

Frequently Asked Questions About the RDE Program

ICANN and Iron Mountain developed the Registrar Data Escrow (RDE) program to ensure compliance with section 3.6 of the Registrar Accreditation Agreement (RAA), to protect data associated with registered domain names in a secure escrow account.

WHY DID ICANN CHOOSE IRON MOUNTAIN AS AN ESCROW PROVIDER?

Iron Mountain was founded in 1951 by Henry Knaust in an effort to provide a secure location for Americans to store their data in the event of a nuclear war. Since then, Iron Mountain has been protecting our clients' data as if it was our own. Over the past half-century, Iron Mountain has grown to become the world's largest provider of information protection and services. ICANN has placed its confidence in Iron Mountain because of its extensive experience and worldwide service delivery.

DOES IRON MOUNTAIN HAVE EXPERIENCE WORKING WITH THIS INDUSTRY?

Iron Mountain currently provides a similar service for registries. In this service, Iron Mountain accepts data from ICANN-certified registries, verifies the data according to current escrow provisions, including digital signatures and data encryption, and stores that data for 30 days as required by ICANN. Iron Mountain has been providing this service since 2001.

WHY IS THE RDE PROGRAM BEING IMPLEMENTED?

If a problem ever occurs with an ICANN-accredited registrar, ICANN needs to know that a copy of the domain name registration information held by that registrar is protected. There are cases, such as if a registrar's ICANN-accredited status is terminated, that ICANN may have to step in and take measures to transfer those domain names to another registrar. With this data in an escrow account held by a neutral third party, the domain name information is protected and secured.

HOW LONG IS THE DATA STORED?

Encrypted, deposited data will be stored online in redundant form (RAID) for 30 days, on a rolling calendar basis. Data will also be backed up to tape on a daily basis and stored for one year, again on a rolling calendar basis. After one year, the "expired" data will be destroyed.

WHERE WILL MY DATA BE STORED?

The online data will be kept in Iron Mountain's facility called "The Underground" in Western Pennsylvania. It is 180-220 feet below the surface and is a self-sufficient city featuring full-backup power for up to seven days, its own fire department and water treatment plant, 24-hour armed security, and 24x7 service operation. The Underground has a Level 4 security rating from the U.S. Government and is located away from urban areas. The tape backups will be stored in two separate, secure off-site facilities which adhere to established Iron Mountain vault specifications.

HOW DO I KNOW MY DATA WILL BE SAFE?

In addition to Iron Mountain's online storage servers being located in The Underground, electronic safeguards are used for data transfer as well. Registrar deposits are received via secure FTP (sFTP) which ensures transfer integrity, allows for content encryption, and validates authenticity. Registrars are required to submit encrypted data so that only Iron Mountain and ICANN can decrypt it. Once data is sent to Iron Mountain's secure facility via sFTP, it is placed in an inbound directory specific to each registrar. The files are then automatically picked up by a background process and moved electronically onto the secure Iron Mountain network.

DOES IRON MOUNTAIN ROUTINELY HANDLE THIS MUCH DATA?

Iron Mountain as a whole receives terabytes of digital record deposits daily. We hold in trust software source code for over 51,000 active contracts worldwide. Iron Mountain has the technology, architecture and processes to manage both physical and digital deposits regardless of their size.

WHO PAYS FOR THE RDE PROGRAM?

ICANN, through its existing fee structure, is covering the costs of the RDE program for registrars that use Iron Mountain as ICANN's agent. Alternatively, registrars can use another reputable escrow agent mutually approved by the registrar and ICANN, at the registrar's own expense.

WHAT DO I NEED TO DO?

Registrars will need to format the data as specified by ICANN (CSV text), upload the text file via sFTP transmission, and repeat this process on a regular basis. Most registrars should be able to implement this process with minimal setup and repeat it automatically, without user intervention.

HOW OFTEN DO I NEED TO TRANSMIT DATA?

Registrars whose transaction volume exceeds 99,999 billable transactions per ICANN fiscal quarter will be required to submit full deposits weekly and incremental deposits daily. Registrars with fewer than 100,000 billable transactions (over 95% of registrars) will be required to deposit data into escrow once per week.

IS THIS MANDATORY?

Yes. Through the RAA, all ICANN-accredited registrars have agreed to submit to ICANN (or an approved escrow agent), the registration records described therein, pursuant to a schedule, format, and terms established by ICANN.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I MISS A DEPOSIT OR IF IT HAS ERRORS?

Iron Mountain will log deposit activity on a registrar-by-registrar basis. If a deposit is not received as scheduled, or if there are problems with the deposit, an automated email will be sent to the registrar notifying it of the error. If there is no response to the email, an Iron Mountain client executive will telephone the registrar to determine the status of the deposit. All deposits, including missed and failed deposits, are reported to ICANN.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I NEED HELP?

Iron Mountain has a dedicated client service team in place to support the RDE program. If you need help, please email rde@ironmountain.com or call +1.978.667.3601 and select option 3.