

# **NUCLEAR INFORMATION AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION**

## **Guidance for the Creation, Use, Storage, Retrieval and Reproduction of Records that Contain Color**

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

#### FOREWARD

During the January 2001 NIRMA Information Management Business Unit Meeting, members expressed concern over the lack of guidance on the storage, retrieval and reproduction of records that contain color. The Information Management Business Unit (IMBU) determined that a white paper on the management of records containing color was needed to promote standardization as to the storage and reproduction methodology of such records.

This document was prepared by a subcommittee of the IMBU with inputs solicited from all subcommittee members. Those individuals providing a significant contribution to this effort were as follows:

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## **1.0 PURPOSE**

The purpose of this paper is to provide guidance for the creation, use, storage, retrieval, and reproduction of records that contain color.

## **2.0 BACKGROUND**

The retrieval, storage and reproduction of records that contain color require special consideration and handling with regards to the most appropriate storage and reproduction methodology. Records programs may vary based on facility specific business requirements and cultures.

## **3.0 GENERAL**

### **3.1 USE OF COLOR FOR FUNCTIONAL PURPOSES**

- 3.1.1 Whenever color is used to designate specific information on records, fidelity and/or comprehension can be lost as the record migrates from one media to another and/or whenever the record is reproduced on equipment without color capabilities. For example, whenever graphs or flowcharts use color to designate different values or paths of action, the distinction (and consequently the comprehension) will be lost if the records are viewed or reproduced in monochrome or on equipment limited to black and white capabilities. This issue applies to any record regardless of retention media i.e., hardcopy or electronic media.
- 3.1.2 When the use of color as a designator within a record, context, i.e. background, circumstance, situation, perspective, and environment are critical issues that must be factored into the migration strategy. In most cases, retention of context can only be accomplished by migration of color differences to specific grayscale or black and white shading or hatching effect. Care must be taken to address the context within which color is used to ensure that as the transition is made, the appropriate context is transitioned as well. When color is used for definition or designation purposes within a document, (i.e. topographical map, wiring diagram, etc,) migration to grayscale or black and white does not address the context within which the color is utilized.

### 3.2 USE OF COLOR FOR AESTHETIC (COSMETIC) PURPOSES –

Use of color to enhance a record's appearance or to emphasize certain data generally does not present a problem when the record is migrated to another media, viewed or reproduced on equipment without color capabilities. The appearance may not be as aesthetically pleasing and any special emphasis placed on specific data may be lost, however, no comprehension is lost in the process.

### 3.3 USE OF SHADING, COLORED INKS OR HIGHLIGHTING ON RECORDS -

Shading (especially gray), redlining, use of ink colors other than black as well as some shades of highlighter pens can occasionally present problems as these conditions tend to obscure data or in certain cases of colored inks the data won't reproduce at all; particularly if the record is migrated to another media, viewed or reproduced on equipment without color capabilities.

## **4.0 RECOMMENDED ACTIONS TO MINIMIZE COLOR RELATED PROBLEMS DURING THE CREATION, USE, STORAGE AND RETRIEVAL OF RECORDS:**

- 4.1 Records Management personnel should interface with document designers and/or originators to discuss current technological limitations and issues associated with the use of color for functional purposes, shading, and highlighting.
- 4.2 Use of target sheets, annotations, header/marginalia overlays, or utilization of a blocking technique for the text or colored portion of a record may be used to display special instructions for document users in regards to viewing or reproducing records that contain color.
- 4.3 Color hardcopy page(s) may maintained in the site record retention storage facility (vault) and be cross-referenced to the original document; in the event that users may need to view the color information.
- 4.4 Records Managers should disseminate information to educate document preparers on color and/or shading-related problems utilizing the most appropriate communication tools and media available.

## **5.0 REFERENCES - None**