CHAPTER 8. DOCUMENTATION OF MICROCOMPUTER APPLICATIONS

8-1.   POLICY STATEMENT. All applications, including those based on
        packaged software, must be thoroughly documented. Managers
        must ensure that documentation is accurate and accessible.

8-2.   PURPOSE. The purposes for documenting microcomputer
        applications are:

            o   to allow verification of the information produced by
                 the application.

            o   to permit easy modification of the application, or
                 recreation of a lost or damaged application.

            o   to comply with the requirements in OMB circular A-123
                 and A-
127.

8-3.   PROCEDURES. Documentation requirements will vary based on the
        size, complexity and significance of the microcomputer
        application, but at a minimum, the documentation developed for
        each application should contain, when appropriate, the
        information detailed below.

        For microcomputer applications that operate in a production
        mode on a recurring basis, providing information to mainframe
        computers, more detailed documentation is required. Refer to
        the ADP Documentation Standards Handbook, 2400.15 for further
        information pertaining to documentation.

        a.   DESCRIPTION. A description of the purpose of the
             application - what it is supposed to produce. Include the
             criticality and sensitivity of the application (see
             Handbook 2400.10, HUD ADP Security Policies Handbook for
             definitions)

        b.   TITLE. The official title of the application.

        c.   DISK/FILE LABELS. The name or label of the diskette, hard
             disk, etc. where the application and its backup are
             located; the file name of the application.

        d.   SOFTWARE. The software package used to develop the
             application.

        e.   DEVELOPER. The name of the person who developed the
             application and the date it was developed. Give the same
             information for all modifications to the application.

        f.   FILE STRUCTURE. A description (or diagram) of the
             structure of the file, especially for spreadsheets,
             showing the exact locations of all components.

g. CHARTS/LISTING. Any documentation from the development of the application: flowcharts, pseudo code, program listings, test runs, etc.

h. VARIABLES. Definitions of all variables (fields); the source of the data for each field, whether it is alpha or numeric, any restrictions upon the values a variable may take, formulas used, interdependencies between variables. Describe the effects, if any, upon other variables of changing a variable.

i. UPDATES. The source and frequency of updates.

j. USE. Where and how data from the application is used. If errors are discovered in one file, it must be clear what other files, reports, or systems will be affected.

k. REPORTS. What reports are produced from the file (include samples), when they are produced, and who receives them.

l. UTILIZATION. Because there are different skill levels among potential users, include an explanation of how to actually use the application as relates to menus, data entry, etc., to permit utilization by all potential users.

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