Using State Archives Retention Schedules

New York State Archives

New York State Archives Presents
Using State Archives Retention Schedules

Workshop Agenda:

Introductions and Overview
Understanding Retention Schedules
How to Use Retention Schedules
Developing Office Retention Schedules
How Long to Keep Records in the Office
How to Destroy Records
Conclusion and Evaluations

For more information:

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The New York State Archives is part of the Office of Cultural Education within the New York State Education Department.

Using State Archives Retention Schedules

- New York State Archives
- www.archives.nysed.gov

Today's Agenda

- Understanding Retention Schedules

- How to Use Retention Schedules

- Developing Office Schedules

- How Long to Keep Records in the Office

- How to Destroy Records

What is a Retention Schedule?

- Lists minimum records retention periods
- Does **not** mandate destruction
- Does **not** address all RM issues
  - How to destroy records
  - Identify what records are confidential
  - Mandate creation of records
  - Cover non-records

Scope of Schedules

- State Archives develops local government and state agency schedules
- Each covers many governments and agencies
- Certain records not covered by Archives schedules

How State Archives Develops Retention Schedules

- Archives examines
  - Statutes, regulations, and policy
  - Audit requirements
  - Need for legal evidence
  - Administrative needs
  - Secondary use
- Archives compiles list of retentions
- Attorney General and State Comptroller review and approve

Types of Schedules
(For Local Governments)

- Schedule CO-2
- Schedule ED-1
- Schedule MI-1
- Schedule MU-1
- Election Records

Commissioner of Education Regulations I

- § 185.5 covers retention and disposition schedules
- 2008 Revision of § 185.5 (c):
  – A local government may adopt a retention schedule or individual schedule item, if approved by the State Archives

Commissioner of Education Regulations II

- § 185.8 covers retention and preservation of electronic records
- 2008 revisions to § 185.8:
  – Electronic copy can be the official copy, provided...
  – Local governments follow procedures in Section 185.8

Section 185.8 Electronic Records

- Ensure records retention is incorporated into electronic system
- Ensure records are accessible and usable for full retention period
- Develop documentation for permanent records
- Prepare preservation copies of permanent records and store offsite
- Ensure media integrity

Why Do You Use a Schedule?

- Keep records as long as required
- Discard records no longer needed
- Improve records retrieval
- Save money and space
- Identify permanent records
- Make your work easier

How to Use Schedules
(the first 5 of 10 easy steps)

1. Adopt the schedule
2. Identify the record series
3. Determine the official copy
4. Check schedule's functional headings
5. Check index to the schedule

How to Use Schedules
(the last 5 steps!)

6. Check "General" & "Misc." sections
7. Search keywords in electronic version
   http://www.archives.nysed.gov
8. If still no luck, call RAO or Albany
9. If RAO can't find it, RAO calls Albany
10. If not found, Archives adds to schedule

Exercise!

Learning to navigate retention schedules

Can't Find a Match?

- Missed it
- Tried to find too perfect a match
- Mistook one section as the correct one
- Unexpected divisions of sections
- Forgot to check "General" or "Misc."
- Record is not in schedule

Exceptions to the Schedules

- Organizational preference
- Created before 1910
- Legal proceedings
- Audit
- Record not scheduled
- Unique historical value

Learning to Navigate through Retention Schedules

We will determine the retention for these records one by one, and in order. For the first record, enter the name of the schedule you're using (ED-1, CO-2, etc.), the retention period (six years, permanent, etc.), the page you found the item on, and the item number (the number in the book that appears within brackets: [ ]). The name of the record (supposedly as provided to you by a colleague) is the only hint you'll get. But remember that every question is a trick question.

Record	Schedule	Retention	Page	Item
1. Fire insurance policies				
2. Bids for equipment				

3. Correspondence for:
  CO-2: County Administrator's
  ED-1: School Superintendent's
  MI-1: Manager's
  MU-1: Town Supervisor's or Mayor's				

4. Contracts				

5. Choose one:
  CO-2: Proposed zoning change notifications
  ED-1: Non-public school book loans
  MI-1: Annual financial disclosure statements
  MU-1: Street address changes				

6. Vouchers				
7. Surety bonds				
8. Parking permits for the handicapped *(Does not appear in ED-1 or General Schedule)*				
9. Board minutes (board members' copies)				

Destroying Records Prematurely

- Records are damaged by disaster
- Information is mostly destroyed or obliterated
- Records pose a health or safety risk
- Must get permission from the State Archives

Comm Regs §185.6(b)

Another Example of Premature Destruction

- Pre-1910 records
  - Normally permanent
- Can destroy if you microfilm or scan originals according to specifications
- Microfilm or digital image becomes official copy or surrogate
- If State Archives approves

Comm Regs §185.6(c)

And Another Exception

- May dispose of or remove certain information from
- Employee disciplinary, investigative, and performance evaluation records
- If removal is based on a provision in a union contract

Comm Regs §185.6(d)

Managing the Retention of E-Records

- Follow the appropriate schedule, as you would for records in other formats
- Address retention in system design
- Manage records centrally, as much as possible
- Simplify retention schedule for e-records

Office Retention Schedules

- Concise
- Allow longer retentions
- Identify records by common name
- Indicate retention
- Help implement records management
- Serve as list of records for FOIL

Elements of Office Retention Schedules

- Department/unit
- Record series title
- Office retention period (active)
- Intermediate retention (semi-active)
- Total retention
- Archives schedule item number
- Location
- Comments

Types of Office Schedules
Full word-processed office schedules

Pros
- Includes any information you need
- Flexible
- Accessible on computer

Cons
- Updating can be time-consuming

Types of Office Schedules
Full office schedules in a database

Pros
- Includes any information you need
- Most flexible
- Accessible on computer

Cons
- Must design the database
- Must backup and maintain

Types of Office Schedules
Case file retention sheet

Pros
- Helps manage difficult files
- Can save time
- Makes difficult decisions easy

Cons
- Used for limited number of series
- More work

Electronic Records and Office Schedules

- Office schedules
  - Indicate if electronic record is official copy
  - Help manage electronic records
  - Encourage disposition of electronic records

Keep Records Longer ?

- Can keep records longer than required
- Do so selectively
- When in doubt: Don't

Determining Longer Retention Periods I

- Decide how long to keep records in office
  (Until they are inactive)
- Determine how long records are active
  - Interview records users
  - Keep use statistics

Determining Longer Retention Periods II

- Decide how long to keep records altogether
  - However long you need them
- Determine need to refer to records
  - Can other records fulfill this need?
  - Is need real, or an office tradition?

Determining Longer Retention Periods III

- Decide if there are historical reasons to keep records longer
- Are records valuable historically?
  - When?
  - Why?
  - What information?
  - Who?

Making Sure Offices Use Your Schedule I

- Have offices/units help develop schedule
- Give offices/unit own copies of schedules
- Make schedules part of policy
- Set up formal disposal day each year

Making Sure Offices Use Your Schedule II

- Remind people to clean their files

- Explain how schedule helps them

- Include schedule in all staff orientation

How to Destroy Records

- Choose method of destruction
- Dispose of records appropriately
- Destroy confidential records completely

Managing Destruction of ER

- Control all computers
  - PCs, laptops, tablets, PDAs, digital cameras
- Control all copies
  - Backups, printouts, microfilm
  - Detachable devices, removable media
- Have method of halting destruction

Destruction of ER

When
- Planning records system
- End of retention period
- Computer reassignment or put into surplus

How
- Physical destruction
- Degaussing
- Overwriting (scrubbing)

Documenting Disposition

- Maintain record of what is destroyed
  – Keep track of records destroyed
  – For your protection
  – Proves you disposed of records legally

Importance of Schedules

- Disposition is a way to control records

- Office schedules help formalize RM

- Appropriate destruction solves problems

- Documenting disposition avoids problems

Thank you all for coming!

Don't forget to fill out your evaluation form!

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