



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

Sent Via Email. No Hard Copy to Follow.

September 19, 2024

Tonia Austin-Douglas
United States Coast Guard
Attn: Records Manager
US Coast Guard Stop 7710
2703 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave., SE
Washington, D.C. 20593-7710

Dear Ms. Austin-Douglas:

Thank you for notifying the National Archives and Records Administration about the loss of a Family Advocacy Program case file. You reported that the records were supposed to have been included in a shipment of records between United States Coast Guard (USCG) facilities. One case file was not found in the shipment upon its arrival at USCG Headquarters. The file cannot be located, and it is therefore to be treated as an accidental removal or destruction.

NARA understands that the family advocacy cases pertain to domestic abuse or neglect allegations. Case files are created by the Office of Work Life when an allegation of neglect or abuse involving an active-duty member or his or her beneficiary is referred to the Coast Guard's Health, Safety, and Work-Life Regional Practice. We understand that the lost file contained records dated 2019-2021, and that the records were temporary records scheduled for a 25 year retention.

Although the applicable records schedule (N1-026-12-002,) states that hardcopy records are destroyed three months after they have been uploaded into an electronic information system, USCG did not actually deploy its electronic information system for these cases until 2023. The paper copy of the lost FAP case file was therefore the record copy, and the only copy.

We understand that the employee who shipped the records left employment with the Coast Guard shortly after the shipment, but was contacted and asked to search for the missing file. You also reported that Coast Guard Personnel searched the sending and receiving locations. These searches did not produce the file. Electronic versions of records in the file were irretrievable because of the amount of time that passed between the employee's departure and the attempt to reconstruct.

To mitigate future incidents, we understand that the Coast Guard is revising its case and records management policies and procedures to require inventories with shipments, and to require that witnesses confirm the contents of shipments at the sending and receiving ends.

Based on this information, the reporting requirements of 36 CFR 1230.14(a) have been met and NARA considers this matter closed. 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)

cc: Michelle Thomas, Department of Homeland Security, Department Records Officer