



Records Management Tip

Records management advice prepared for GNWT records professionals by the Records Management Unit, PWS

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Records Centre Series

Records Transfers Under Review

The Records Analysts at Public Works and Services review every transfer that department's submit for storage in the Records Centres. This Records Management Tip will identify what the records analysts review when they look at a transfer, and explain why they may ask you to make changes to a transfer.

The Records Centre series gives you information on how to access the Records Centre's storage, retrieval, and disposition services.

Records Classification

The first thing that records analysts look at is the classification of the records. They quickly review the Box Inventory Forms, or the folder entries in iRIMS, and check to see if the classification numbers appear to be correct. If the initial spot check gives them cause for concern, they will more thoroughly analyze the classification numbers. They may contact you for more information about the files, or ask you to make changes to the classification numbers.

If you have not included classification numbers in your Box Inventory Forms, the records analysts will check to see if ARCS or an ORCS applies to your files¹. If so, they will ask you to resubmit the forms with the classification numbers from ARCS or ORCS.

Records Retention and Final Disposition – Is It Correct?

The next thing that the Records Analysts review is the retention period that you assigned to the files. They will do a spot check to confirm that the correct retention period has been assigned to the files, based on the classification numbers. If there appears to be a mistake in the retention period or final disposition that you assigned to a file, they will ask you to fix it and resubmit the Box Inventory Forms.

Records Retention and Final Disposition – Original or Copy?

The records analysts will check the Box Inventory Forms to see if you followed the master or copy file retention period assigned to the files correctly. You may be asked to confirm that records are in fact master files or copies. You may also be asked to separate master files and copy files into different boxes, as copy files do not have a semi-active retention period.

Records Retention and Final Disposition – Are the Closed Dates Correct?

The records analysts will check closed dates, and look for files that have special closure criteria. Closure criteria are usually marked in ARCS and ORCS by the abbreviation "SO*". A note located under the table of secondaries will explain what the closure criteria are. You may be asked to confirm that the correct closure criteria were used.

¹ ARCS stands for the Administrative Records Classification System. ORCS stands for Operational Records Classification System.

Records Retention and Final Disposition – Are the Files Sorted Correctly?

Once the Records Analysts have verified that the files have the correct retention periods and final disposition, they will check to make sure that you have sorted the files correctly. The Records Centres manage boxes, rather than individual files. Therefore, they require that all of the files in the box can be processed in the same way.

Files should be packed in boxes so that:

- Files that have a final disposition of D (Destroy) are in a different box than files that have a final disposition of AS/D (Archival Selection).
- Files that can be disposed of now are in a different box than files that must be stored for a few more years.

You will be asked to re-pack your boxes if you have mixed D and AS/D files in the same box. You may also be asked to re-pack boxes if some of the files could be disposed of right away.

The Records Analysts will also make sure that all of the boxes in your transfer are eligible for storage. Transfers should be separated so that all of the boxes in the transfer are either:

- Going to be stored in the Records Centre for a period of time.
- Going to be transferred right away to the NWT Archives for archival selection.
- Going to be destroyed right away.

You will be asked to split your transfer into two or three transfers if boxes that are to be stored are mixed with boxes that can be destroyed.

Records Retention and Final Disposition – Are the Files Semi-Active?

The Records Analysts also review your Box Inventory Forms to verify that the boxes have reached the semi-active phase of their life cycle. You will be asked to remove files that are still in the active phase of their life cycle. If the records are unscheduled, they will not be accepted unless they have been closed for two years.

Files that do not have a semi-active period (i.e. the semi-active period is “Nil” or 0) and files that have reached the end of their semi-active period cannot be sent to the Records Centres for Storage. You will be asked to remove them from the transfer and send them in for disposition.

Records Retention and Final Disposition – Disposition Date Range

Ideally, all of the files in a box will be eligible for disposition during the same fiscal year. The records analysts will check the disposition dates of the files in the box to make sure that all of the files can be disposed of within a couple of years of each other. You may be asked to remove files from a box if there is a large range of disposition dates in the box. The reason for this is that PWS does not want to store files in the Records Centres for several years longer than necessary.