



THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1200

OCT 11 1996

MEMORANDUM FOR: SECRETARY OF THE ARMY  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY  
SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE

SUBJECT: Implementing Instructions for Elimination of Remains Identification Reference Specimen Samples from the Health Record

References: (a)

Assistant Secretary of Defense (Health Affairs) Memorandum and Policy Statement, "Establishment of a Repository of Specimen Samples to Aid in Remains Identification Using Genetic Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA) Analysis," 5 January 1993.

(b)

Assistant Secretary of Defense (Health Affairs) Memorandum, "Memorandum of Instruction of Procedures for the Collection and Shipment of Specimens for Submission to the Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA) Specimen Repository," 9 March 1994.

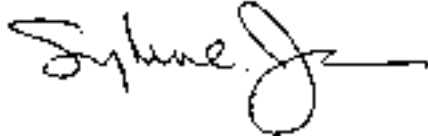
Previous policy on remains identification reference specimen sample collections (references a and b) required the collection of a bloodstain card to be inserted in the servicemembers individual health record in a "[medical records pouch](#)" in addition to the bloodstain card and oral swab sent to the Armed Forces Repository of Specimen Samples for the Identification of Remains (AFRSSIR). Reference specimen samples are to be eliminated from the health record.

The Services shall remove and destroy all existing remains identification reference specimen samples from individual health records. Services shall destroy, by shredding or incineration, any duplicate reference specimen bloodstain card stored in the medical record and the medical record pouch within one year of the date of this memorandum.

Collection sites shall no longer place remains identification reference specimen samples into individual health records.

Services shall ensure that hereinafter all specimen samples (two bloodstain cards and an oral swab from each servicemember) are sent to AFRSSIR.

AFRSSIR's [detailed collection procedures and explanatory information for dissemination to collection sites](#) are attached, so that servicemembers may know and understand the remains identification reference specimen sample collections program.



Stephen C. Joseph, M.D., M.P.H.

Attachment:  
As stated

**HA POLICY 97-007**

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**PROTOCOL FOR DESTRUCTION OF  
MEDICAL RECORD REFERENCE SPECIMENS  
USED FOR THE IDENTIFICATION OF REMAINS**

1. Purpose

Department of Defense (DoD) is concerned with the privacy and protection of servicemembers' medical information. This protocol is furnished to provide specific instructions to DoD installations/sites on the destruction of medical record bloodstain specimens used for the identification of remains. Questions concerning the destruction of these specimens can be directed to the Armed Forces Repository of Specimen Samples for the Identification of Remains at telephone 301-295-4379 or facsimile 301-295-4388.

2. General

a. The duplicate bloodstain specimen which is contained in the medical records pouch has been a requirement of the collection program since its inception in 1992. The potential exists for every servicemember who has a specimen in the Armed Forces Repository of Specimen Samples for the Identification of Remains to have a duplicate specimen in the member's medical record. It is also possible that due to insufficient information the specimen sent to the Repository was not entered into the database or a DEERS record flagged, but its duplicate could be in the servicemember's medical record.

b. Therefore, it is necessary to review all active and reserve component medical records to ascertain if a duplicate bloodstain card is in the medical record. This action will be completed within one year of the date of the memorandum directing the removal. Once removed the duplicate specimen will be destroyed by either burning or shredding.

### 3. Review of Medical Records for Medical Records Pouches

- a. A pictorial example of the medical records pouch is at enclosure 1.
- b. Service personnel responsible for the maintenance of the medical record shall conduct a screen of the record for the medical records pouch (see enclosure 1). This task may be accomplished by any organized method which will assure the removal of all pouches within one year. If found the medical records pouch is to be removed, and placed in a secure location until it can be properly destroyed.
- c. Service personnel responsible for issuing medical records for appointments shall conduct a screen of the record for the medical records pouch before issuing the medical records to the servicemember. If found the medical records pouch is to be placed in a secure location until it can be properly destroyed.
- d. When medical records personnel file medical information into a individual servicemember's medical record the record shall be reviewed to see if it contains a medical records pouch. If found the medical records pouch is to be placed in a secure location until it can be properly destroyed.
- e. To prevent repeatedly reviewing the medical record for the medical records pouch, the outside of the medical records jacket will be annotated with the following, "Medical Records Pouch Review Completed". This statement can be hand written or a stamp may be used.

### 4. Destruction of Medical Records Pouch

- a. The specimen in the medical records pouch is not biohazard material. However, due to the personal data on the bloodstain card and the medical records pouch it must either be destroyed by burning or shredding.
- b. Disposal of the medical records pouch by simply throwing it in the trash without ensuring that it will be burned or shredded is unauthorized.
- c. DoD installations/sites that maintain medical records will report back through their appropriate Service within one year that all medical records have been reviewed and that all medical records pouches have been properly destroyed.

### 5. Agencies other than DoD that Store DoD Medical Records

Coordination will be made with non DoD agencies to effect the review of medical records in their possession that may contain a medical records pouch. Individual destruction instructions will be furnished to each agency.

**MEDICAL RECORDS POUCH**

PLACE  
BAR CODE  
LABEL HERE

**Last Name**

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**First Name**

•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
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**MI**

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**Social Security Number**

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**CLOSING INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Insert dried blood stain card and desiccant pouch
2. Fold closure at perforation
3. Remove wax liner and discard
4. Refold adhesive onto itself along perforation

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