



UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

Federal Investigative
Services Division

Federal Investigations Notice

Notice No. 08 - 02

Date: August 8, 2008

SUBJECT: Electronic Delivery of Completed Investigations

The Office of Personnel Management's Federal Investigative Services Division (OPM-FISD) has established a greater use of information technology in the investigative and adjudications processes. We are excited to announce the most recent installment of our efforts: a process that provides for electronic delivery of completed investigative results. We refer to this new delivery method as "Agency Delivery." Agency Delivery uses an electronic tool which packages completed investigation files in a usable electronic format. Files are electronically sent to the customer agency in a condensed encrypted ZIP file via an approved secure connection. Agency Delivery replaces the traditional method of mailing a paper version of the completed investigation package with a secure electronic delivery through an automated process.

With Agency Delivery now incorporated into *EPIC*, which is OPM's integrated suite of automation tools that support investigations and adjudications, we provide for total end-to-end electronic processing for agencies equipped to implement. By linking electronic Questionnaires Investigations Processing (e-QIP), which collects the subject's background information electronically, along with imaged fingerprints and supporting documents, to OPM's automated investigations processing system, data and required forms can now move seamlessly between the subject, clearance granting agency, and OPM without paper handling, mail, or redundant data entry. During investigations processing, relevant data is relayed electronically to Federal, state, and local record providers, as well as OPM's field investigators for their use in conducting required interviews and record searches. Reports of investigations are constructed and stored in a data format along with text, data, and imaged results received from third-party records suppliers. Now with Agency Delivery, the investigative results can be electronically bundled for transmission to the adjudicating agency.

The Agency Delivery Process

The process of Agency Delivery begins after the closing action of the background investigation is entered into the Personnel Investigations Processing System (PIPS). Once the investigation is closed, a collaborative effort between PIPS and OPM's PIPS Imaging System (OPIS) generates a Distributed Investigative File (DIF). The DIF is the completed investigative package which contains results obtained throughout the investigation process and is provided to the customer agency in a combination of text, graphics, and imaged documents. The DIF may include, but is not limited to, reports of investigations, credit reports, arrest records, other agency files, written inquiries, Case Closing Transmittal (CCT), Certification (CERT), and the adjudication form OFI 79A.

The DIF is sent electronically to the customer agency as a final product in the form of a Portable Document File (PDF), eXtensible Markup Language (XML) via an encrypted, password protected ZIP file.

Benefits

The benefits of using Agency Delivery are:

- Eliminates hardcopy manual processes - agencies will no longer receive paper documents. All case-related material will be received electronically, which is a component of the e-Clearance initiative.
- Reduces delivery time - this process cuts out the mail time and enhances the overall efficiency of the investigative process.
- Automated files feed into an agency's system - this will allow agencies to process cases as needed based upon the automation/technology systems currently in place. Enhances and streamlines agency adjudication process – agencies will have the ability to streamline the adjudication process.

Requirements

Agencies receiving the investigative file results via Agency Delivery require Connect:Direct software. Connect:Direct is the point-to-point file transfer software developed for a secure delivery of files among enterprises. OPM will use a Connect:Direct Secure + link to distribute files to the agency.

Customers Using the Agency Delivery Method

We currently have several customer agencies that are receiving investigations through this automated method. To date, we have processed over 284,000 completed investigations via Agency Delivery.

For more information regarding the Agency Delivery process and the content of the DIF, please contact the Agency Liaison Group at (724) 794-5612.



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Code: 736 Personnel Investigations
Distribution: SOIs
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Process Flow from OPM Agency Delivery R2.2 Technical Paper

The following is the process of Agency Delivery after the closing action of the background investigation is entered into the Personnel Investigations Processing System (PIPS).

1. PIPS core electronic data and documents are sent to OPM PIPS Imaging System (OPIS) in the form of a standardized eXtensible Markup Language (XML) document.
2. Documents that are not in an electronic format (microfilm/paper) are converted and stored in an Image Repository in OPIS.
3. PIPS data (XML) is translated and applicable documents are stored in the Image Repository and a PIPS generated agency XML. The XML file includes relevant PIPS data in XML data element tags, or text format representation wrapped in an XML tag. The file does not include specific element tags for every data element in PIPS with the exception of data presented in the Case Closing Transmittal (CTT) document.
4. OPIS separates documents that are part of the DIF special section. Special section documents are not yet available for Agency Delivery, but are in the works for the near future. Due to the sensitive nature of information, documents require special handling and/or limited access. Examples of special section documents are Protected Source and Medical/Psyche reports. Keep in mind not all investigative packages contain the special section.
5. OPIS consolidates all releasable case-related images into indexed Portable Document Format (PDF) files. The PDF file is the imaged document portion of the DIF which contains any combination of text, graphics and images. Since PDF is a common standard, OPM/FISD does not purport the use of any single PDF viewer. Any PDF viewer supporting bookmarks and embedded text should suffice.
6. OPIS retrieves the original e-QIP XML from archive, if applicable. This XML file includes original information the customer agency provides to OPM for processing the investigation. If applicable, the e-QIP Request XML file will be provided in the Distributed Investigative File (DIF).
7. OPIS condenses the PDF and XML files into an encrypted ZIP file. The DIF ZIP file is encrypted using 128-bit Advanced Encryption Standard (AES) encryption and password protected. Passwords for each file will be given in the DIF Index File and is unique to each file.
8. OPIS generates the DIF Index File (Crosswalk), if necessary. The Crosswalk file is a XML listing of all DIF ZIP files provided to a customer agency. Its purpose is to provide the receiving agency with a manifest of files sent and a method to associate the provided files with the data in their systems. The DIF Index File is also placed into an encrypted ZIP file that has a predefined password.
9. OPIS sends the ZIP file to PIPS Distribution Repository for distribution.
10. OPIS generates the crosswalk file for all DIFs being distributed.
11. PIPS distributes the DIFs and crosswalk files to the customer agency via an approved secure connection.

Appendix A

OPIS DIF Contents

The following table describes components of the DIF.

DOCUMENT	Distributed Investigative File (DIF)					
	DIF PDF		DIF XML		XML eQIP	Manifest XML
	PDF	PDF TXT	XML TEXT	XML DATA		
Closed Case Transmittal (CCT)	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N
Certificate of Investigation (COI)		Y	Y	N	N	N
Report of Agency Adjudicative Action (79A)		Y	Y	N	N	N
Report of Investigation (ROI)*		Y	Y	N	N	N
Credit Report (E0#)*		Y	Y	N	N	N
Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Fingerprint (B0#)*		Y	Y	N	N	N
Standard Form 86 (F86)*		N	N	N	Y	N
Other Documents*		N	N	N	N	N
Manifest XML (Crosswalk)		N	N	N	N	Y
*If Applicable	Y - In Document N – Not In Document					