



# Records Management Bulletin

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

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### What does “Final Disposition” mean?

Records managers use the term “final disposition” when they talk about the actions that take place at the end of a records’ life cycle. One of three things can happen:

- The records can be destroyed.
- The records can be given to an archive.
- The records can be given to another organization.

You can find out what the final disposition of your records is by checking an approved records disposition authority (RDAs). Examples of RDAs include:

- GNWT Administrative Records Classification System (GNWT ARCS).
- Operational Records Classification System (ORCS).

### So how do I dispose of records?

The **Archives Act** says:

No government body\* shall, except with the written authority of the Public Records Committee or as authorized by the regulations, destroy any public record over which it has control or relinquish its control over any such record to a non-government body (s. 9).

This means that it is illegal to shred, burn, throw out, give away, or take government records without the Public Records Committee’s (PRC) permission. The PRC gives its permission to dispose of records when it approves RDAs. You cannot dispose of records that have not been described and scheduled by an approved RDA.

### Listing your files: it may seem like a lot of red tape, but it is important!

Your department needs to know which records are being disposed of and who approved it. So, all of the records that you want to dispose of must be listed on **Box Inventory Forms**.\*\* These forms help your department account for all of the records that it disposed of. Send these forms to your Records Coordinator after you fill them out.



Your director or regional superintendent must approve the disposal of the records. Usually the director does this by writing an approval letter to your department’s Records Coordinator.

\* A government body is a department, board, or agency.

\*\* Records being destroyed under RDA 1997-02, the Transitory Records Schedule, do not have to be listed on Box Inventory Forms. You also do not have to fill out these forms if your folders are already listed in iRIMS.

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Your Records Coordinator will work with the Public Works and Services to transfer the records into the Records Centre and dispose of them.

### **Do I have to send my records to PWS?**

You have to send your records to PWS if you want to destroy substantive records. There are two main reasons for this:

- The **Archives Act** states that the PRC must advertise the destruction of all records in the **NWT Gazette** (s.5(5) and 5(6)). PWS looks after this for the PRC. The public has 15 days after the Gazette is published to file a request to review the records.
- The **Transfer of Records Agreement between the GNWT and the Government of Nunavut** states that Nunavut may review the destruction of all records created before April 1, 1999. Nunavut has 30 days to decide if it wants to review the records before they are destroyed. PWS coordinates this process.

Records are held in PWS' Records Centres until the NWT Gazette and Nunavut review periods end.

PWS also coordinates the transfer of records to the NWT Archives.

### **What if I am transferring records to another department?**

You do not have to contact PWS if you are giving records to another department. However, there are some things that you should do:

- You should list all of the records that are being transferred.
- Your deputy minister should agree in writing to transfer the records to the other department.
- The deputy minister of the receiving department should agree in writing to receive and manage the records.
- Both departments should agree in writing on how the records will be managed, and how to address access to information issues.

### **What if I am transferring records to another a non-government organization?**

The **Archives Act** says that departments cannot transfer records to a non-government organization without the PRC's written approval (s.9). Contact the Territorial Archivist before giving records to a non-government organization.

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For more information, contact your department's records coordinator, or contact the Records Management Unit at 920-3009 or 873-7446

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## **Disposition of Transitory Records**

You can destroy small volumes of non-confidential transitory records by hiring a contractor to shred or burn the records. Do not throw records in the garbage. Public Works and Services will destroy large volumes of transitory records for you. Call the Records Management Unit for more information on how to dispose of transitory records.

**Check out these bulletins for more information:**

- #4 on substantive and transitory records
- #10 on the ownership of records
- #7, #9, and #11 for information on records disposition authorities
- #17 on the NWT Archives
- #18 on the PWS Records Centres

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