data set. The IRR system of records located at VA Central Office, Washington, DC, is an optical disk system containing images of paper records, i.e., code sheets, medical records, correspondence and questionnaires relating to the veterans exposed to ionizing radiation. Once these paper records are scanned on optical disks, they are disposed of in accordance with VHA Records Control Schedule (RCS) 10-1.

The System Location has been amended to include the IRR system's change to a secure web-based data entry procedure. The process moved to a secure web-based data entry system at each VA facility during the first quarter of calendar year 2003. The secure web-based data entry system is maintained by the AAC and provides retrievable images to users. The optical disk system is currently being utilized where there is no access to the secure web-based system. However, the optical disk system is scheduled to be discontinued in 2004 and all access to the IRR system will be through the secure web-based data entry system.

As amended by Title 38, Code of Federal Regulations, the Categories of Individuals Covered by this System has been amended. This system will continue to include data collected for veterans who may have been exposed to a radiation-risk activity, as authorized by Title 38, U.S.C., under the following conditions:

1. On-site participation in a test involving the atmospheric detonation of a nuclear weapon, whether or not the testing nation was the United States. Note: Reference to the timeframe