

Introduction to the OFR's Beta eCFR Website and Other Online Resources

Please stand by for real time captions.

Hi, I am your host and before you get started, I will walk you through a few housekeeping items. If you have any questions or technical issues, feel free to use the chat box which for people on desktop computers or laptops is at the bottom corner of your screen. I will keep track of all questions and at the end of the presentation, centers will respond. We are recording today's session and will email a link for everyone that registered and will be sending a certificate of participation with the email you used to register. If anyone needs additional certificates because multiple people watch the webinar with you, please email us and include the title of today's webinar along with the email addresses needed. Laptop viewers may zoom in and click on the fullscreen button. To access fullscreen, go to the blue bar until it expands and then click on the blue return button to get back. At the end of the session, we will share a satisfaction survey with you and let you know when the survey is available and the URL will appear in the chat box. We appreciate your feedback including comments on the presentation style and the value of the webinar. Finally, please keep in mind that our presenters will be screen sharing portions of the presentation which means once they start screen sharing, you will no longer see the chat box. If you want to watch traffic during the presentation, one screen sharing begins, but your mouse over the blue bar and when the menu drops down, click on chat to enable the chat bar. That takes care of her housekeeping items. Let me brief you in introduce you to the presenters. We have John Martinez which is a director of the publications division officers of records initiation. We also have Steve Frattini who is a supervisor of the codify group federations. In a minute, we will be ready to go.

I believe we are. I think we are here. Are you there, Steve?

I am.

@. Let's get started. Hello everyone, I am John Martinez, the director of publications and services at OFR and have been here for six years.

My name is Steve Frattini and I'm the supervisor of the CFR unit and having the supervisor for five years now but have been with the office for almost 20.

We will begin and today we will talk about our beta CFR website and also about other online resources that might be interesting. So, let's begin. Next slide, please. We will give you a brief overview of the Federal Register and Code of Federal Regulations. I gave two presentations and one on the Federal Register and one of the code of federal regulations. This will be a brief review of those basically explaining why these two publications exist and what we do with them and then we will talk about the purpose of the beta eCFR website and then we will give a demonstration of the website itself and then we will talk about other resources that are

available online to you. So, let's talk a bit about the Federal Register and Code of Federal Regulations. So, first off, we are part of the office of the Federal Register which is part of the national archives and records administration. Our office was created in 1935 as part of the Federal Register act and the Federal Register was the first publication in 1936. The Code of Federal Regulations came soon after and then over the years, they had been given more and more publications and now we have 11 or 12 major publications. We also have other duties that come our way including that we help administer the electoral college and asked to be a go-between with proper certificates from the states that make it to Congress and then we also are at a place where consul constitutions our house. Those are interesting things that we deal with. Next slide, please. The Federal Register is the official Gazette and that is a technical term for the daily publication that talks about what the federal government is doing and specifically with regulations and different standards and documents. The CFR is the codification of the rules that have been published and are related together one into the other. Just to give a little background, we have the public laws made by Congress and frequently, Congress will say what is wanted by a law and will assign an agency to administer the law and part of the administration is the agency get to decide how the law will be administered so the how are federal rules of the agency makes. There is a process that all agencies have to go through and some have additional steps or variations on it but high-level overview of that process is that agencies have to publish proposed rules in the Federal Register opportunity to comment on that rule. After that comment period, an agency can adopt a final rule and the final has to be published in Federal Register. Some of these rules have to be reviewed by Congress or can be reviewed by Congress so it depends on the type of rule but ultimately, once a rule goes into effect, you can find it in the Code of Federal Regulations. That is the codification of the rules. I wanted to get some background on that before we go to publications themselves. Go ahead, Steve.

Okay, thank you, John. I will talk a little bit about the Federal Register website. Many of you are probably familiar with it. We launched this site in 2010 and it was designed on a new way to present the material that everyone used and it actually came about as part of a transparency and open government initiative that our office participated in. Is updated each day whenever a federal register issue is released and basically the federal workdays and the site lets you see the current issue and any past issues. It also has an area where you can have the staff that a document must take before it can be published in the Federal Register. We also have an area dedicated to presidential documents such as proclamations and executive orders and other presidential documents and our goal is to be published in the Federal Register and we designated a separate area for federal presidential documents. We have the executive order disposition table and that gives a good history and summary of all the different executive orders that were issued by the president and how they were amended and changed over time. We also have search tools available both basic and advanced search tools as they can be tied with things so you can save your reoccurring searches and get updates if any of the keywords are matched as well as you can track documents issued by a particular agency. You don't have to sit there but it will actually do that for you and will be helpful. This is probably something you are all very familiar with. I only wanted to bring it to your attention because it provides access to the publications of all branches of government but it also is the repository for all publications

as well. They are available in PDF format and our legal and two of the big ones are of course the daily federal registration and the code of federal regulations. The Federal Register is available thanks to a massive undertaking by GPO to digitize any of those older issues prior to 1996 and the CFR is available from 1996 and on. The eCFR is our website that complements the standard Code of Federal Regulations and the printed version and the main difference is that the printed CFR means the official legal version and is updated annually on a quarterly basis. What that means is not all titles are updated on the same date and time. That would be a massive undertaking so it's broken down into quarters and we have a revision date of January 1, April 1, July 1 and October 1 and a subset of titles are updated so it is a rolling update schedule and that makes it more manageable to keep it up-to-date. Like I said, these are only updated once every quarter so the way that they complement it is that we update the eCFR every day. It gives people the ability to see what is going on and if you are following January and rather than to wait until the next is released, you can take a look at the site now and see what it looks like. The eCFR is not an addition and by that I mean the only legal version is the online PDFs that are available and those are also considered legal additions as well. Our eCFR.gov site has a search engine and we also have simple versioning. It takes a snapshot of each content of the eCFR so if you're interested in seeing what was posted last Thursday, we could do so.

Talk about the new version of the eCFR website which is slated to the current version. The current website was designed around the year 2000 and was based on SGML and we wanted to make the website more accessible to users. We really wanted to follow the approach back in 2010 with Federal Register talk of where we can add more tools and accounts and things. We determined to use the XML so that the training can be more dynamic than what we currently have. Something else that we wanted to do was so that it looks like the Federal Register and has similar layouts and locations of the Tosa people using one website can readily use the other. We want to show that both come from the same organization and right now they look very different. We also want to demonstrate because they are dedicated in the Federal Register.

Thank you, John. One of the main goals was to really possess the information in a new way and when I say that, this is what I mean, the current site is structured around the individual and is basically a static representation of the individual volumes. We have the same rigid organization of the online presentation as we do in the printed version. With the CFR, we wanted to get away from that and present the eCFR as a collection of titles and not individual volumes that were posted up. We really want to show the CFR as a complete whole. One of the things that happened because of this presentation was that many of the chapters and sections of the CFR span multiple volumes. We would be doing research and going into one area and then realize that the section was a completely different book or in the case of being online, we would realize it was a completely different file so you had to backup all the way out and go to the next volume online and click on that and look at it. Those splits were very arbitrary and had nothing to do with the content. As you can imagine, it makes no sense to divide up a chapter were part and it was really done because of implications and that was the finding of the printed books and limitations of the machinery used to prepare that. With the new CFR, we are no longer bound to those things. We can also present the material in larger phases using colors as

opposed to the rigid two column format of the paper. We also made improvements to the search and we really wanted to make searching much more like the experience that people used to with Google. It's very simple and forward and you plug in whatever the search criteria is. We are making it happen using new technologies and those are designed for a large volume of data. It's designed for searches. We can also provide much faster with new technology and can tailor things to the content. With the similarities, we can share what people are searching for between the publications and return things faster to them and at the same time we can also help people. For example, several years ago, there were regulations on drones which was a big deal at the time and it really got the public's attention and the articles we heard, we refer to them as drones but the FFA referred to as UAV. We had a lot of people calling our office and emailing us and saying I can't find the regulations on drones so we had to explain to them that you had to look at UAV regulations. With the new search technology, that is something we can help them with. If someone were to search for drones, we could send them a pointer to say you said something about drones but we think you mean UAV and then they can get information faster without having to wait for someone on the phone or getting an email response from somebody. We also made efforts with the new site to make better connections and links between the CFR and other publications . We have better linking between the CFR and Federal Register. We've always had source notes and pointing to where the amendments were made in the register and now we can make those go directly back to the document and we also hope to continue that with the LSA and it really gives a detailed history of all the amendments and it's far too much to include and we are hoping a link that is better and you get entire history of that section with current and past.

Other things we want to do is to link internal references between the sections of the CFR so that frequently, the checks will say refer pair so we want the ability to click and see what that other text is an link to external content such as things that were published in the Federal Register and available on the United States code and other public laws or publications possible like Steve had mentioned with the LSA. Also, wanted to make clear what amendments have occurred in the CFR peer currently on the website, we have where you can put a date and see what something looks like on the website on that date. We wanted it to be a little more robust and have a more useful tool for the public so we wanted to improve the ability to see the specific CFR material at a point in time and also create a compare feature where you can say I want to see what the rule looks like today and how it changed from a year ago. You can put in last year's date and this years date and get that highlighted with text removed and highlighted with what has been added to clearly see what has been changed in that piece of the code in that time and when we get into the demonstration, we will show you.

Thank you, John. Earlier, we were talking about the Federal Register website and we get the same thing for the CFR beta site. You can perform a search and subscribe to that search and see results in your email based on whatever the keywords were and that is something that happens automatically when you do the search and you can also if you want to create multiple searches, it's very helpful to have a My FR account so you can get updates. It also allows you to monitor a different area of the CFR so you can monitor for a change and even make monitoring for a particular section. We will talk about the data testing process. Some of you probably got a quick

look at this site and we officially started the public rollout in the beginning of August. We had that on our website and our current eCFR site. We are running in parallel with that site for the next few months and we already have great feedback and are continuing to get feedback from you all and members of the public and use them for the website. Eventually, the long-term plan is to have that website which will take place in the URL of CFR.gov. What is now the beta of the main site

Now, we will show you the website and I will turn off my camera. Great, here is the front page of the beta eCFR website. You will notice that is a very similar look and feel to the Federal Register and similar coding and structure. So, talking about the tools, let's go across the top and we will explain what the tools are going across the top. The first one is the home and that takes you back to this page. The next one is titles and titles are basically the same as the first page but doesn't have any announcements that we have on the first page. We have the reader eight announcement if you click on titles, that won't be there but if you scroll down, you will see the full 50 titles. Those are very similar pages. Next, it is the search if we click on that. Here is the search box and you can have that by title and limit your title or limit the search with a specific title and I also want to mention at the end of the toolbar, there is also in the toolbar a search so you can either search here or search at the end of the toolbar. Next to that, we have recent changes as we click on that. You will see the recent changes that have happened in the Code of Federal Regulations. This is something new that we haven't had before. Let's scroll down to a 27 and you will see that there are quite a few things have happened here. If you scroll up just a little bit, you will see options and currently we are displaying the full hierarchy which shows all the different levels from top to wherever that change is. If you just want to see where the changes are, click the hierarchy and it will shrink it down so you can see exactly where the changes are. You don't see necessarily the relationship to where they are in the hierarchy but it is a clear way to see what the changes are. Backup to the toolbar, the next corrections and this is similar to what we have on the classic eCFR website. You will see we have a number different things to help you understand the website and I highly encourage you to visit this part of the website. This will give you some pointers and explain in more depth the number of tools. Then, we have the my eCFR where you can set up an account and if you have one that you can sign into, this is where you can manage different subscriptions that you have to the webpage. At the very end of the toolbar, we have the search bar.

Okay, thank you, John. We will go back to that main page and I want to go down here a little to point out this tool that we made available and this would be the eCFR reference. We put this here as an easy way to know the exact part of the CFR you want to see, you can go directly to it without have to do any dragging or browsing or anything like that and we will show you how that works using the example here. All you do is simply type that and hit go and it will take you right to that section. You look up that section and it will take you right there. That is just an easy and quick way to get to an area to know exactly where you want to go. Suppose you don't know where you want to go, you don't know exactly what you are looking for but in that case, going back to the main page and you have those titles and you can see all those titles all 50 and I want to take a moment and point out that those of you that saw that earlier may remember that the titles were listed vertically. We found that to be requiring scrolling down with the 50

titles and many people made that same comment and we did the early one and people seem to like this but with anything, it is continually evolving and if we have something better, we encourage people to speak up and let us know. Let's go down and look at the regulations. We will see the entire title 49 and we will scroll down here and go down to take a look at subtitle B. You will notice it has a hyperlink and it will actually tell us what sections are within the subtitled. Likewise, we can do the same thing if we have chapter 1. It will show us what sections are in chapter 1 so let's take a look at subtitle B and we click on that on the left-hand side. That brings us a table contents and this time it is for subtitle B and we will scroll down to subchapter D. We will click on pipeline safety. Again, now we have the table of contents for that subchapter and let's take a look at 191. We will scroll down and now we want to take a look at this. Now, we click on the right-hand side and this will take us directly so we will do that and now you can see part 191 and if you recall earlier, I talked about some of the display changes we made and if anyone is use to that or even the current website, you will see this presentation here is much easier to read and we have the hyperlink references appearing in the citation and John mentioned the references. We also have indentation which can get a better feel of the structure and how the organization of the text and has some use of shading board designation. Now, I want to talk about the tools on the left-hand side. Those are very similar to the site where we have tools on the left-hand side. The table of contents brings you back and if you get down to the part and get in that specific section of part 191, you can do that by clicking and we also have a timeline which will show you the recent changes that occurred and let's do that as an example here. Let's take a look and compare the March 13 version of part 191 to the current version. We do that in the most recent site and now you can see some of the changes that John talked about earlier with the new text and the new additions of being added and some of the older provisions of the citation and we also have a cross-reference and this is a link we were caring that went into effect sometimes March 13 and today. If you want to see what other changes , at the bottom of the screen you have those changes and you can go to the next group of changes or the previous group by using these buttons. We will jump down to the next amendment and you can see some paragraphs we are adding here. Again, we made a change to the source note for this section here. You can see in this paragraph, there were a number of different changes and text was added and removed. If you want to go back and up to the changes, you use this tool button here and go back up. It's trying to make it very easy to see where the changes are occurring. Some of the other tools that we have are the go to and this brings up a very simple calendar tool if you want to go to a specific date, you can just use the calendar tool and select the date and hit go to and it will take you away from the current information or whatever we have to put whatever date you select. We also have a compare option where you can compare rather than being limited to recent changes like the timeline and you can select what you want to compare with and both of those can be in the past as well. We also have that link to subscribe as I mentioned earlier, and you can share any account you have. We have links to the official publish addition and this is available and we have an option for developers. Now, I will go back up and we want to show you real quick this section in detail. As John said earlier, we want to encourage you to start here when you are looking at that site to get an idea of how it looks.

We did get a question come in. From Andrea, how far into the past does the go to date feature go?

Right now, I think it's 2017 .

January 2017.

Our site developers are working with GPO to make available earlier content but right now it is just 2017.

One other thing before we leave this page, if you have any comments or suggestions about that site, please click the help button and send it and we are using that as the tracking and management tool that we see.

We do get another question that came in. When looking at a section, if you click on the publish addition on the left, would you be going to an older addition with the annual quarterly update?

That is correct.

The annual CFR that is updated is considered the official version and the PDF is also considered official version. The eCFR is authoritative but not considered official. The biggest thing that means is you can take a copy of it into the court of law and we are working and this beta website is a step in the direction of making the eCFR official. It will take a while to get there but this is a big step in that direction. Currently, only the annual update is considered official.

That highlights the reason we came up with that to begin with. The amount of changes that occur on a daily basis is immense and when you're done with the publication and logistically is difficult to update and it takes a lot of time to prepare so when you are dealing with that, one of the reasons we provide the eCFR is so that we can really show the changes as they occur throughout the year in a much more real-time situation then you can do with the printed annual like we have now.

We should mention that the eCFR and CFR site both have a delay from when things happen.

The delay is simply a processing and it just takes time for editors to make and review changes so unfortunately, that's just the way it is. Not all of the amendments that are published in advance of the effective date and in fact many of the amendments that are published go into effect the day they are published. We don't have the opportunity to work ahead but we have to wait until the material publishes and only once the material publishes can we update the CFR so we have to have that built in to give a time to prepare the material for public viewing.

I don't want to eat into the presentation time but I will add that and has come back in and added the original question to the PDF edition and can you consider adding that to alert researchers?

It is mentioned somewhere and we will definitely make sure that is more prevalent but this is definitely something that we've had the attorneys involved with and also some of the other folks that make our rules to make it clear with what is official.

I know on the federal registry that there are a few more indicators on that site. They indicate what is official and not and will probably have to look at adding more visual cues as well. Thank you for that, that is great.

Okay, let me turn my camera back on. Let's talk about some of the other online resources we have. As we were talking about during the presentation, one of the concerns that had come especially right now in the current stance, we have a lot going on and we wanted to provide you more opportunities to see what we have online that could be of use to you and with that I will let you take it, Steve.

Sure, to start with, I want to point out that the register produces a publication and we talked a little bit about those earlier. Those are available online and then we also have online resources related to electoral college which we also administer. One of the publications is the index which is a consolidation of the table of contents that published in the register and provides the page number to each one of the documents. There are two ways to view that. There is a daily updated version of the table of contents that is available and we also have the monthly cumulative versions that are available on the website. We also have a CFR index which is a subject for rules currently codified in the CFR with a list of agencies preparing indexes and also provides a table of laws and documents for regulations and you saw there are citations earlier and also provides a list without political agencies and is available online all the way back to 2017.

Then, we have the list of sections affected. These are the changes that have happened in the regulations published in the Federal Register and Steve mentioned it is similar to some of the notes that we have in the CFR itself but they have more information and it is published monthly in a cumulative form and online, it's available back to 1997 so if you are tracking a certain provision or idea that is taking shape and evolved, this is a useful tool. Again, it is also available on gov info. We have the United States government manual and some people refer to this as the blue book. It is the official handbook of the government which provides information on all the agencies including all three branches and is available in his own website with the manual which has the current version that used to be in print and is only available electronically now. That is the website. However, once every year, we make a snapshot of it and have prior versions and that is available at gov info and that is the link there. If you want more, I gave a presentation on this and I believe that was recorded.

We also have the privacy act and that requires agencies to publish any systems of records that they maintain annually and publish that in the Federal Register is required to publish a compilation of those documents so that there is a single publication where you can see all of the records maintained by the agency. That is something we still maintain and is published once

every two years officially and that in between, we make intro updates available. We also publish the compilation of presidential documents and it is a record of the remarks given and was originally a publication from 1965 on the way back to 2009 and with the inauguration, it switched to a daily compilation. What we mean is we updated the items and speeches as we complete them. We don't have to wait until the end of the week. The weekly publications are available online.

If you want more information about that, there was a webinar that I gave last year with Joe Vetter both on compilation of public documents and sorry Steve, I will let you take it.

In addition to the daily compilation, if the speeches or remarks and public issuances are jeering six months, it also includes hand selected photographs of the various events that occurred in that term during that period and it is available all the way back to President Hoover but not FDR. That was privately and as John mentioned, if you are interested on the public papers, you can consult that webinar from last year.

We also provide the laws, the slip laws which are public and private so we processed those and they are available on guv.info and if you want an email notification, we have a system with the public wall service and you can sign up by clicking on the URL that is there and get the automatic email. Those are then compiled altogether into the statutes at large which is the permanent collection enacted that include preparations from the president if I'm not mistaken. These are available back to 1951 and that is one the national archive took over the Department of State and are available at that list. As we mentioned, we also help administer the electoral college acting as a go-between between the state and then we have those we do this on behalf of the United States and we have a website that explains this process and gets more information available at the URL listed and I have a feeling over the next few months that this will be of more interest to the public and you might get more questions about it. There it is. With that, are there any questions?

We do have a few questions I have come in and quite a few. I will see if we can get them all in the time we have. Is there a time to only offer the eCFR?

Right now, there is not a plan by that. Unless that statute changes and if it were to change, we would need other things and right now we don't have plans for that.

Okay, from Eric, can you use the eCFR to make sure that is the most current before using in a brief war in court. I'm sorry, I misread that. You can use eCFR to make sure what is most current before using in a brief or using in court.

I am not an attorney so I can't give legal counsel but what I will say is you can use the last printed CFR and anything that has happened in between is where you use the Federal Register to show where those changes are. The PDF version is considered official.

Is there a difference between the term authenticated and the term official?

Yes. Authenticated it carries a signature and it shows what is there and what you receive are the same. There was no change from leaving the server and coming to computers. Also, they are showing that it was incorrect. Official on the other hand in the Federal Register around means more that it is considered an official publication in the court of law and other legal situation. That is why Steve was using the term legal. This is the legal version so there are certain specific uses where you have to have an official copy which are different than the authentication and it hasn't been corrected.

From Amber, when will the manual be updated annually again?

We updated every year and the issue is we rely on the agencies and have no authority to force them to get more information. One thing we did start is putting a note in there but if you have not received updated information, hoping that would spur some action and some agencies that did and some it hasn't. It's more of a friendly persuasion that we are working on for agencies to give us that information. The way the regulation is set up, they give us the information and we cannot go out and harvest it and we don't have a staff to do that. It's really up to the agency so if you see something that might not be updated, reach out to the agency and update it.

Okay, I put out a chat and you were talking about the webinars in the past so I put a link to all the webinars you have done with us so feel free to check those out.

I have done a few of them lately.

The next question is from Ann. Does the OFR have ever have to change the language compared to how it was published in the Federal Register and if so, how do they alert the reader of the changes?

That is not something that you want. We cannot make any changes to that. We have staff at the OFR that work before publication and we work with the agency to make sure everything is correct and ready for the publication and incorporations and if something is discovered after it is published, the agency is required to publish that correction. They would have to publish another rule in the Federal Register and inform the public that way.

Okay, from my, regarding the compilation of documents, does that include all the executive orders?

It does. It includes executive orders and all of the documents.

Okay, from Ann, will printed editions be available for recent years and for example 2013 to present?

We have a backlog currently and have put in place eight months ago a real strict plan to get these caught up and we will be seeing a few these publish and we are working on those.

I have two more questions so I will quickly go through the last two questions. From Anthony, if CFR is willing to the old website, will it keep the new hyperlink? Mac I can't tell you right now and it could be redirected possibly to the new site and the current site goes away, any links will likely go over and go to the new site. We are going to try to do that and are looking at that and we can't say that it will be in all cases.

A question that came to me privately. Is there a site where we can see what discusses the difference between authenticated and official and legal and so on?

If you go to the register, there is a discussion in the reader's aide portion. That explains that and that is not considered official although we have plans and have a plan moving forward hopefully at some point most of that website would be considered official and we will take some legal action and rulemaking to get there so I'm not sure how long that will take but in preparation for that, there is some exultation on that website.

Just one more question came in and it dawned on me. When will the new site go live?

We don't have specific plans for that. We were seeing a number of months and perhaps a year but part of it will depend on how many comments and things we received and you can see huge errors that might be there that you get accustomed to. We are not putting a specific date right now but we want to see how many comments we are receiving back and what kind of work that will require to change that if we determined to change it that way. We are being flexible with it and it will be a number of months perhaps a year and there are also some other internal processing things that we have to deal with on our side as far as is we stop using the current eCFR website, what does that mean for our production and what pieces of those production and needing to go over to the new website, what would be necessary in terms of that so there are a lot of moving parts.

All right, I did put the link to that webinar survey in the chat box so you can fill that survey out. We would appreciate your feedback and let me thank John and Steve for sharing a great new tool and thank you to all of our participants they for joining us and we look forward to seeing you all again in future webinars. Thank you everyone. [Event Concluded]