



# Records Management Bulletin

Records management advice prepared for GNWT employees  
by the Records Management Unit of Public Works and Services



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## The Operational Records Classification System (ORCS)

### The GNWT's Operational Records Classification System

The Operational Records Classification System (ORCS) is a records classification system and retention schedule for operational records. ORCS is used to:

- Describe operational records.
- Organize operational records.
- Classify operational records.
- Schedule operational records.

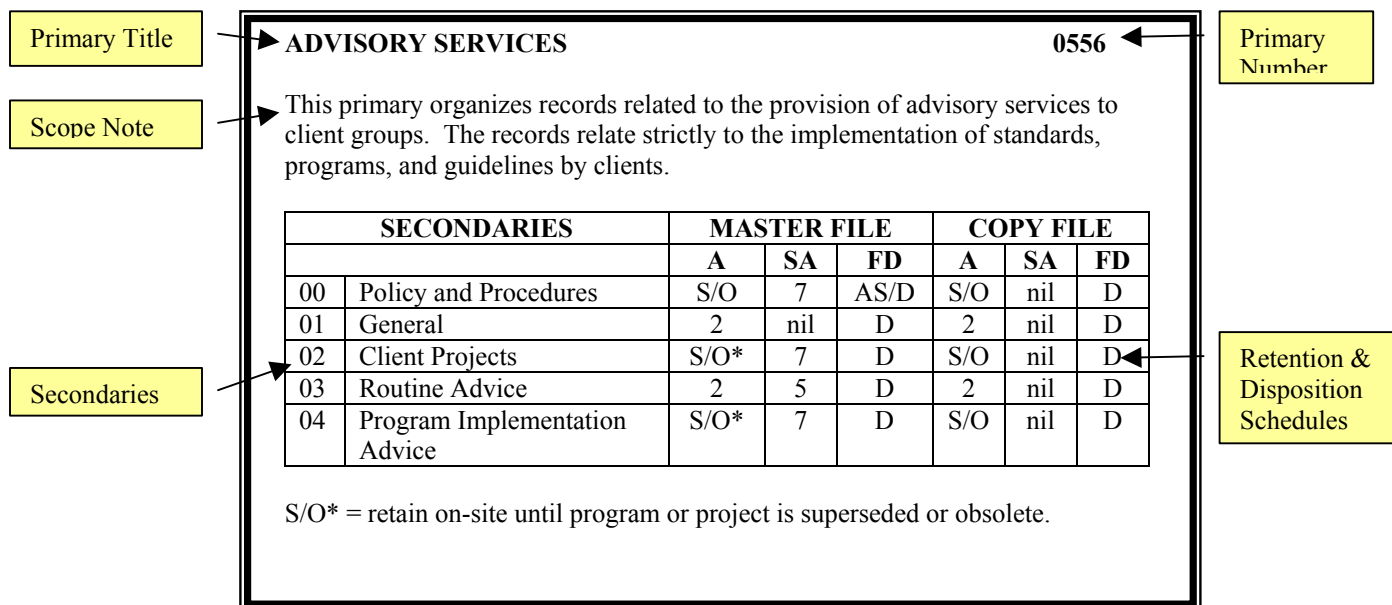
ORCS looks and feels a lot like the GNWT Administrative Records Classification System (GNWT ARCS). ORCS uses the same basic format, structure, and numbering system as the GNWT ARCS. The main difference between ARCS and ORCS is that ORCS is used for records that are created and received in support of your department's unique, mandated programs and services. The GNWT ARCS, on the other hand, is used for records that are common to all departments.

Together, ARCS and ORCS describe, organize, classify and schedule all of your department's records. Each department has one or more ORCS to schedule its operational records.

### Why do we need ORCS?

ORCS is one of the most important parts of a department's records management program. There are many reasons why your department needs an ORCS:

- To organize active records.
- To transfer records to the Records Centre for storage.
- To dispose of records. An approved ORCS gives your department the authority to destroy records or transfer them to the NWT Archives when they are no longer needed.



### Structure of ORCS

ORCS is organized in a way that is very similar to the GNWT ARCS. ORCS is made up of **primary** and **secondary** classifications. Each primary is numbered from 0100 through 0999, or from 7000 and up. Primary titles and scope notes describe the records that can be classified in each primary.

Each primary is split up into one or more secondaries. Each secondary has a descriptive title and is numbered between 00 and 99. When you classify your records, you must give them both a primary and a secondary number (e.g. 0549-20).

Many ORCS let you split the secondaries into **tertiary** and **quaternary** (third and fourth level) classifications. Check with your records coordinator to find out more about assigning secondary and tertiary numbers.

### Retention Schedules in ORCS

Every secondary in an ORCS has a retention schedule for master and copy files. The retention schedules tell you:

- How long you should keep the records on site (active period).
- How long you can keep the records in the Records Centre (semi-active period).
- How you will dispose of the records (final disposition).

### Where do I get ORCS?

Departments develop and maintain their own ORCS. Your department's records coordinator should be able to tell you if your division has an ORCS.

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## **How is ORCS Developed?**

Your department's records coordinator develops ORCS. The ORCS development process follows these basic steps:

1. The records coordinator inventories the division's records. An inventory is a process of finding out what a division does and what kind of records it has. You can help with the inventory by talking to the records coordinator about what you do, what records you have, and how you use them. You will also help if you give the records coordinator access to your division's records.
2. The records coordinator writes the ORCS.
3. The deputy minister, director, or regional superintendent signs off the ORCS.
4. The records coordinator submits the final version of the ORCS to the Public Records Committee (PRC) for approval.
5. The PRC reviews the ORCS and either approves it or asks for changes.
6. The ORCS can be used to schedule and dispose of records after the PRC approves it.

For more information about ORCS, call your department's Records Coordinator, or call the Records Management Unit at 920-3009 or 873-7627.