

RECORDS MANAGEMENT HANDBOOK

Managing noncurrent files

APPLYING
RECORDS
SCHEDULES

Revised
May 1961

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS SERVICE
RECORDS MANAGEMENT DIVISION

Federal Stock Number
7610-634-5022

RECORDS MANAGEMENT HANDBOOKS are developed by the National Archives and Records Service as technical guides to reducing and simplifying paperwork.

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INTRODUCTION

Each Federal agency is required by the Federal Records Act of 1950 to establish and maintain a records disposition program to keep its records moving out of high cost office space and filing equipment as rapidly as desirable.

Such a program includes two chief elements: the retirement of noncurrent records to economical storage and the disposal of records not warranting further preservation under even the most economical storage conditions.

The economies and other benefits to be derived from the transfer of records to noncurrent storage are explained in the Records Management Handbook, "Federal Records Centers," which also contains information about procedures to be followed in packing and transferring records to these centers.

Transfers to centers, however, merely involve a transfer of custody or a new location of files. The only way to avoid perpetual expansion of records storage space and constantly increasing masses of records lies in vigorous disposal of unneeded records.

Many Federal officials, particularly in the field, may feel that a disposition program is no concern of their own small offices. They may need to be reminded that about three-quarters of the savings resulting from records disposal over a four year period came from the disposal of files held in field offices. (See Figure 1.)

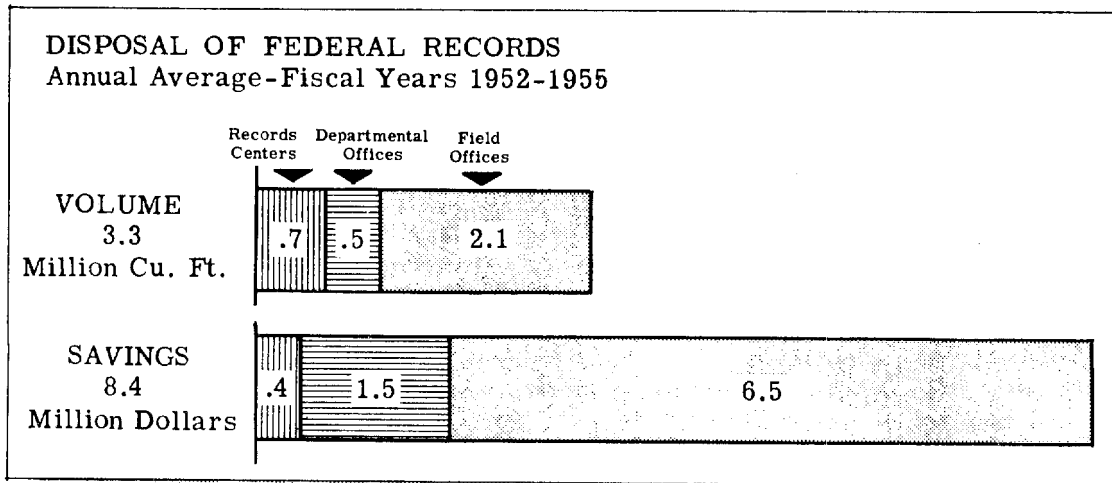


FIGURE 1

The key to an effective records disposition program is the agency records control schedule, which lists and describes the records of the agency, and shows when they shall be retired to a center or other storage space and when those not warranting indefinite retention shall be disposed of.

Even the best records control schedules, however, are of little value unless they are systematically applied to the records of the office, and it is the purpose of this handbook to suggest ways to apply them effectively.

REVIEWING SCHEDULES

The first step in applying schedules is to obtain current copies of them. Records may be transferred to Federal Records Centers without being formally scheduled for transfer, but records cannot be destroyed without Congressional approval of their destruction. (See Figure 2.)

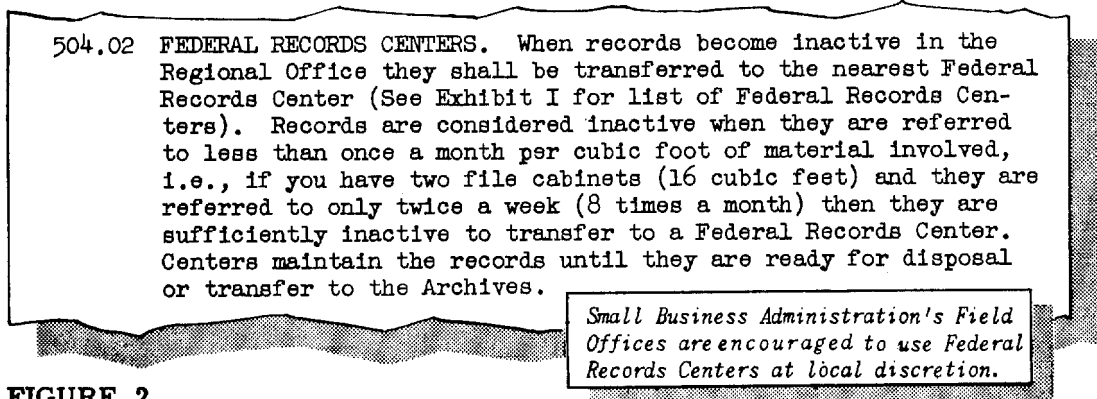


FIGURE 2

The Records Disposal Act of 1943 provides three types of authorizations for the disposal of Federal records, each of which must be approved by the Joint Committee on the Disposition of Executive Papers before it is put into effect:

1. **LISTS** of records in an agency's custody that are deemed not of sufficient value to warrant further preservation. This is a one-time authorization and permits disposal only of the precise records described on the list.
2. **SCHEDULES** of records that have accumulated in an agency or that may in future accumulate that will not, after the lapse of a specified period of time or after the occurrence of a specified event, have sufficient value to warrant further preservation. These are mandatory authorizations for the periodic disposal of records and may be used repeatedly.
3. **GENERAL RECORDS SCHEDULES** developed by the General Services Administration covering records common to several or all agencies. These schedules are permissive but within any agency by administrative action their use may be made mandatory or may be left to the discretion of individual custodians of the records.

Records Control Schedules required by General Services Administration Regulations combine these disposal schedule authorizations with instructions for the transfer of records to storage and for the indefinite retention of records of enduring value.

In field offices it is not always easy to determine whether currently applicable schedules are at hand. At every session of the Congress hundreds of new disposal authorizations are approved. Some simply revise existing authorizations to destroy records, some authorize such destruction for the first time.

Approved For Release 2001/07/17 : CIA-RDP74-00005R000100020020-0

Theoretically all field offices holding a given type of records should be notified by agency headquarters whenever there is a revision in the disposal authorization pertaining to the records. In practice this would not be feasible so most agencies try to issue annually revisions to generally applicable agency schedules.

If there is a change that is of particular importance, either requiring the retention of records formerly disposable or permitting the disposal of a large body of records, the field may be notified before the annual consolidated statement of revisions is issued. Normally this is not the case.

The most recent agency issuance governing records disposition may normally be considered valid.

The issuance announcing the provisions of the schedule should be an agency directive, or an attachment to an agency directive, usually issued at the bureau or divisional level. It should:

1. Incorporate any necessary information from the pertinent laws and GSA regulations so that field officials need not check these legal documents.
2. Include a statement that the new schedule supersedes all schedules issued in the past or, if this is not the case, explain what the relationship of the new schedule is to prior schedules.
3. Define all terms subject to misunderstanding.
4. Authorize application of the schedules.
5. Indicate in understandable terms just what records are covered by each item.
6. Indicate the use to be made of General Records Schedules.
7. Define the coverage of the schedule in terms of organizational units, dates (if significant), and records.

If such an agency directive has been issued and is in the hands of the proper field officials, there are no problems in determining what the agency's policies are as to the disposition of the records of each office.

There may be very considerable difficulties if such a directive has not been issued. In such a case the field official has two choices:

1. He can ask his central office what records disposition policies are in effect that might be applicable to the records of his office, or
2. He may first develop descriptions of the records of his office and ask his central office whether (a) he may transfer any of the files to a Federal Records Center (if he has not discretionary authority to make this decision himself), or (b) any of the files are covered by disposal authorizations.

Almost certainly some of his files are covered by General Records Schedules. Since these are permissive, however, they should not be used by a field official

unless he has determined whether it is agency policy to use them as issued by GSA or to use them with specified modifications.

If the official's central office replies that the agency has no policies on disposal or transfer of records, the General Services Administration's Records Management Service in the field may be asked for assistance in developing an appropriate schedule.

Field officials should not often get such an answer, however. Agencies have reported to GSA that only 4 percent of all their holdings are not definitely scheduled either for disposal or indefinite retention - by far the bulk of them are scheduled for disposal. Of field records, only 3 percent have not been definitely evaluated.

With the applicable schedules in hand, it is most important that the person responsible for applying them be thoroughly familiar with their provisions.

If the wrong records are destroyed, they cannot be re-created.

ITEM NO.	JOB NO.	TITLE AND DESCRIPTION OF RECORDS	CLASS	AUTHORIZED DISPOSITION
		This schedule covers reports required of regional offices as listed in B7.02 of the Organization and Policy Manual. Unless otherwise indicated, this schedule applies to both the central office and regional office copies.		
1	CSDA-52	Security program workload	Temporary	Destroy 1 year after date of report.
2	CSDA-52	Work reports		See Budget Schedule
3	CSDA-52	Management comments: a. Budget and Finance Division copy b. All other copies	Temporary	Destroy 2 years after close of fiscal year. Destroy 1 year after close of fiscal year.
4	CSDA-52	Status of disability retirement applications: a. Central office Medical Division copy b. Regional office copy	Temporary	Destroy 3 years after date of report. Destroy 1 year after date of report.

REPORTS REQUIRED OF REGIONAL OFFICES Page 1
March 1955
S-1

Civil Service Commission schedule covering reports required of Regional Offices.

FIGURE 3

MATCHING SCHEDULES WITH RECORDS

After the applicable schedules have been reviewed so that they are thoroughly understood, the next step in applying them is to match the records of the office with the written descriptions of the records to see what records are eligible for transfer or disposal. In doing this matching job, usually one of four situations is found:

1. SCHEDULE TAILOR-MADE FOR RECORDS OF ONE OFFICE

The schedule may be tailor-made for the records of the office, based usually on an inventory of its records. This is likely to be the case if the office is the only one performing particular functions.

If many offices perform exactly the same functions, a schedule based on an inventory of the records of one of the offices may fit the records of all similar offices, especially if filing systems are uniformly prescribed. (See Figure 3.)

With a tailor-made schedule in hand, there should be no difficulty in matching the schedule with the records and determining the disposition instructions applicable to each group of records.

2. A GENERALIZED SCHEDULE COVERING ESSENTIALLY ALL THE RECORDS OF THE OFFICE

Such a schedule is usually based on an inventory of several offices performing substantially the same work, but not always using exactly the same terminology and often not keeping records in exactly the same manner. Such schedules usually describe the records in terms of the function performed so that differences in terminology and filing systems and locations do not affect the coverage of the items.

Major examples of such schedules are the General Records Schedules. They are based on inventories of the records maintained by offices performing the pertinent functions, together with analyses of the paperwork procedures involved in carrying out the functions. Generalized descriptions of the various types of records resulting from the procedures are then developed. (See Figure 4.)

Similarly, many agencies have developed such schedules in cases where field offices perform substantially the same functions.

Often all the items in a generalized schedule are not applicable to the records of a given office. Therefore the person applying the schedule must use his own judgment in determining which items apply to which of the records.

Such schedules are much more flexible than the tailor-made schedules in that the schedule need not be re-written with each minor change in record

keeping or records-creating procedures. On the other hand at times they may involve some difficulties of interpretation. (See Figures 5 and 6.)

3. LOCALLY PREPARED SCHEDULES THAT ARE DEVELOPED WITHIN THE LIMITS OF AGENCY-WIDE GENERALIZED SCHEDULES

Some agencies obtain Congressional approval of generalized schedules, then require each local field office to compile an inventory of its records, indicating for each item the appropriate disposition instruction based on

GENERAL RECORDS SCHEDULE 2			
<u>Payrolling and Pay Administration Records</u>			
<p style="text-align: right;">GSA Reg. 3 Appendix B (10-8-57)</p> <p>Payrolling and pay administration records pertain to disbursements to civil employees of the Government for personal services. This schedule applies to the pay records created since January 1, 1921, that are common to all agencies, but it excludes (a) retirement record cards (Forms 2806 or equivalent) that are maintained during employee duty and then are transferred to the Retirement Division of the Civil Service Commission; (b) files physically transmitted to the General Accounting Office or maintained in agency space for audit under section 117(b) of the Budget and Accounting Procedures Act of 1950 and the Post Office Department Financial Control Act of 1950; (c) records relating to tax withholding, savings bonds, or fidelity bonds, or other records held by the appropriate units of the Treasury Department responsible for the related Government-wide programs; (d) or to Bureau of the Budget files reflecting agency personnel needs and problems. Evaluation and disposition of these groups of records must be provided for separately, except that Congress has given the St. Louis Federal Records Center authority to destroy certain pre-1921 files that are transferred to its custody, provided the transferring agency concurs in their destruction.</p>			
ITEM NO.	DESCRIPTION OF RECORDS	RECOMMENDED METHOD OF FILING	AUTHORIZED DISPOSITION
1.	Individual earning and service cards (such as Standard Form 1127 or its equivalent).	Alphabetically by name of employee; start a new file every year.	Transfer to Federal Records Center, St. Louis, Mo., 1 year after audit. (a) If in personnel folder or in individual pay folder filed adjacent to personnel folder: dispose with the personnel folder (see GRS 1, item 1); (b) If not in or filed adjacent to personnel folder: dispose 56 years after date of last entry on card.
2.	Correspondence files maintained by operating units responsible for payroll preparation and processing, pertaining to administration and operation of the units.	Conform to agency practice.	Dispose after 2 years.
2h.	Wage survey files consisting of wage survey reports and data, working papers and related correspondence concerning area wages paid for each employment class (excluding authorized wage schedules and wage survey recapitulation work sheets).	Conform to agency practice.	Dispose after completion of second succeeding wage survey.

A General Records Schedule for pay records developed by GSA.

FIGURE 4

28. Records and Documents Regarding Program Planning, Farm and Ranch Planning and Management, and Procedure

(a) Program Planning: This includes the planning of surveys to determine conservation needs and economic benefits of conservation, lending assistance in the development of new districts and the planning of District Programs and Work Plans, assistance to the District governing body, cooperation with local groups in developing or amending State soil conservation legislation.

(b) Farm and Ranch Planning and Management

Includes techniques and procedures for the development of conservation farm plans, improving and accelerating farm planning, keeping the operating personnel acquainted and up-to-date on the technical aspects and new developments in the field of farm planning.

(c) Procedure

Includes assistance in the development of operating procedures and the Development of State policy.

Sub-item 1: Conservation Needs

Records relating to the determination of the total soil conservation job which needs to be done in the United States by Areas in terms of land use adjustment, types and quantities, of practices, technical personnel required, and costs. Involves records of field surveys and data compiled therefrom, correspondence and reports on basic land resource areas, minor resource areas and basic land resource units, data and statistics on the Soil Conservation District job ahead, and data on the rate of soil decline.

Retain: Washington Records

Dispose: State Records
Work Sheets
Five years after survey is completed.

Summaries
Ten years after survey is completed.

SCS 3-1-54

Soil Conservation Service covers central office and field records in one generalized schedule.

FIGURE 5

Records Management

PROGRAM RECORDS CONTROL SCHEDULE

B-620

(First of 6 pages)

FOOD AND DRUG DISTRICT AND RESIDENT INSPECTION STATION RECORDS

Approved: H.R. 688-84th Congress-1st Session

NOTE: All previous authorizations for the disposition of records covered by this schedule are hereby rescinded.

Housekeeping records covered by Department Records Control Schedules should be disposed of at the expiration of retention periods.

DESCRIPTION OF ITEMS AND APPROVED DISPOSITION

1. Establishment (Factory) Inspection Report Files.

a. Jacketed Records.

Retain records created prior to January 1, 1941. Transfer to a Federal Records Center.

b. All other jacketed records.

Dispose of after 10 years. Transfer to a Federal Records Center in 2-year accumulations folders on firms which have gone out of business, or which are of no further regulatory interest.

These files consist of establishment (factory) inspection reports, investigational reports, surveillance reports, assignment letters, and related correspondence on firms and their products, fastened in chronological date order in folders which are filed alphabetically by firm name.

c. Unjacketed Miscellaneous Correspondence.

Dispose of after 10 years.

These files consist of an alphabetical file of correspondence and reports on "home" District firms which did not develop to point warranting the establishing of individual folders.

Appendix B-620 to HEW's Records Management Manual covers in generalized items most Food and Drug field records.

FIGURE 6

the generalized schedule items. The local schedule is then reviewed at the central office level before it may be applied. This represents a combination of a tailor-made schedule and a generalized schedule.

Insofar as it is a tailor-made schedule it usually requires frequent revision but offers few difficulties of interpretation. Insofar as it is generalized, it obviates the need for frequently seeking new Congressional authorizations for disposal.

4. SCHEDULES COVERING ONLY FRAGMENTS OF THE RECORDS

In view of agency reports that 96 percent of all their records are scheduled, this situation should seldom arise.

It will most frequently arise in cases where an agency over a period of years has scheduled all its records, but has never integrated its disposal authorizations into one issuance. If such a coordination has not taken place, the existing disposal authorizations are likely to overlap, duplicate, and even contradict one another, since they have been obtained at different times when slightly differing procedures were in effect. In these cases it may be impossible for the field office to tell what authorizations apply to what records and it may be necessary to ask the central office for virtually an entirely new schedule.

After agency schedules and pertinent General Records Schedule items have been matched with the field files, an important segment of files will not have been covered: the so-called site-audit records.

The site audit records are the contracts, accounts current, and all the supporting papers which, prior to the establishment of the site audit system, would have been sent to the General Accounting Office in Washington for audit.

Agency records which have a subject matter relationship to the transactions reported in the formal accounts are not part of the site audit accounts and are covered by the General Records Schedules or the agency schedules.

The site audit records are records of the General Accounting Office, despite their maintenance by the agency. As GAO records they are governed by GAO retirement and disposal policies.

Under GAO policy, as expressed in the Policy and Procedures Manual of the Comptroller General, each agency is required to submit for GAO approval a plan for the retirement periodically to Federal Records Centers of the site audit records after they have met administrative needs of the agency. After GAO has approved this plan on an agency-wide basis, transfers are to be made on the prescribed timetable, subject to the written prior approval of the GAO Regional Director.

Federal Records Centers are responsible for obtaining clearance from both the agency concerned and the GAO for disposal of the records 12 years after the accounting period involved, in accordance with established GAO disposal policy.

Site audit records retired to the Federal Records Center are available for reference both to the agency concerned and to the GAO. Therefore the agency concerned does not need to create and maintain duplicates of these records for reference purposes.

WHEN TO APPLY SCHEDULES

Records do not have to be disposed of or transferred on the exact day their retention period ends. Because of short and varying retention periods, it usually is most practical to consolidate all disposal and transfers into one effort. It is recommended, therefore, that eligible records normally be transferred or disposed of once a year. Deviations from such a timetable may be advisable if records accumulate very rapidly so as to make more frequent retirement to centers advisable or accumulate so slowly as to make annual transfers unwarranted. Arrangements in these unusual cases should be worked out by the local agency office and the center concerned.

In applying the schedule, the exact time of actual disposal or transfer of particular records should depend on two factors:

1. Regardless of schedule authorizations, agency personnel should not dispose of records if such records are still needed by the agency for administrative, legal, or fiscal purposes.
2. The costs of handling records for disposal or transfer should be kept to a minimum.

Whenever records need to be retained significantly longer than required by the schedule, presumably owing to events unforeseen at the time the schedule was developed, the agency central office should be notified, with a detailed explanation of the factors requiring further retention of the records. A delay in destroying records should not be regarded as significant unless it is of more than a year's duration and concerns enough records to affect filing equipment requirements.

Careful timing of disposal and transfer actions will hold down the costs of handling the records both in the agencies and in the centers. Technically, additional records become disposable or transferable every day of the year, but to take action so often would be uneconomical and inefficient. To avoid this several factors must be considered:

1. AVOID INTERFERENCE WITH CURRENT OPERATIONS

Records should be disposed of and transferred during slack periods if possible. The guiding rule should be to interfere as little as possible with current operations.

Thus, whether such actions should take place at the same time throughout an agency or should occur at varying times in different elements of the agency, depends on the particular circumstances involved.

2. BULK HANDLING

It seldom pays to dispose of or transfer records in very small quantities. This is another reason records should not be disposed of or transferred more often than once a year, except where accumulations cannot be accommodated in the office in which they are filed for that long a period. (See Figure 7.)

904.6 RECORDS CONTROL SCHEDULES. The provisions of such schedules are mandatory. Records will be reviewed at least once a year, and action taken to dispose of those eligible for disposal in accordance with approved schedules in section 904.6b.

Forest Service instructs field offices to apply their schedules at least once a year.

FIGURE 7

Since the volume of business may vary greatly among different field offices, the volume of records of a particular local office may be so small that it may only be worthwhile to effect disposals or transfers at much longer intervals than the schedule requires. This is usually the case when an agency's field office schedule is prepared to take care of the records turnover requirements of its larger field offices. The timing of transfers may not be economically applicable to its small field offices.

On the other hand, if the schedule is prepared on the basis of the needs of the smaller offices, the agency's larger offices may find it advisable to transfer their noncurrent records more often than the schedule itself requires.

3. TIE-IN WITH FILE BREAKS

Files should be cut off periodically so as to make their disposal or transfer as easy as possible.

Many groups of records fall naturally into chronological segments. Income tax returns are most easily filed by the year in which the tax return is made; harvest records are almost automatically filed by growing season; many fiscal records are necessarily filed by the period covered by the accounts, such as month, quarter, or fiscal year. Retirement and disposal periods for such records are easy to apply owing to the essentially chronological basis of the filing system.

Other types of records are not susceptible to chronological filing. General subject files, stock inventory files, and office reference files must be artificially broken to facilitate retirement and disposal - that is, a new file must be started periodically.

Some agencies, particularly those which create a considerable volume of records, have prescribed periodic breaks either as an over-all policy or with respect to particular groups of records.

The Army requires the breaking of most department and field files on an annual basis, except where the nature of the files dictates breaks based on completion of action or other factors. This policy has been written into all the Army disposal standards.

The Bureau of Narcotics provides periodic cutoffs for certain routine correspondence files relating to Bureau activities. Files are broken into five year segments, transferred to Federal Records Centers for an additional five years, then disposed of.

In the Atomic Energy Commission correspondence files are uniformly broken every two years, and other files are broken at specified intervals.

The Civil Service Commission breaks its examination record card files every five years.

The intervals between breaks should be tailored to the size of the files and should fit the agency's needs. The breaks should be made long enough before the actual disposal or transfer to allow the files to "cool off." The required retention periods must be reckoned for the cutoff files as a whole and should therefore begin from the latest record in the file.

4. SCREENING

In order to dispose of a block of files, it may be necessary to remove from the block certain documents or folders of continuing value. In other cases, two or more files maintained in different offices may duplicate each other to such an extent that their combined volume could be reduced by half or more if they were merged and duplicate copies of the same papers destroyed.

Such extraction of individual documents or folders from larger files is called screening, and may involve either withdrawal of materials to be kept or withdrawal of materials to be destroyed.

Folder-by-folder screening for disposal may be avoided by placing closed cases in an inactive file upon completion of action. For example, individual claims case files may be transferred to the inactive file upon filing of the action indicating approval, disapproval, or closing. The inactive file can then be transferred or disposed of on a block basis without screening for active cases.

Screening is usually defended on the grounds that it will improve the quality of the documentation and the ease of reference to the files, or it is justified because it will free office equipment and space.

Generally, however, unless the documents or folders to be retained are of permanent or very long time value and constitute only a very small portion of the total file, it is extremely uneconomical to screen on a paper-by-paper basis or where each folder must be completely reviewed.

The costs of screening the contents of one letter-size file cabinet, as reported by various agencies, range from a minimum of about \$3 to a maximum of about \$60, depending on whether:

- a. Complete folders can be removed,
- b. Disposable material can be separated easily from individual folders, as in the case of temporary records filed on a specified side of a folder,
- c. The materials to be extracted are easily identifiable by information on the folder tab or, in the case of individual documents, by form number or similar obvious characteristics.

Savings in space and equipment that result from screening depend on the following:

- a. Number of cabinets that must be screened to empty one cabinet,
- b. Value of equipment released, and
- c. Value of space released, computed annually for the period of time the documents or folders to be kept must be retained.

Normally savings in space and equipment are not sufficient to justify screening because there are more economical alternatives:

- a. Transfer the files intact to a records center where they can be retained until they are disposable as a whole, or
- b. Microfilm the file intact, if the records to be retained are of permanent or very long time value and constitute a relatively large proportion of the whole file.

Figure 8 shows the comparative costs of microfilming and retention in a Federal Records Center. Before any agency undertakes a screening project it should estimate the costs of the job and the resulting potential savings. If necessary a pilot test can be undertaken to validate the estimates.

A comparison of these potential costs and benefits with the costs and benefits involved in microfilming or center storage is usually conclusive in determining that screening is not justified.

The real solution to screening problems in the long run, of course, lies in revision of filing systems so that in future records to be retained for long periods are not intermixed with papers of very temporary value.

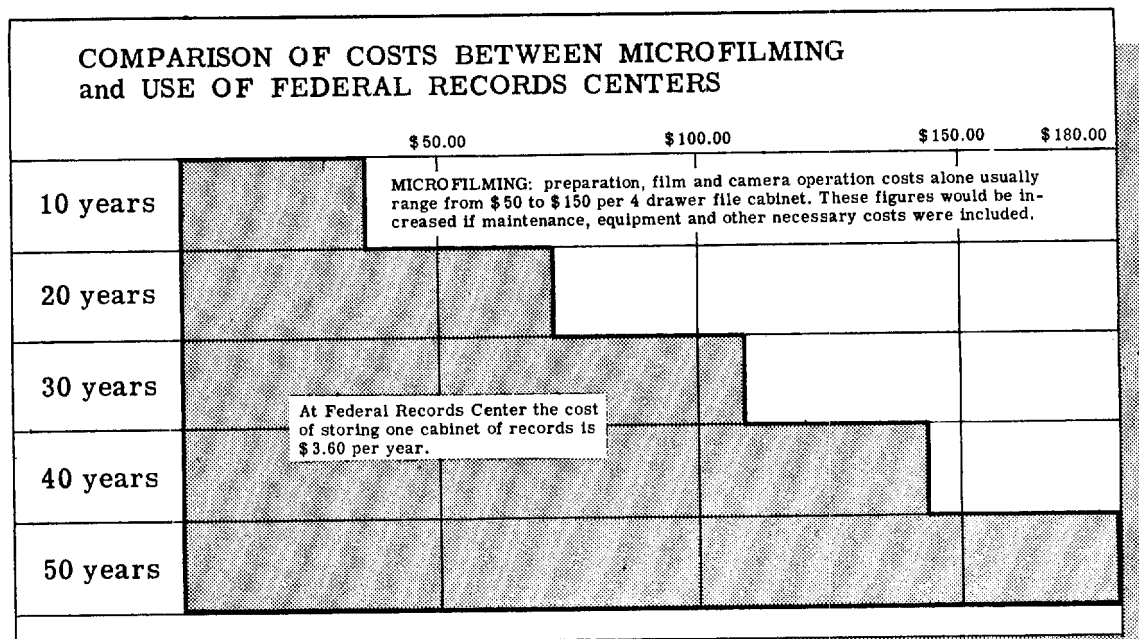


FIGURE 8

METHODS OF TRANSFER AND DISPOSAL

When records have been identified as eligible for transfer or disposal in accordance with agency policy as expressed in its schedules, the transfer or disposal may take place in one of several ways. Transfers may be to an agency holding area, records center, or depository, a Federal Records Center, or under very unusual circumstances, to the National Archives. Disposals may be by sale, salvage, donation, or destruction.

1. TRANSFERS

Records to be transferred to cheap noncurrent records storage areas, for either permanent or temporary retention, normally should go either to (a) Federal Records Centers maintained by the General Services Administration, or (b) agency records centers or depositories approved by the National Archives and Records Service in accordance with the provisions of Title 3 of the Regulations of the General Services Administration.

Some agencies, particularly in the Department of Defense, have established storage facilities intermediate between office space and centers. These "holding areas" are used for the storage or processing of records that must be retained for so short a period that it is uneconomical to send them to centers.

Normally transfers to the National Archives are made only from headquarters offices of agencies located in Washington, and then only under circumstances specified in the GSA regulations.

Records may usually be transferred to Federal Records Centers at any time, whether specifically provided for in a schedule or not. Information about arranging and carrying out such transfers is included in the Records Management Handbook, "Federal Records Centers."

2. DISPOSAL

a. **SALE OR SALVAGE:** Disposable records should be sold on a competitive basis as waste paper or other waste material unless:

- (1) The quantities involved are too small,
- (2) The market price is too low, or
- (3) The records can be sold only after unwarranted expensive and time-consuming sorting and cleaning.

In many regions, GSA's Personal Property Utilization Division has currently in effect a standard contract for the sale of waste paper, so that agencies may simply call representatives of that Division to make arrangements for the sale of waste paper. Where no such contract is in effect or where the disposable records are at a distance from a GSA office having such a

contract, representatives of the Personal Property Utilization Division will assist the agency in letting such a contract.

Security-classified records may be sold as waste paper only if adequate safeguards are taken to prevent any disclosure of the information in the records prior to their shredding or other destruction. Confidential security-classified records should be shredded before being sold. This may occur after the sale, however, if the records remain until their mutilation under the observation of an authorized Federal official or employee. Records bearing a secret or higher classification must be burned. Security-classified records must not be donated for salvage purposes without prior shredding.

If the records are privileged, that is if their availability to the public is prohibited by law or administrative regulation, the waste paper contractor must pulp or macerate the records under the witnessing supervision of a Federal employee.

b. **DONATION FOR PRESERVATION AND USE:** Whenever it is believed that the public interest will be served thereby, a Federal agency may transfer records authorized for disposal to a government, organization, institution, corporation, or person that has made application for them; provided

- (1) That the applicant agrees not to sell the records as records or documents,
- (2) That the transfer is made without cost to the United States Government,
- (3) That no transfer shall be approved if the records contain information the revelation of which is prohibited by law or would be contrary to the public interest,
- (4) That no transfer to a foreign government shall be approved unless such government has an official interest in the records, and
- (5) That no transfer to a person or business corporation shall be approved unless the records are directly pertinent to the custody or operation of properties acquired from the Government.

Each donation of records to non-Federal custody should be reported to the agency records officer who, in turn, must make a report to the National Archives and Records Service.

c. **DESTRUCTION:** If records are neither salable nor otherwise salvageable, or if an agency considers their destruction necessary to prevent the disclosure of information prejudicial to the public interest, the records may be destroyed by shredding, burning, or other appropriate means.

KEEPING A SCHEDULE UP TO DATE

After matching the schedules against the records on hand, some records may be found that are not covered by any disposition instructions. Similarly, records already transferred to a Federal Records Center may not be covered by disposal instructions and the Centers will call this to the attention of the transferring office. The reasons for such lack of coverage may lie in the fragmentary nature of the available schedules, in the recent addition of new programs or functions to the office, in significant changes in existing programs, or in the termination, prior to the development of schedules, of former programs. Regardless of whether these unscheduled records are few or many, they should be called to the attention of the agency records officer so that the agency schedules can be revised to include them or, if appropriate, lists can be prepared to cover files that are immediately disposable.

To revise a schedule the records officer will need complete information about each series or group of the unscheduled records, including:

1. The purpose for which the records were created, their relationship to the program activities of the unit creating them, and any other significant purpose or function they may or do serve;
2. Their content;
3. Their relationship with other records, including duplication elsewhere in substance or content, either in record form or in printed or published private sources;
4. If unusual and significant, the kind of copy, i. e. , whether all carbon copies, all ribbon copies, all processed, or others;
5. The terminal dates of the files; and
6. Their volume.

This information should be sent to the agency records officer with the request that disposition instructions be issued covering these files. If the field official holding the files has definite ideas as to what should be done with them, he should include his opinions for whatever help they may be in determining the proper disposition of the files.

Pending the receipt of such instructions, the records may be retained by the office holding them, or, if not currently needed, they may be transferred to the nearest Federal Records Center, which will carry out the disposal instructions when they are received.

ENSURING MAXIMUM USE OF SCHEDULES

In order to ensure that schedules are actually used, most agencies have installed certain management controls so that the headquarters offices and local officials can be aware of how effective the schedules are and wherein they need improvement. The four major records disposition program measurement checks are (1) a reports system, (2) an inspection or audit system, (3) tickler files, and (4) a requirement that the records officer approve all requests for filing space and equipment. Normally at least three of these checks are necessary.

Such controls should be simple and require as little time and effort in field offices as possible. A complex time-consuming controls system only defeats itself by preventing the disposition program from making any significant net savings.

1. REPORTS SYSTEM

Volume data on records holdings, disposals, and transfers for a given period are essential for measuring the over-all progress of the records disposition program. Such data must be furnished the agency records officer by field and other operating officials.

Normally annual reports will be sufficient since in a given office transfers to records centers or disposals usually occur only once or twice a year. Furthermore, the reports should be designed so that an agency can easily submit to the National Archives and Records Service the biennial statistical summary of records holdings required by Title 3 of General Services Administration Regulations. (See Figure 9.)

The volume data should be on an over-all basis for the reporting element. It need not be broken down into individual schedule items unless special significance is attached to certain records series, owing to their volume or other characteristics. All volume data should be in terms of cubic feet.

It is essential that the reporting system not require too frequent or detailed reports. The only purpose of collecting and compiling the volume data is to be able to measure the general effectiveness of the program. The object is not to maintain a current stock-type inventory. This means that separate reports to central office on each records disposal or on each transfer to a records center are usually unnecessary. In bureaus or offices where disposals and transfers are centralized, the reviewing official can use a work sheet to keep track of the volume involved. All individuals making on-the-spot disposals or transfers should do the same. (See Figure 10.)

Information on the volume of total records holdings should be collected in the easiest way possible. Two short cuts are:

- a. To combine the task with the annual check of the records against the schedule, or

b. To combine it with an inspection by a records officer or specialist.

2. INSPECTION OR AUDIT SYSTEM

Nothing can replace personal inspection as a means of:

a. Getting a concrete picture of an agency's records holdings and records problems;

b. Spotting or solving potential records problems and nipping them in the bud.

STANDARD FORM 136 MARCH 1960 EDITION GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION REG. 3-1-102.00 (136-103)		BIENNIAL SUMMARY OF RECORDS HOLDINGS		DEPARTMENT OR AGENCY	
TO:		One copy of this report is to be submitted to General Services Administration, National Archives and Records Service, Washington 25, D.C., by each Federal agency within 30 days after the close of Fiscal Year 1960, and every even year thereafter (See instructions on reverse).			
LOCATION OF RECORDS		VOLUME OF RECORDS ON HAND—END OF FISCAL YEAR (Cubic feet)			
		DEPARTMENT	FIELD	TOTAL	
CURRENT FILE ROOMS AND OFFICES					
STAGING, HOLDING, AND OTHER STORAGE AREAS					
TOTAL					
REMARKS (Agencies may include here data on programs made during the period in disposal, transfer, and scheduling of records)					
SIGNATURE		TITLE		DATE	

FRONT

INSTRUCTIONS

GENERAL

Records to be reported herein, with no distinction made between them, are to include the following:

1. All of the records of the reporting agency;
2. Records held at the site for GAO audit; and
3. Official Personnel Folders (legally records of the Civil Service Commission) in the custody of the reporting agency.

Nonrecord material (as defined in the Records Disposal Act of July 7, 1943, as amended) is to be included in volume reported if the reporting agency's practice calls for statistics on this type of material.

No volume should be included for Agency Records Centers operated by the reporting agency in accordance with GSA Regulations 3-IV-401.01, and 3-IV-401.03a, because they submit separate reports on Standard Form 137, Agency Records Center Annual Report. (See GSA Regulation 3-IV-401.04.) No volume should be reported for Federal Records Centers which report separately.

DEFINITIONS

"Departmental" means the headquarters office of the reporting agency, as contrasted to its field activities, but excludes Agency Records Centers.

"Field" means the reporting agency's offices other than the headquarters office and Agency Records Centers.

"Staging, Holding and Other Storage Areas" means areas at departmental or field locations formally designated for staging and holding purposes, as well as all other storage areas except current file rooms and offices, Agency Records Centers, and Federal Records Centers.

EQUIVALENTS

For the purpose of this report, volume may be calculated according to the following table of cubic foot equivalents:

FILING CABINETS		FILING CASES			TABULATING CARDS	OUTSIZED EQUIPMENT
LETTER	LEGAL	3x5	4x6	5x8		INSIDE CUBIC MEASUREMENT
1 1/2	2	3/8	1/2	3/4	1	
PER DRAWER		PER 12" DRAWER			PER 10,000	

NOTE.—Equivalents are for full but workable drawers. Appropriate adjustments should be made for partially filled drawers.

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE : 1960 OF --548401

Agency biennial report to GSA of records holdings.

BACK

There are two equally important types of inspections. One is a check by a records officer of operating office files. The other is an audit in a large agency of the operations of subordinate records officers.

Every records officer in a field office or staff or operating division of a central office should make a personal inspection of the records holdings under his jurisdiction whenever he has reason to believe the disposition program is not moving smoothly. At other times records should be spot checked to see how the schedule is being carried out. However, if the records officer is also the one who checks the records against the schedule to see what changes are necessary to keep it up to date, then of course he does not need to make spot inspections.

Agencies accomplish this inspection or audit in different ways, but the aim is the same.

The Civil Service Commission has its field operations personnel attached to its central office check on records management activities as part of an annual administrative audit.

3. Maintain a folder to include a disposal sheet for each calendar year, a copy of each Transmittal of Government Records, each Shelf List, each Form 2615, Annual Records Inventory Report, and each letter of transmittal forwarding the inventory report. The disposal sheet will be a simple record indicating the volume of records destroyed in each disposal recorded in cubic feet and totaled in cubic feet at the end of the calendar year. This data will enable the Office Manager to provide volume records information to the Director, Administrative Services Division, as provided in 2 above. All records data included in the folder will be kept on a cubic feet basis by use of the following table of conversion:

CONVERSION TABLE FOR RECORDS

(FULL BUT WORKABLE DRAWERS)

Legal or Cap Size Drawer	2 Cubic Feet
Letter Size Drawer	1½ Cubic Feet
3 x 5 12" Drawer	1/10th Cubic Foot
4 x 6 12" Drawer	1/6th Cubic Foot
5 x 8 12" Drawer	1/4th Cubic Foot
Map Cabinets and Other	Cubic Measurement of
Outsized Equipment	Inside Containers
Shelving	Cubic Measurement of
	Space Occupied

Federal Housing Administration instructs its office managers to keep a simple record of records transferred and disposed of.

FIGURE 10

The Army has an elaborate and extensive audit system. Since 1950 records management specialists in The Adjutant General's Office have made annual audits of field command levels as part of the larger annual joint command inspections. In turn the command levels are expected to survey the subordinate levels.

Commodity Stabilization Service has a staff representative based in Denver inspect disposal activities in field offices west of the Mississippi River and a staff representative based in Washington inspect offices east of the Mississippi.

Veterans Administration makes records management inspections at three levels: the Departmental level, the Administrator's level (through an internal audit group), and the agency records management level. These inspections may occur at any time and may cover records activities specifically or be part of larger administrative or program audits.

3. TICKLER FILES

Tickler control files are used in Federal Records Centers and in some agencies to make sure that records are disposed of when they are eligible for disposal, or, in the case of agencies, transferred to storage when they become noncurrent.

Some agencies require controls of this kind, while in other agencies their development and use is discretionary.

The Veterans Administration requires every installation to maintain cards as tickler controls.

The Atomic Energy Commission encourages the use of tickler files in field offices, but does not require them.

Techniques used in recognizing when records should be transferred to storage or destroyed are left by most agencies to the discretion of field officials.

4. RELATED SPACE AND EQUIPMENT CONTROLS

Many agencies require the approval of the local official responsible for disposal activities on all requests for filing space and equipment, in order to comply with GSA directives for the economical use of such equipment.

This is an effective means of:

- a. Ensuring compliance with the schedule,
- b. Ensuring that unnecessary nonrecord materials - obsolete publications, stocks of obsolete forms, and unnecessary reference files - do not remain in office space and equipment, and
- c. Spotting records problems.

Before approving requisitions for additional filing equipment, the records officer should investigate the extent to which the requesting unit is complying with authorized records disposition policies, and the possibility that existing schedules need revision.

Only if the records officer is satisfied that the unit is disposing of its records in a prompt and orderly fashion should requisitions for additional filing equipment be cleared.

See Figure 11 for a filing equipment requisition bearing a certification that the regulation providing for the proper utilization of such equipment has been complied with.

METHOD OF AUTHORITY GSA - Stook		DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY WASHINGTON, D. C. PURCHASE ORDER		* This number must appear on all PACKAGES and PAPERS relating to this order. ORDER NO. SA-1234-56	
APPROPRIATION 7568704		MAIL INVOICE TO: Department of Health, Education, and Welfare Social Security Administration Bu. of O. A. S. I. Accounts and Audit Section, Baltimore, Maryland		DATE Jan. 25, 1956	
REQUISITION NO. 12776		PLEASE DELIVER IN ACCORDANCE WITH INSTRUCTIONS AND THE TERMS OF ANY EXISTING CONTRACT AGREEMENT, ACCEPTED INFORMAL BID OR QUOTATION. THE ARTICLES OR SERVICES LISTED BELOW:			
ALLOTMENT ENCUMBRANCES 25.08		TO: General Services Administration Federal Supply Service 7th & MD Streets, S.W. Washington 25, D.C.		CONSIGNEE AND DESTINATION S Department of Health, Education, and Welfare M Social Security Admin., Bu. of O.A.S.I. P Earle Bldg. T 74 West Washington Street O Hagerstown, Maryland	
INVITATION NO.		CONTRACT NO.		TIME FOR DELIVERY DISCOUNT TERMS	
F. O. B. POINT		SHIP VIA		GOVT. S/L NO.	
ITEM NO.	ARTICLES OR SERVICES	QUANTITY	UNIT	UNIT PRICE	AMOUNT
710-273-9447	Section, filing, upright, 4-drawer, without lock, Olive Green, letter size	10	ea.		\$445.30
NOTE: This certifies that this Department has complied with the applicable utilization provisions of GSA Reg. I-III-204.00					
INSTRUCTIONS INVOICE MUST BE SUBMITTED IN TRIPLICATE TO THE ADDRESS SHOWN ABOVE. ORIGINAL INVOICE MUST BE CERTIFIED AS FOLLOWS: I certify that the above bill is correct and just and that payment therefor has not been received. Date _____ Payee _____ For _____ Title _____ ALL ARRANGEMENTS AND/OR AGREEMENTS RELATIVE TO THIS ORDER MUST BE TAKEN UP WITH THIS OFFICE AND MATTERS OTHERWISE HANDLED WILL NOT BE RECOGNIZED AS BINDING TO THE GOVERNMENT. MERCHANDISE DELIVERED OR SHIPPED WITHOUT APPROVED WRITTEN PURCHASE ORDER WILL BE AT THE VENDOR'S RISK.				TOTAL \$445.30	
FORM NEW-10 ORIGINAL COPY				* U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1950-382808	

Purchase Order with certification of compliance with GSA regulations on utilization of filing equipment.

FIGURE 11

CHECK LIST

The questions are so worded that check marks in the NO column indicate the need for corrective action.

- | | YES | NO |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Are your records all covered by records control schedules? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Are copies of all currently applicable schedules available to your office? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Are applicable schedules incorporated in a single document? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Are the disposition instructions and the schedule clearly understood by those applying them? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Have the schedules been applied within the past twelve months? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Is timing of the application of the schedules coordinated with other workloads? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Is full use made of GSA's Personal Property Utilization Division assistance in selling disposable materials? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. Is the cost of screening records estimated and compared to center storage costs before a screening project is undertaken? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. Are the schedule provisions for transferring records to Federal Records Centers appropriate for your office? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. Are unscheduled noncurrent records sent to Federal Records Centers pending establishment of a retention period? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11. Are annual volume reports of holdings made to the agency records officer? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12. Has the effectiveness of the schedules been checked by the agency records officer within the past year? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 13. Does the agency or local records officer clear all requests for additional space and equipment for records? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 14. Are all disposition instructions satisfactory to your office? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 15. Does your agency have in office space only those records needed for the conduct of current business? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

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