

On June 14, 2004,  
Reclamation sent  
the attached materials  
to the regional office  
for distribution  
to the district office.

**THE RECLAMATION REFORM ACT OF 1982 (RRA) AND THE PRIVACY ACT  
QUESTIONS/ANSWERS FOR DISTRICTS**

Row	Question	Answer
1	What is the purpose of the Privacy Act ?	<p>The Privacy Act ensures that:</p> <p>(a) Systems of records, which contain information about individuals and are maintained by Governmental agencies, are publicly identified;</p> <p>(b) Only information that is legally authorized and necessary is collected; and</p> <p>(c) Such information is maintained in a manner that precludes unwarranted intrusions upon individual privacy.</p> <p>Special requirements apply to “records” that are maintained in a “system of records,” as those terms are defined in the Privacy Act.</p>
2	What is a “record?”	A record is an item, collection, or grouping of information about an individual that contains the individual’s name or some other identifying symbol assigned to that individual, for example, social security number.
3	What is a “system of records?”	A “system of records” is a group of records from which information is retrieved by the name of an individual or some other identifying symbol for that individual.
4	Are any RRA-related documents considered records under the Privacy Act?	Yes, many RRA-related documents contain information about individuals and are retrieved from a group of records ( <i>system of records</i> ) by the individual’s name or some other identifying symbol. Examples of such documents are certification and reporting forms, irrevocable elections, lease agreements, trust documents, and partnership agreements.
5	Are districts that maintain such RRA records subject to the requirements of the Privacy Act?	Yes, districts maintaining such records are subject to the Privacy Act requirements because districts act as agents for the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation).
6	Does the Privacy Act apply to all RRA records?	No, the Privacy Act protects only those RRA records about individuals. It does not pertain to records about legal entities.
7	Do special storage requirements apply to RRA documents subject to the Privacy Act?	<p>Yes. Districts must restrict access to RRA records that are subject to the Privacy Act.</p> <p>a. Hard copies of such records must be maintained in a locked cabinet, locked room, etc. with access granted only to authorized personnel. Areas where such records are kept must be posted with warnings regarding access limitation and possible penalties for Privacy Act violations. Standardized labels for this purpose can be obtained from the appropriate Bureau of Reclamation office.</p> <p>b. Access to Privacy Act records on electronic files must be restricted through the use of passwords and/or other computer security measures.</p>

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**QUESTIONS/ANSWERS FOR DISTRICTS  
REGARDING THE RRA AND THE PRIVACY ACT**

Row	Question	Answer
8	May districts release RRA records?	Generally, districts may not release an RRA record subject to the Privacy Act to another person without written permission of the person to whom the record pertains. However, there are some exceptions. For example, records can be released to Reclamation RRA staff and parties listed as "routine uses" in the RRA System of Records Notice.
9	What is a "System of Records Notice"?	<p>A System of Records Notice is a notice published in the Federal Register that describes a system of records maintained by a Governmental agency. The RRA System of Record Notice, which was published in the Federal Register on March 17, 1999, can be obtained from the appropriate Reclamation office. As explained in the answer to the question in row 8, the Notice lists some parties to which RRA records may be released; however, Reclamation's advice is:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>WHEN IN DOUBT, DON'T GIVE IT OUT. CALL RECLAMATION.</b></p>
10	How are RRA records to be disposed?	RRA records that are subject to the Privacy Act must be burned, pulped, or shredded when they are discarded.
11	Are there any consequences if districts do not comply with the requirements of the Privacy Act?	Persons who knowingly and willfully make an unauthorized disclosure of records subject to the Privacy Act can be found guilty of a misdemeanor and may be fined up to \$5,000.