



Records Management Bulletin

Records management advice prepared for GNWT employees
by the Records Management Unit of Public Works and Services
No. 49 – June 2006

Changes to Records Centre Services

What is changing?

On October 1, 2006, Public Works and Services will stop accepting unscheduled records for storage in the four records centres. The Informatics Policy Committee approved this change in April 2006.

What does this mean?

Unscheduled records are records that cannot be classified and scheduled according to an approved Records Disposition Authority. Examples of records disposition authorities are the Administrative Records Classification System (ARCS) and Operational Records Classification Systems (ORCS).

ARCS was approved in 1995. After it was approved, PWS required that departments use ARCS to schedule the administrative records that they stored in the records centres. However, the records centres continued to accept unscheduled operational records. The only restriction was that the unscheduled records had to be closed for at least two years.

This will change on October 1, 2006. From that day on, the records centres will only accept records that are classified and scheduled by ARCS or ORCS. Unscheduled records, no matter how old, will not be accepted for storage.

Why are the rules changing?

This change is necessary because the records centres are filling up. Unscheduled records do not have retention schedules that state how long they should be kept. Likewise, they cannot legally be disposed of. Instead, they arrive at the records centre and stay there. Forever. Forgotten.

Unless things change, the Inuvik Records Centre will be full within 18 months. The Yellowknife Records Centre will be full by the end of 2009. The Fort Smith and Fort Simpson Records Centres will fill up a few years later. By reducing the growth and volume of unscheduled records in the records centres, PWS will be able to prolong their life.

Unscheduled records are a liability to the government. They cost money to store. They must be produced for Access to Information requests, audits, and investigations. They may contain historical information that is not being protected and preserved.

What do I have to do to prevent this?

If your division has ARCS and an approved ORCS, you have nothing to worry about. There will be no change in records centre services.

If your division does not have an ORCS, contact your department's records coordinator about developing one. The Public Records Committee must approve an ORCS before it can be used to schedule operational records.

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