



Records Management Tip

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

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**Records
Disposition
Authorities Series**

Implementing the Retention and Disposition Schedules in ARCS and ORCS

The Administrative and Operational Records Classification Systems are both a classification system and a retention and disposition schedule. Each secondary in ARCS and ORCS has a retention period and a final disposition assigned to it.

All of the records classified to a secondary inherit the retention period assigned to the secondary. This Records Management Tip will look at how to implement the retention schedules.

Closing Files

In the ARCS/ORCS system, the retention periods take effect after a file has closed. Files should be reviewed on a regular basis to see if they should be closed or not. At minimum, files should be reviewed for closure once a year. This usually happens at the end of the fiscal year (March 31st). Do not close off a file if documents are still being added to it.

Assign a closed date to each closed file. The closed date is usually the date of the last piece of correspondence on the file; however, in some cases a different closed date may be used. Other closed dates may be used when you want to schedule all of the files relating to a specific contract, program, project, or person together.

It is a good idea to mark closed files in some way, so that they can be easily distinguished from open files. For paper files, stamp or write the word “closed” on the file. For electronic records, you may want to change the name of the network directory so that it shows that the documents inside are closed.

In some offices, closed files are moved to another filing cabinet or to another space on the network. This is a useful practice with financial records, where all of the files relating

The Records Disposition Authority series gives you tips on how to develop a records disposition authority.

For more information...

See these Records Management Bulletins:

- # 5, on Master and Copy Files
- # 6, on the Life Cycle of a Record.
- # 9, on ARCS.
- # 11, on ORCS.
- # 12, on retention schedules.
- # 18, on the Records Centres.
- # 19, on final disposition.
- # 36, on closing files at the end of the fiscal year.
- # 37, on the Office of Primary Responsibility

See these Records Management Tips:

- # 3 and 4, on transferring records to the Records Centre.
- # 19, on retention schedules.
- # 26, on the other closed date.
- # 34, on reviewing transfers.

See these iRIMS Tips:

- # 17, on entering transfers into iRIMS.
- # 19, on closing files.

to a single year close at the same time, because the open files are clearly separated from the closed files. It is less useful with case files, where each file can have a different closed date. To locate a file, you may have to look in two different places.

Reviewing and Implementing the Retention Periods

Once you have identified all of the files that are closed, find out if they are master (original) or copy files. ARCS and ORCS have different retention periods for master and copy files. For master files, read the side of the retention schedule that is marked as **Master File** (sometimes this column is marked as **Original File**). For copy files, read the side of the retention schedule that is marked as **Copy File**.

Next, check the **active (A)** column to find out if the files must stay in the office for any additional time. If there is a number in the active column, then the files must stay in the office for the number of years shown in the column. For example, if the active column has the number two (2) in it, then the files must stay in the office for another two years. If there is no number in the active column, and the file meets the closure criteria indicated in the active column, then the file moves directly to the semi-active period.

Next, identify the files that have reached the end of the active period. You will find this by adding the closed date to the number of years in the active column. If that date has passed, then the files are ready to move to the semi-active period. For paper records, remove these files from the filing cabinet.

The semi-active period is indicated in the **semi-active (SA)** column in the retention schedule. If there is a number in the semi-active column, then the files must be kept for the number of years shown in the column. Usually semi-active files are kept in the Records Centre. If the semi-active column has the word “Nil” in it, then the files do not have a semi-active retention period and will move directly to the final disposition phase.

Place the records in records centre boxes according to the mode of final disposition, final disposition date, retention period, and classification number. The mode of final disposition is indicated in the **final disposition (FD)** column in the retention schedule. A final disposition of “D” means that the records will be destroyed. A final disposition of “AS/D” means that the records will be transferred to the NWT Archives for review and acquisition. Files that the NWT Archives does not take will be destroyed.

You can find the disposition date by adding the closed date to the number of years shown in the active column, plus the number of years shown in the semi-active column.

Separate the boxes into transfers based on whether they are going into storage in the records centre or not. If your department is on iRIMS, enter the boxes into iRIMS. List the files on Box Inventory Forms or assign them to boxes in iRIMS. Then contact your department’s Records Coordinator. The Records Coordinator will review your Box Inventory Forms and/or iRIMS entries, and arrange to have the boxes transferred to the Records Centre for storage or disposition.