

Office of Information Affairs

USDA Date Formatting Quick Guide

U.S. Department of Agriculture's records and information existing in electronic environments must be saved using standardized date formatting for it to be distinguishable, discoverable and retrievable.

[ISO 8601](#) sets the international standard for date formatting:

- YYYY-MM-DD
- 2026-01-05

When two versions of a document are saved on the same day, it is important to include the time of document creation to track the current version.

Please note that when formatting time of creation in the documents file name, the naming structure will not allow you to use a colon (:). Instead, save the time of creation in a four-digit format with before or after midday distinction (AM/PM). For example:

- 2026-01-05_1005AM
- 2026-01-05_0157PM

For any questions, contact the Departmental Records Program:

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