



Records Management Bulletin

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

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Implementing the Transitory Records Schedule

What is the Transitory Records Schedule?

Every office has transitory records. Most of us throw them out without a second thought. However, transitory records are public records. The **Archives Act** states that public records cannot be destroyed without the Public Records Committee's (PRC) approval.

The **Transitory Records Schedule** is a record disposition authority. It gives departments permission to destroy transitory records when they are no longer useful. The PRC approved it in 1997. It was revised in 2005. It is approved for all government departments.

What does the Transitory Records Schedule cover?

Transitory records are records that have short-term usefulness, are not needed to meet legal obligations, or are not needed to provide ongoing support to your department's activities. The schedule divides them into six categories:

1. **Advertising material** – consists of ads and promotional material. It includes things like flyers, catalogues, and other junk mail.
2. **Blank information media** – consists of blank audio and videotapes, blank disks, and similar blank or erased recording media. It also applies to blank, obsolete forms.
3. **Draft documents and working materials** – used for information that was used to create a final document, and that has no further value once the final document is completed.
4. **Duplicate documents** – consists of multiple copies or convenience copies that have no further value.
5. **Non-GNWT Publications** – consists of books and other publications that were purchased or obtained from another organization.
6. **Temporary information** – consists of information such as message slips, routing slips, announcements, and other information that has a very short usefulness.

Note: drafts, working papers, e-mail, and sticky notes should be kept if they:

- Were used to write laws, regulations, and policies.
- Are records of actions or decisions.
- Are about legal matters or audit reports.
- Were used to prepare or update the financial system or the public accounts.
- Were used to prepare publications.

For more information...

The Transitory Records Schedule is on the PWS Website:

<http://www.pws.gov.nt.ca/records/authorities.htm>

Bulletin #4 has tips on how to identify transitory records.

When in Doubt....

If you are not sure if a record is transitory or not, do the following:

- Keep the record.
- Call your department's Records Coordinator for advice.

Retention of transitory records

The retention and disposition schedule for transitory records looks like this:

| | | |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| A | SA | FD |
| S/O | nil | D |

In other words: keep the records in your office until you no longer need them. They do not have a semi-active period and cannot be sent to the records centre for storage. So, they can be destroyed when you decide that you do not need them.

Destroying transitory records

Paper transitory records should be recycled if possible. They should be shredded using a crosscut shredder if you do not have a recycling program. Whatever you do, make sure that the records do not end up at the local landfill!

E-mail and other electronic transitory records can be deleted. Remember that hitting the delete key on your computer does not really delete a record. People who know how can still find it on hard drives and back-up tapes.

Destroying large volumes of transitory records

The Records Management Unit, PWS, will arrange to destroy large volumes of transitory records in Yellowknife, Fort Smith, Fort Simpson, and Inuvik.

1. Call your department's records coordinator and tell him or her that you have transitory records that need to be destroyed.
2. Pack the records in Records Centre boxes.
3. Have your director or regional superintendent sign a letter stating that you wish to destroy transitory records. Send this letter to your records coordinator. Your records coordinator will forward this letter to the Records Management Unit.
4. The Records Management Unit will send labels for the boxes to your records coordinator.
5. Put the labels on the boxes. Contact the Records Management Unit when the boxes have been labeled.
6. The Records Management Unit will arrange to have the boxes picked up and destroyed.
7. The Records Management Unit will tell your records coordinator that the records have been destroyed.

In communities that do not have a records centre, large volumes of transitory records should be shredded using a crosscut shredder or burned in an incinerator. They can also be shipped to a community that has a records centre.

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