

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act

This legislation ensures the public's right to access information created or received by the GNWT. It also specifies exceptions to access of some kinds of information and prevents the unauthorized collection, use or disclosure of personal information by public bodies.

Active records

Active records are records that are required by a department or division on a regular basis. They may be referred to daily, weekly, or every couple of weeks. Because active records are used frequently, they should be kept in the office where they were created.

Administrative records

Means records common to all offices and which are distinct from operational records. Administrative records support "housekeeping" functions such as the management of facilities, property, material, finances, personnel and information systems. Administrative records also relate to common management processes, including committees, agreements, contracts, information services, legal opinions, and other similar functions.

Administrative Records Classification System (ARCS)

Means the government-wide system for the classification, filing, retrieval, and records retention and disposition for all types of administrative records.

Archival selection

The process whereby the NWT Archives determines which Government records will be retained permanently to document the history and operations of the GNWT.

Archives Act

This legislation establishes the position of the Territorial Archivist and the Public Records Committee. The *Archives Act* defines GNWT records, and stipulates that they must be transferred to the Territorial Archivist within 30 years of their creation unless legally disposed of according to an approved records disposition authority.

Block numeric

A file classification system whereby specific subjects are grouped into separate blocks of more general primary subjects. Primary numbers are assigned to the main subject blocks and secondary numbers are assigned to the specific subjects within the blocks. Together the primary and secondary numbers designate particular files. When further breakdown of subjects is necessary, tertiary and quaternary numbers are created.

Case files

A file containing material relating to a specific action, event, person, project, location, etc., and which is filed by that name, project, location, etc. All case files in a particular series usually contain the same type of record material. Examples of case files are personnel files and estate files.

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Classification system

A systematic arrangement of records into subject groups or functional categories using numbers or letters for identification.

Confidential records

A record containing certain information that requires protection against un-authorized access or disclosure.

Conversion of records

The transfer of records from one physical format to another.

Copy file

A record that is a copy of and is maintained in addition to the master file. A copy file is kept for reference purposes and is not used or relied upon as the department's official record of its actions, business transactions, decisions, policies, and approvals.

Destruction

See **Records disposition**.

Electronic records

Records consisting of data and information which is input, created, manipulated and/or stored on electronic media which show evidence of actions and decisions occurring during the transaction of business.

File

Papers and documents on specific subjects, locations, people, etc., which have been collected within a single file jacket, shannon file, etc., and which have been arranged in logical sequence, usually in date order.

Final disposition

The final action taken with regard to a group of records after their inactive phase has ended; may be either destruction or transfer to the NWT Archives.

Full retention

Indicates that all records so designated in a retention schedule are to be retained permanently by the department, board or agency that created or received, used and maintained them. Sometimes called permanent retention.

Government records

See **Public Records**

iRIMS – Records and Information Management software

Acronym for Integrated Records & Information Management System.

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Life cycle

The evolution of a record through creation and receipt, distribution, use, maintenance, and disposition.

Master file

A record that is created or received, maintained, used, and relied upon as the department's official record. A master file provides evidence of the department's actions, business transactions, decisions, policies, and approvals.

Microform

A generic term for any film or paper, which contains reduced photographic images. Examples include microfiche and microfilm.

Non-record

See **Transitory Records**.

NWT Archives

All public records and other documentary material under the care, custody and control of the Territorial Archivist. This term is commonly used to refer to the organization that is managed by the Territorial Archivist, and which looks after the NWT Archives. It is also commonly used to refer to the facilities in the Prince of Wales Heritage Centre that house the NWT Archives.

Office of Primary Responsibility (OPR)

The program unit within a department, which has primary responsibility for a category of records or holds the master copy of any records series. The OPR maintains the official master copy of the records in order to satisfy operational, financial, legal, audit and other requirements. All other copies are considered duplicates and have a shorter retention period.

One-time records disposition authority

A one-time disposition authority is used to process the disposition of a specific group of records. Such a schedule is prepared in order to process the disposition of the records created in carrying out a discontinued program or service.

Ongoing records disposition authority

An ongoing records schedule is one that can be used by a department on a continuing basis, until it is amended or repealed.

On-site records storage

Refers to the storage of records in the office in which they were created.

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Operational records

Records which relate to the operations and services provided by a department or agency in carrying out the functions for which it is responsible according to statute, mandate, or policy. Operational records are distinct from administrative records and are unique to each government organization.

Operational Records Classification System (ORCS)

A standardized system for the classification, filing, retrieval, vital records and freedom on information and protection of privacy designations, and disposition scheduling of operational records.

Policy and procedures files

Files which contain records relating to the plans, decisions, and actions embracing the general goals and acceptable procedures of a government organization.

Public records

As defined in the Archives Act, "*public record*" includes any correspondence, memorandum, book, plan, map, drawing, diagram, pictorial or graphic work, photograph, film, microfilm, sound recording, video tape, machine-readable record, manuscript, inventory, pamphlet, periodical, photographic slide, micrographic, electronic data print-out, and any other documentary material regardless of its physical form or characteristics, held by or under control of a government body;

Public Records Committee

Operating within the mandate of the Archives Act, the Public Records Committee reviews and approves records disposition authorities and advises the Commissioner on disposition of government records.

Record

See **Public Records**

Records centre

The storage facility administered by the department of Public Works & Services which is responsible for the transfer, processing, storage, and retrieval of inactive records owned by the departments of the Government of the Northwest Territories.

Records classification system

A systematic arrangement of records into subject groups or functional categories using numbers or letters for identification.

Records coordinator

An individual designated by a GNWT department to be responsible for the development and overall administration of the department's records management program.

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Records disposition

See **Final Disposition**

Records disposition authorities

Also known as a “Retention Schedule” or a “Disposition Authority”. A list of public records which indicates and authorizes the length of time a particular series of records should be maintained in the active area of the department, the length of time they should be maintained in semi-active or inactive storage and identifies the final disposition action for the series (destruction or archival selection).

Records inventory

Usually organized by record type, an inventory provides the basis for establishing a records schedule and fully describes the title, purpose, function, information content, format, physical extent, date range, legal and fiscal retention requirements for the records, and other factors that may have a bearing on the retention periods and final disposition.

Records management

The application of an information system to the administration and control of records (and the information they contain) throughout their life-cycle, including creation or receipt, classification, use, retention, storage, and final disposition.

Records schedule

See **Records disposition authority**

Records series

Also known as 'series'. Records arranged in and maintained in a unit because they relate to the same subject, function, or activity, have a similar form, or because of some other relationship resulting from their creation, receipt or use. Examples are subject files, purchase orders, case files.

Reserved secondaries

Within an ARCS and ORCS, each primary has two reserved secondaries. A '-00' secondary is reserved ALWAYS for 'Policy and Procedures' type record material; and a '-01' secondary is reserved ALWAYS for 'General' or routing type record material. Whether the primary has these two files or not, the primary '-00' and '-01' are typed in the numerical index under each primary. When files actually exist for either or both of the files, the words 'Policy' and 'General' are inserted as required.

Retention period

The length of time a record must be retained in order to satisfy administrative, fiscal, legal and research requirements of a department. Retention periods are usually specified in number of years or by reference to the termination of a project or event.

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Scope note

A description of the functions, uses and content of the records that are classified within a primary records classification. A scope note indicates the administrative or operational function of the records, and should give a general statement about the record types (memos, forms, reports) and media (video recordings, computer disk). A scope note may also contain information about records that are specifically excluded from the primary classification and filed elsewhere, about records arrangement and organization, records management practice, and records usage.

Semi-active records

A record that is no longer required for constant referral in the course of daily business but which is still of some use to the department. The record may be required for occasional consultation and may be retained because of administrative or legal requirements.

Subject files

The collection of record material on a specific subject placed together, usually in date order, within a single file folder.

Superseded/Obsolete

Is used to identify records that must be retained until the occurrence of an event. Examples include expiration of a contract, cancellation of a program, disposal of an asset, or the resolution of a claim.

Transitory records

Means records of a temporary usefulness which are not an integral part of an administrative or operational records series, which are not regularly files within a standard records classification system, and which are only required for a limited period of time for the completion of an action or the preparation of an ongoing record. Transitory records are not required to meet statutory obligations or to sustain administrative or operational functions.

Transitory record categories as identified in the Transitory Records Schedule include:

- i) Advertising Material
- ii) Blank Information Media
- iii) Draft Documents and Working Materials
- iv) Duplicate Documents
- v) Non-GNWT Publications

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Values

- i) 'ADMINISTRATIVE' the usefulness of records to the department holding them for the conduct of current business.
- ii) 'FISCAL' the value of records to the department for their usefulness in showing how monies were obtained, allotted, controlled, and expended.
- iii) 'LEGAL' the continuing value records may have in protecting the civic, legal, property, human and other rights of the GNWT, individuals, or society as a whole.
- iv) 'EVIDENTIAL' the value of records for providing evidence of the organization and functioning of government departments.
- v) 'ARCHIVAL' the determination that records merit permanent preservation by the Territorial Archivist.

Vital records

Records without which, the GNWT could not continue to function. Examples include:

- i) Records necessary for the government to fulfil its obligations to personnel, clients, and suppliers; and
- ii) Records necessary for the government to protect the rights of personnel, suppliers, etc., and its own rights to physical and intellectual property.

Working materials

Rough notes, calculations, preliminary drafts and research notes assembled or created in the preparation or analysis of other records such as correspondence, memoranda, reports and statistical tabulations. When the final documents have been produced and incorporated in an administrative or operational records classification system, working materials become transitory records and do not have to be retained. Working materials related to statutes, audits, or records specified in a records schedule, however, are not transitory records and must be retained according to an approved records disposition authority.