



Records Management Bulletin

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

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ARCS Updates

Revisions to ARCS

The GNWT Administrative Records Classification System (ARCS) was first issued in 1995. Since then, it has been revised several times. It was completely revised in 1998. Smaller amendments were made in 2000, 2002, 2004, and 2005.

There are several reasons why ARCS is revised:

- To make the system easier to use.
- To address changes in government programs and functions.
- To address changes in legislation, regulations, and policies.
- Because departments have identified a need for a change.

ARCS is a living document. It will continue to change as the government evolves.

Changes to ARCS are posted on the Public Works and Services Website:

<http://www.pws.gov.nt.ca/records/authorities.htm>. They are also available from your department's Records Coordinator.

How do the Changes Affect My Files?

When ARCS is amended, the following changes may occur:

- New classification numbers are added.
- Existing classification numbers are discontinued.
- Retention periods are changed.

Each of these changes will affect your files in a different way.

New Classification Numbers

New classification numbers take effect when an amendment is approved.

Discontinued Classification Numbers

Records that were classified using a previous version of ARCS do not have to be re-numbered.

Do not use discontinued primary and secondary numbers for new files, folders, or volumes. Check the latest version of ARCS before you open a new file to make sure that the classification number is current.

Records that were classified with a discontinued primary or secondary number will continue to use the retention periods that were in place before ARCS was revised.

This bulletin is based on a procedure written by Deana Dickson, Records and ATIPP Coordinator, Public Works and Services.

Revised Retention Periods

New retention periods apply to records that are created after an amendment is issued. There are two options for files that were scheduled using a previous version of ARCS:

- **Active files:** files that are still in the office should follow the new retention periods.
- **Semi-active files:** files that are in the Records Centre continue to follow the retention period that was in place when they were transferred to the Records Centre.

Implementing the Changes

As noted above, you do not have to redo your filing cabinets whenever ARCS is changed. Files with discontinued file numbers will follow the retention periods that were in place when the files were created.

Although you do not need to renumber your files, there are times when it is a good idea:

- When the retention is longer in the new version.
- When you want to keep your files in the same place in the filing cabinet.

You do not have to renumber or reschedule files that are currently in storage at the Records Centre. You may wish to redo the files if the new retention period better meets your department's needs. In that case, send amended Box Inventory forms to your departmental records coordinator and the Records Management section of Public Works and Services. They will make sure that the new retention periods are assigned to the files.

New volumes of a discontinued file number

Do not use a discontinued primary or secondary number to open a new volume of a file. Instead, open the new volume using the new classification number. Place a cross-reference sheet in the old file and the new one, so that you will know where to find the other related files.

Updating File Lists

If your office uses an MS Word or Excel file list, note the discontinued file numbers on the list. It is important that these numbers are not re-used.

Also update your file lists with any new retention periods.

iRIMS and ARCS Amendments

If your office is using iRIMS to manage your records, you will not have to worry about the retention changes made in the ARCS amendments. iRIMS will be updated to reflect the amendments. Files that are in the office will adopt the new retentions. Files that are in the Records Centre will follow the previous retention period.

Print off new file lists and distribute them to any users who do not have access to iRIMS.

Questions and Suggestions

Contact your departmental records coordinator or the Records Management section of PWS if you have any questions about the amendments to ARCS or suggestions for changes to ARCS.

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