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# Retention and Disposition of Records

How Long to Keep  
Records and How  
to Destroy Them

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The State Education Department

New York State Archives

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## Publication Concepts

- In New York State, no government entity may legally dispose of or destroy records without authorization. This authorization comes in the form of a records retention and disposition schedule, issued by the State Archives.
- Records come in any format, including paper files, electronic databases and electronic mail, audio-visual files, and microforms.
- Records should be retained as long as they are needed by the organization to support the business for which the records were created, or their primary use. Records should also be retained as long as they are needed for other purposes including legal, fiscal, audit, and research purposes, or their secondary use.
- Holding onto obsolete records greatly increases the difficulty of performing your duties and of disclosing records in response to subpoenas, discovery demands, audits, and Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) requests.
- Storing records for longer than necessary, whether in paper, electronic or other formats, increases both storage costs and the challenge of identifying and retrieving needed documents.
- Records retention and disposition schedules provide clear guidance on how long to keep records and whether they should be destroyed when no longer needed.

## Introduction to Retention Schedules

A records retention schedule (more formally called a "records retention and disposition schedule") provides a routine, repeatable, and consistent process for applying the **minimum retention period** and the **final disposition** for an organization's records.

- Retention and disposition schedules are designed to ensure that records are retained as long as they are needed for **administrative, fiscal, legal, or research** purposes. The State Archives works with local governments and State Agencies to analyze records requirements and determine the minimum retention period which satisfies these purposes.
- Governments may decide to keep some of their records longer than the period required by the appropriate retention schedule.
- Any such divergence from the schedule should be documented, clearly explained, and applied consistently, since random undocumented divergence may expose your organization to legal risks.

Retention schedules apply to the information contained in records regardless of the recording medium: paper, microfilm, electronic, etc.

Whatever the medium, you must **retain** records for the length of time specified by the appropriate retention schedule, and you must ensure that the records are **accessible** for the full retention period.

Hardware and software obsolescence and degradation of storage media are not acceptable excuses for losing access to records before the end of the required retention period.

Retention schedules **do not**:

- indicate how long to retain non-records (such as blank forms or outside publications)

- tell you how to destroy records
- identify confidential or restricted records (contact the [Committee on Open Government](#) for guidance regarding confidentiality of records)
- obligate your organization to create all listed record types – the general retention schedules produced by the State Archives list hundreds of records, but no local government or state agency will have every record listed in one of these schedules

## Benefits of Retention Schedules

- allow you to promptly discard records that you no longer need (without a schedule in place, you have no legal authority to dispose of records)
- improve retrieval of records by reducing their bulk
- reduce staff time needed to access records
- save money by reducing storage costs
- save space by freeing up filing cabinets and storage areas
- identify permanent records so that they may be preserved

## How the State Archives Creates Retention Schedules

When working with State agencies and local governments to develop schedules for records, Archives staff first assemble information on

- applicable laws and regulations,
- audit requirements,
- the need for legal evidence,
- administrative needs, and
- historical or research value.

This information provides essential context to understand the requirements for creating the records and their potential uses.

Local governments and state agencies provide different services; as a result, there is limited overlap in the types of records created and maintained. Even if both levels of government hold copies of the same records or of records that serve similar functions, retention requirements may differ. Because of this, the State Archives issues separate retention schedules to state agencies and local governments.

## State Agency Schedules

Executive branch agencies may not destroy or otherwise dispose of any record unless such disposition is authorized by the State Archives, acting on behalf of the Commissioner of Education and in cooperation with the State Comptroller and the Attorney General.

State agencies may use two types of schedules:

- [General Retention and Disposition Schedule for New York State Government Records](#) (*State General Schedule*): This is a pre-approved schedule created by the State Archives that covers many common administrative, fiscal, and personnel records in state agencies. You may use the *State General Schedule* to dispose of records as long as your agency's Records Management Officer (RMO) first notifies the State Archives in writing of the agency's [intent to use the](#)

[schedule](#). Agencies may discontinue using the schedule at any time, but the RMO should notify the State Archives if this occurs.

- Agency-specific schedules: Often, the bulk of records in the custody of a state agency are unique to that agency. To set retention periods for these records, you should contact the State Archives at (518) 474-6926 or [recmgmt@nysed.gov](mailto:recmgmt@nysed.gov) to begin the process of developing Records Disposition Authorizations (RDAs) for each records series. Archives staff work closely with agency employees to collect information about the records you maintain in order to identify retention periods that meet agency administrative needs as well as any relevant legal, fiscal, or continuing research requirements.

State Archives staff distribute finalized General Schedule and agency-specific items for review by the Offices of the State Comptroller and the Attorney General to ensure that the proposed retention periods satisfy fiscal, audit, and legal requirements. The schedule items are subjected to final review and approval by the State Archivist.

### Local Government Schedules

Record types held by local governments (e.g., schools and BOCES, municipalities, counties, towns, miscellaneous public entities) are described within the [Retention and Disposition Schedule for New York Local Government Records \(LGS-1\)](#).

Proposed schedule items are reviewed by

- local government and state agency officials,
- the Local Government Records Advisory Council,
- local government associations, and
- archivists and records managers in other states.

The proposed schedule then undergoes the rulemaking process, during which it's made available for public review via the New York State Register. The Board of Regents then reviews the schedule and adopts it as regulation. Before using the schedule, local governments' governing bodies must first adopt the schedule by [passing a resolution](#). It is not necessary to send copies of resolutions to the State Archives.

### General Retention Schedules

As general retention schedules are used by all state agencies and hundreds of local governments, the schedule items are written broadly so that they can be applied to a variety of organizations. Because item titles and descriptions may not reflect how records are categorized or named in your office, you might need practice to use them efficiently.

Using the State Archives' [LGS-1](#) (for local governments) and [State General Schedule](#) (for state agencies) is fairly easy if you follow the process below. You will rarely need to follow all the steps to figure out a record's retention, but the first few are necessary.

#### 1. Adopt the schedule

The adoption of a State Archives general retention schedule documents your organization's retention policy and is the necessary first step toward using one of these schedules.

State agencies adopt the *State General Schedule* through submission of a [written notification](#) to the State Archives by the agency's Records Management Officer (RMO). As all state agencies also hold unique, mission-specific records not covered by the *State General Schedule*, they must also work with the State Archives to develop their own agency-specific schedules.

Local governments adopt the *LGS-1* by [resolution of their governing body](#). It is not necessary to send a copy of the passed resolution to the State Archives.

## **2. Identify the record series**

Before you can determine the appropriate retention period for any record, you must first identify the records series. Since you will usually be familiar with the records, this step is often the easiest. First, make sure you are dealing with a true series, not merely a group of unrelated records. A records series is a group of records that is normally filed and managed as one unit: for example, meeting minutes, purchase orders, or correspondence files. Second, talk with someone who uses the records on a daily basis to determine the purpose of the record. Knowing why the record is created and how it's used will help you identify a possible title for the records series.

## **3. Determine if you have the official copy**

When using a schedule, you should determine whether you are dealing with the official copy of a record or a secondary or duplicate copy. Your organization should designate one copy of each record, in one file format, as the official copy. The schedule's retention periods apply only to official copies of records. All other copies are mere duplicates, and you may dispose of those whenever they're no longer needed.

## **4. Check the index**

Both the *LGS-1* and *State General Schedule* contain an index. However, the indexes may not reference the schedule item you need or may describe it differently than is done in your office. When using the index, first search for the term that most accurately summarizes the records series. For instance, if you are looking up canceled checks, "checks" is the most obvious term to use. If that does not provide you with the answer you need, try to think creatively of synonymous or related terms that may also be appropriate. In the case of canceled checks, you might have to search under "fiscal" to find the item you're looking for.

## **5. Check the schedule's functional headings**

The State Archives' general schedules arrange records series in sections under headings that reflect their function (such as "Fiscal"). Before using a schedule, take time to read the introduction and become familiar with the functional headings. The schedules do not generally identify individual documents or specific forms; instead, they describe the purpose or function of the series. If a records series' content and function are substantially the same as an item described in the schedule, you should consider the series covered by that item.

**6. Check the "General Administration" section**

Both of the State Archives' general schedules have a "General Administration" section that covers those records common to many government departments (such as correspondence, general reports, and minutes), so be sure to check this section if you cannot find the records series under a more specific functional heading. Always resorting to the "General Administration" section, however, would be a mistake, since you must find the schedule item that most closely matches your records. For example, the *LGS-1* contains both a general item for "annual reports" in the "General Administration" section and more precise items, listed under functional headings, that provide retention requirements for specific types of annual reports.

**7. Search for keywords in an electronic version of the schedule**

Sometimes, the easiest way to find a particular item in a retention schedule is to search the PDF or HTML copy for specific keywords. If you do this, remember that the retention schedule might not use the same words that you would to describe a certain function, so search for likely synonyms.

**8. Contact the State Archives**

State Archives staff are very familiar with the retention requirements in use by local governments and state agencies and are available to help whenever you cannot find the retention period for a particular record.

**9. If the State Archives doesn't find a retention period for the records, the Archives must schedule that series**

Sometimes, the State Archives has not yet scheduled the record series you are considering; your call to the Archives could initiate that process. Until there is an item in the appropriate schedule covering this series, you must retain it. For state agencies, if a series is not in either the *State General Schedule* or your agency-specific schedule, you can work in concert with State Archives staff to add it to your schedule. If a series is not in the *LGS-1*, local governments, may consult with State Archives staff about requesting a special disposition authorization.

**Local Government Records Not Covered by the State Archives' *LGS-1***

Some records are not regulated by the Commissioner of Education or are considered state government records and thus do not appear in the *LGS-1*. Contact the appropriate government for more information about the following record types:



### Government Records Contacts (Per Record Type)

Record type	Contact Entity	Contact Unit or Person	Contact Info	Notes
<b>Birth, Death and Marriage Records (1881–present)</b>	State Archives		<a href="mailto:recmgmt@nysed.gov">recmgmt@nysed.gov</a>	Although these records are not listed on the State Archives' local government schedules, the Department of Health (DOH) has developed a schedule (approved by the Archives) for use by local governments. Summary information about the DOH Schedule is available in the introduction to the <i>LGS-1</i> . Contact the State Archives for more information.
<b>Cancelled Obligations</b>	Office of the State Comptroller	Division of Legal Services	(518) 474-5586	Section 63.10 of the Local Finance Law and Part 55 of Title 2 of the <i>Official Compilation of Codes, Rules and Regulations of the State of New York</i> covers the disposition of canceled obligations (including bonds and notes). Refer also to <a href="#">Appendix B: Destruction of Cancelled Obligations</a> .
<b>City of New York Records</b>	New York City Department of Records and Information Services (DORIS)		(212) 639-9675 <a href="https://www1.nyc.gov/site/records/index.page">https://www1.nyc.gov/site/records/index.page</a>	
<b>County Boards of Elections</b>	State Archives and State Board of Elections			County Boards of Election Records Retention Schedule is available at <a href="http://www.archives.nysed.gov/common/archives/files/mr_pub_electionschedule.pdf">http://www.archives.nysed.gov/common/archives/files/mr_pub_electionschedule.pdf</a>
<b>County District Attorneys' Records</b>	Appellate Division of the State Supreme Court	Clerk of the appropriate Judicial District		Section 89.2 of the Judiciary Law governs the records of county district attorneys. It states that application for disposition of any records of a county district attorney must be made to the appropriate judicial department of the Appellate Division of State Supreme Court.

<b>Court Records</b>	Office of Court Administration	Records Management Office	(212) 428-2875	
<b>Motor Vehicle Records</b>	New York State Department of Motor Vehicles	Records Management Officer	(518) 474-2381	
<b>Municipal Housing Authorities' Records</b>	New York State Division of Housing and Community Renewal	Housing Management Bureau	(212) 480-7242	Section 59 of the Public Housing Law exempts housing authorities from State Archives' jurisdiction for records disposition. The Division of Housing and Community Renewal must approve the disposition of records relating to the operation of state-financed programs. For all other records, housing authorities may establish their own records disposition policies, except for minutes of the housing authority (including appendices and attachments) and copies of annual reports submitted to the Division of Housing and Community Renewal. Housing authorities must retain these records permanently. All records disposition decisions must also meet any applicable records retention requirements of federal and state agencies, including the Office of the State Comptroller.
<b>Utica Transportation Authority Records</b>				Section 68 of Transportation Law exempts the Authority from the State Archives' jurisdiction for records disposition. See that law for special requirements for the disposition of Authority records.
<b>Other State Agencies</b>	Contact either the appropriate agency or the State Archives			

State Agency Records Not Covered by the State Archives' *State General Schedule*  
The State Archives' *State General Schedule* is not intended to cover all the records that a state agency has in its possession. Records not covered by the *State General Schedule* include

- **Records unique to a single agency**  
State agencies collaborate with the State Archives to produce detailed Records Disposition Authorizations (RDAs) for records unique to their agency.
- **Records created or maintained by control and service agencies**  
The *State General Schedule* does not cover records used to carry out or document the approval, control, audit, or oversight responsibilities of control and service agencies or records used to provide centralized services to other agencies. These records are retained under RDAs issued to the relevant control or service agency.
- **Records subject to specific increased federal requirements**  
Agencies must make certain that the retention periods in the *State General Schedule* meet applicable retention requirements for any programs subject to federal audits or oversight. If some records require longer retention periods to meet federal requirements, you must submit separate scheduling requests for those.

## Agency-Specific Schedules

State agencies work with the State Archives to develop agency-specific schedules for those records unique to their agencies, and for other records that are not included in the *State General Schedule*. Agencies may also wish to create schedules for record types where the retention periods in the *State General Schedule* are not sufficient to meet agency needs.

In order to create a schedule,

- the state agency develops a [Records Disposition Request \(RDR\)](#) describing each records series that suggests and justifies a retention period
- the State Archives, the Office of the Attorney General, and the Office of the State Comptroller review the RDR to ensure that the proposed dispositions meet legal, fiscal, administrative, research, and other retention needs
- the State Archives then approves a completed **Records Disposition Authorization (RDA)**

## Staying Familiar with your Records Disposition Authorizations

Agencies should periodically review their RDAs because:

- As agency organization and business processes change, the common title of a series may become outdated (be sure to look for any series under all possible titles).
- Agency staff may forget about the RDAs and not realize which of their records are authorized for disposition.
- Over long periods of time, agencies may neglect to use approved RDAs, causing obsolete records to accumulate even though they are authorized for disposition.
- Changes to the nature, contents or use of a series may mean that the approved disposition plan is no longer appropriate.

## Exceptions to the Schedules

Although in general you can follow the guidelines of a State Archives retention schedule without question, there are a few situations that will force you to suspend implementation of the schedule.

### Organization preference for longer retention period

Certain situations within your organization may create the need for retention periods that exceed the minimums listed in a State Archives schedule.

Examples include

- routine audits,
- use of records to conduct research, or
- use of records for ongoing investigations.

You are not required to destroy records at the end of the retention period or to inform the Archives if you intend to keep records longer. However, if you plan to retain records longer than the minimum retention period as a regular business practice, you should note this intent in written internal procedures. This will provide documentation of normal practice for FOIL requests or for legal actions such as discovery motions. State agencies may submit separate Records Disposition Requests (RDRs) for those series that they wish to retain longer than the retention periods specified in the *State General Schedule*, but are not required to do so.

### Records created before 1910 (Local Governments)

Local governments need [written approval](#) from the State Archives, acting on behalf of the Commissioner of Education, to dispose of records created before 1910, regardless of the retention period listed in a State Archives retention schedule. Often these records have continuing historical or research value because:

- no other documentation exists
- they contain more detailed and historically significant information than more recent records
- they have intrinsic value, which means the records are important to keep in their original form

To dispose of records created before 1910, local governments must submit a completed [disposition request form](#) to the State Archives for review.

### Records with unique historical value

The *State General Schedule*, *LGS-1*, and organization-specific schedules take into account the general historical value of records. Some record types are, because of the information that they contain, scheduled for permanent retention (local governments) or transfer to the State Archives (state agencies) regardless of which government entity produces them. In series where records can typically be destroyed after a set event or period of time, there may be records related to specific topics or that are unusually detailed that warrant permanent retention. If you believe some of your organization's records have unique historical value, contact [State Archives staff](#) for information on how to appraise your records. For more information on archival appraisal, see [Appraisal of Local Government Records for Historical Value](#).

#### During legal proceedings

To comply with current or pending legal actions, you may need to retain some records beyond their scheduled retention periods. You must keep any records related to a matter under litigation hold or that is used in such actions for at least the duration of the action, even if the records' retention periods have passed. Legal actions may include subpoenas and notices of claim (the first indication of a pending filing of a lawsuit). If the retention period has not expired by the end of the legal action – and lifting of the litigation hold – you must retain the records for the remainder of the retention period. If the retention period has expired by the time the legal action ends, **local governments** must keep the records for one additional year to resolve any need for the records in an appeal. However, there is no such requirement for **state agencies**.

#### When there are outstanding FOIL requests

If records that are the subject of a FOIL request exist at the time of the request, you must not destroy them until after you respond to the request. If you deny the request in full or part, you should not destroy the records until after any potential appeal is resolved.

#### If waiting for a pending audit or other review

If you know there is a pending state or federal audit, you must retain any pertinent records. However, if there is no requirement that an audit be done of certain records and if you have not been told of an impending audit, then you may discard any of the applicable records once they have reached the end of their retention periods. Review by another organization, such as accreditation review, may also require you to retain records beyond their retention period.

#### If the records are microfilmed or digitized

Imaging paper documents, either as microfilm/fiche or as digitized copies, can reduce the amount of physical storage space needed for your records and, in the case of digitized copies, make it easier for staff to access content. If you applied the State Archives' [Digital Imaging Guidelines](#) when microfilming or digitizing records and have verified the accuracy of these new copies, you may be able designate them as the record copies and discard the paper files. Consult your organization's legal counsel prior to destroying paper records, as original copies of certain record types – including those with signatures – may need to be retained. Local governments will also need to [request permission](#) from the State Archives to dispose of any original records created before 1910.

#### If records are not yet listed in a retention schedule

Keep in mind that you cannot dispose of any records unless they are listed in a retention schedule. If you believe you have records that are not scheduled, [contact the State Archives for help](#). Archives staff will first verify that the records are not covered by any retention item before beginning the process of identifying the retention period. **Local governments** must keep these records until either an item is added to the *LGS-1* or they request and receive a special disposition authorization from the State Archives. **State agencies** can work with the Archives to add the necessary new items to their agency-specific schedules.

## Using Office Retention Schedules

### Basic Concepts

- No state agency or local government unit creates or maintains all record series listed in the general retention schedules!
- Creating office retention schedules describing only those records held by a single unit reduces staff confusion and frustration.
- Office retention schedules can include clarification of how State Archives-issued records series are applied within the unit.

### Office Retention Schedule Features

Because most units within local governments and state agencies create or maintain only a portion of the records types described within the State Archives' general schedules, organizations should consider developing **office retention schedules**. Office schedules:

#### *List only the records maintained by the associated office*

Every item on the schedule is pertinent to a specific office. Because the schedules are shorter, they are easier to use.

#### *Document longer retention periods*

State Archives schedules show only the legal **minimum** retention period. Governments may keep records beyond the time listed in a retention schedule when necessary to fulfill administrative needs or organization-specific legal or audit requirements. Office schedules can be used to document these extended retention periods. This may be important if your organization is involved in legal actions where you need to prove that you are following these modified retention periods in the normal course of business. State agencies can submit separate Records Disposition Requests (RDRs) for those series that they wish to retain longer than the retention periods specified in the *State General Schedule*, but are not required to do so.

#### *Identify records series by common names*

An office retention schedule can identify your records series by the names used in your office, instead of the sometimes unfamiliar titles used in State Archives schedules.

#### *Indicate records storage locations and other useful unit-specific information*

Office retention schedules can specify when staff should move records from an **active office** space to **inactive storage** (such as a file room). These schedules can also include notes on destruction methods, weeding, confidentiality of record series, and transfer procedures.

#### *May fulfill FOIL "subject matter list" requirement*

New York's Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) requires local and state governments to maintain and make publicly available a "subject matter list" of all categories of records held by the entity. Although local governments may use the *LGS-1* as their subject matter list, an office retention schedule would provide a much more exact catalog of the records held by your organization.

### Keep It Simple

Small organizations might have a single sheet for each work unit, listing only the office's

active and total retention periods. Larger organizations, on the other hand, may need more complicated schedules that add such information as retention in semi-active storage (temporary vault or file room storage), comments on records appraisal and weeding, or notes on the type of destruction for each records series.

Remember: to be effective, office schedules must be easy to understand and use!

### Elements of Office Retention Schedules

The organization of your office, complexity of your records retention requirements, and availability of storage space can all impact the design of your office schedules. They can include records management guidance beyond the retention schedule – as little or as much information as needed to inform unit staff's decisions regarding their records and promote appropriate retention and storage.

Consider including the following fields in your office schedule:

#### *Department and unit*

Most office retention schedules are arranged (or can be filtered) by governmental department or unit. Providing each unit of the organization with only that part of the office schedule it needs makes it easier for staff to correctly identify and apply schedules.

#### *Records series title*

For the office retention schedule to work, it must first identify the record series. Keep in mind that you also have the option of using the common title used in your office as the records series title.

#### *Records series description*

This may reference specific document types or the processes during which records are created or referenced.

#### *Format of records*

It is often useful to include a brief description of the record format(s) and the retention requirements for each. For example, you may decide that, as you're maintaining the paper copy of your minutes forever, the electronic version only needs to be kept for a few years. Conversely, you may decide to destroy paper correspondence after scanning and image quality verification and retain the digital copy for the duration of the retention period.

#### *Total retention period*

While most office retention schedules include the total retention period for each records series, some list only how long the records are retained during one or more of the three following phases:

##### *In-office retention period (active)*

A true office schedule must identify the in-office retention period. This allows staff to easily determine when they may move records out of the office.

##### *Intermediate retention period (semi-active)*

This level of detail will not be necessary in most offices. However, some units

maintain a central filing room that serves as semi-active storage for those records not quite active enough to keep in the office but not inactive enough to move to inactive storage.

#### Offsite retention period (inactive)

You may wish to obtain records storage space specifically for records that are rarely accessed but have not yet completed the required retention period. Inactive storage space could include space leased or owned by your organization, storage with a commercial vendor, a cooperative arrangement with another government for storage space or – for state agencies – use of the [State Records Center](#).

#### *State Archives' schedule item number*

This is the unique number assigned by the State Archives to each general or agency-specific schedule item. Identifying the item number from the appropriate State Archives retention schedule gives you an easy way to look up and verify the minimum retention period.

#### *Location*

Some office schedules indicate the filing or storage location of each series to make it easier to find the records.

#### *Comments*

You might also want to add additional comments to the office retention schedule. As with anything in the schedule, be sure to add only the information you need. Possible areas of comment include:

#### Appraisal or retention notes

These notes indicate your reasons for deciding to keep records longer than required by State Archives' retention schedules.

#### Official or secondary copy

Some office schedules indicate whether a series is the official copy – which is retained in accordance with the Archives-approved schedules – or a duplicate copy. This can formalize the process of identifying the official copies of records in your offices.

#### Confidentiality

Documenting records' confidential nature and any necessary special treatment within the office schedule reminds staff to protect the records and the information contained within them from inappropriate disclosure.

#### Type of disposition

Different records require different types of disposition. While the vast majority of records are scheduled for eventual destruction, some have historical value and warrant permanent preservation in the local government's archives or the State Archives. For records that will be destroyed, those containing confidential or personally identifiable information usually need to be shredded or otherwise securely destroyed,



while it may be appropriate to simply recycle records that are publicly-releasable.

#### Notes on weeding the files

If only part of a file is discarded at a certain time, it might make sense to note this in the office schedule. For some complicated case files, offices may wish to produce case file retention sheets indicating which records to discard and which to keep.

### Setting Office Retention Periods

The most important decision you need to make in any office retention schedule is when to move records out of offices and into inactive storage. This is important because you should maintain only truly active records in active office space. Doing otherwise increases the chance of interfiling active and inactive records and accidentally disposing of active records – or of holding onto inactive records for much longer than necessary.

Determining how long to keep records in your office is conceptually simple: Keep all records in your office until they become inactive. The difficulty is in determining when the records actually become inactive.

#### Some considerations:

- For paper records, the general rule of thumb is that if you refer to a drawer of records less than once a month, they are inactive.
- For computer files, if you refer to them less than once every three months, then they are probably inactive.
- Often, the easiest and fastest way to determine when access needs change is to talk to staff who use the records.
- If you have the time or inclination, you could be more exact by setting up a system for tracking use over time.

### Determining Whether to Keep Records Longer Than Required

Retaining records beyond the required retention period increases storage space needs, the likelihood of document loss or mistaken use, and the volume of records that must be reviewed and – potentially – released in response to litigation, audits, and FOIL requests.

That said, you can keep records for longer than the minimum retention periods listed in State Archives retention schedules, but if you decide to do so, proceed carefully. Keep records longer only for a compelling reason. Many people are too cautious and keep records just in case someone might ask to see them again. When determining whether to increase the retention period for a records series, discuss the issue with staff, especially those who work with the records daily. Verify that there aren't other records that could also fulfill the identified need for information. Require strong evidence of serious continuing use to justify keeping records beyond their minimum retention periods.

Sometimes you may keep records longer because of their **historical value**. [Contact the State Archives](#) for assistance in determining whether records have long-term, archival value. For more information on archival appraisal, see [Appraisal of Local Government](#)

[Records for Historical Value](#). The State Archives also provides training in records appraisal.

### Types of Office Schedules

The size of your office, the number of units or retention schedules, and available technology may influence the format in which you produce your office retention schedules. Each format has specific purposes, advantages, and disadvantages. Follow the links below or review [Appendix A: Sample Office Retention Schedules](#) for examples of each type of office schedule.

Schedule Format	Description	Advantages	Disadvantages
<a href="#">Manual or Semi-Manual</a>	Typewritten or word-processed schedules created for each unit. May be printed for distribution or shared electronically.	Users are provided with a single document specific to their needs. Paper copies are familiar to staff and remove the need for staff training and access to new software programs.	Need to save individual files for each unit. Producing and updating lists for each unit is inefficient. Staff are unable to keyword search paper copies.
<a href="#">Database</a>	Contains information about records series and office schedules in a flexible electronic format. Content is divided into "fields" by data type (e.g. unit, series title, description, retention period, storage location)	Easy to search and efficient to update. Ability to create reports by unit or other parameter on demand. Simple interfaces can be created (including pull-down menus and fields for search terms) and posted to your organization's intranet site for ease of staff access. Database software is often included in office productivity packages.	Staff may need to learn how to create databases and user-friendly interfaces. Requires computer (and potentially network) access to generate unit-specific lists – though, depending on the user interface, it may be easy to print reference copies of lists for distribution.
<a href="#">Records Management Software</a>	Specialized database that manages records. Functions may include tracking changes in box location and requests for records, maintaining an up-to-date records inventory, and generating an automated office retention schedule	These off-the-shelf products provide a broad array of functions related to the retention and movement of records and contain a variety of programmed reports.	Records management software can be very expensive. Many options require payment of annual licensing and support fees. Additional resources may be needed to customize the system. Your organization will need to evaluate systems prior to purchase; some systems may emphasize functions that you don't need to the detriment of those that are necessary to support your program.

<a href="#"><u>Case File Retention Sheet</u></a>	Subset of an office schedule. Retention sheets are purging guides that help office staff identify which items in a case file should be discarded at the end of the file's life cycle and which should be retained. Such a guide is necessary because case files usually have records with differing retentions in the same folder and because procedures vary between organizations.	These retention sheets provide clear guidance to staff on how long to retain specific document types within a case file. Staff are more likely to weed files accurately when they have detailed instructions.	Case file retention sheets have a limited utility as they relate to a small subset of organization records.
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## Tips for Encouraging Staff Use of Office Retention Schedules

### *Have staff help develop schedules*

Working with the units that create and use the records included in the schedule ensures that the records series listed are accurate and complete and that descriptions make sense to those who will be applying the schedules. Staff who are part of the process will have a stake in its success and be more likely to advocate for and abide by the schedule.

### *Distribute copies of the schedule*

Schedules can be provided in hard copy or electronically. Provide copies to everyone in the relevant unit – even staff who are not assigned files management duties need to be aware of the obligation to retain records in accordance with the schedule.

### *Make office retention schedules part of policy*

Making office retention schedules part of official policy can be an effective form of gentle persuasion for staff. It also demonstrates the importance that your organization ascribes to records retention, which is especially beneficial when your organization is unable to provide records upon request because they have already been destroyed in accordance with the schedule.

### *Remind staff to clean their files*

Remind staff to periodically clean out files or – better yet – work with management to set aside time at least once a year for staff in each unit to appropriately dispose of or relocate records.

### *Discuss the schedules during staff orientation*

You can make the use of an office retention schedule a simple administrative habit by including an introduction to the schedule in staff orientations. Ideally, staff should be made aware of their records management obligations **before** they begin handling the organization's records.

## Records Disposition

In order to avoid both premature disposition and retention beyond the minimum retention period, organizations should establish a formal disposition procedure. Depending on the volume of records, frequency with which they become inactive, and variations in workload throughout the year, it may be practical to schedule time for disposition monthly, quarterly, or yearly.

## Documenting Disposition of Records

The State Archives does not require state agencies or local governments to document disposition, but it is in your best interest to develop a records destruction authorization form to authorize and document records disposal. Documentation of regular disposition in accordance with the applicable schedules can protect the organization when they are unable to provide properly destroyed records in response to litigation, audits, or requests under FOIL.

Organizations may use the State Archives' [sample records destruction authorization form](#), amend it to fit their needs, or create their own unique document. Any such form should contain the following information:

- series titles
- record date range
- retention schedule item number
- minimum retention period specified by schedule
- signatures of the Records Management Officer and the manager of the office that “owns” the records authorizing the disposition
- destruction date with signature of person who performed or witnessed destruction. If records are transferred to a third party for destruction, form may note date of change of custody and names of parties between whom records were transferred

## Selecting a Method of Destruction

State law does not specify a destruction method for most records. Decisions regarding the method of destruction are usually left up to the organization. One exception is [cancelled obligations](#) which have their own specific cancellation and destruction requirements.

When selecting which method of destruction to use, consider the following:

- Are the records **confidential**? Confidential records should be destroyed in a way that ensures their total illegibility.
- What is the **quantity** of records to be destroyed? Is doing so inhouse an effective use of staff time and available equipment?
- **How often** will records destruction take place?
- What is the **physical composition** of the records?
- Do the records contain numerous **fasteners**, such as staples or paper clips?

Must they be removed before destruction occurs?

- Are there any relevant **local environmental restrictions**? Are incineration or disposal in a landfill permitted in your area?
- Do you have access to a vendor who provides **bonded recycling**?
- Do you have space and staff for an **on-site destruction program**?
- Can your **equipment** handle the bulk to be destroyed?
- Can your shredder handle **non-paper** records such as microfilm?
- Will you be able to contain the **dust** produced by a shredder?
- Is it more efficient and economical to use an **outside vendor** or facility?

Based upon this evaluation, consider which destruction options are most appropriate.

#### Destroying Paper Records

Consider the following methods to dispose of paper records:

- **Recycling**  
This may be the best option for records without protected content and those that have been shredded. If your office produces both protected and non-protected content, or if shredding records in-house is impractical, you may wish to utilize a bonded recycler, as these vendors can guarantee that information contained in the records will remain confidential until the records are destroyed. If you have a large quantity of records, a vendor may even provide pickup service. Consider arranging recycling under the State's [wastepaper recycling contract](#).
- **Shredding**  
Shredding destroys records and ensures confidentiality at the same time. In-house shredding can be time-consuming, especially if you are using a small shredder or have a large quantity of records to destroy. Both state agencies and local governments may choose to make arrangements under the State's [wastepaper recycling contract](#), or with another commercial shredding vendor. If your office owns a large shredder, you may want to wear a mask while shredding documents to help filter out dust particles.
- **Incineration**  
Incineration used to be a very popular method of destruction, although environmental restrictions now limit its use.
- **Landfill**  
In some areas, burial in a landfill is still an option. You should shred any confidential records before disposing of them in landfills, since burial is not an assured method of destruction.

#### Destroying Microfilm and Microfiche

Pulverization transforms microfiche and microfilm and its reels into a cotton-like substance. Some large, sophisticated shredders can shred microfilm or fiche as well as paper. Silver microfilm should be recycled for its silver content. Contact your microfilm/fiche vendor to discuss the recycling and destruction services they offer.

### Destroying Electronic Records

IT staff should be consulted regarding the best way to permanently delete electronic records that have completed their required retention period. Even though deleting a file seems to make it disappear, it still exists and is retrievable until the media on which it is stored is overwritten, destroyed, or exposed to a magnet to scramble the data saved upon it (a process called degaussing). Your organization may have a standard process for either destroying storage media or preparing it for further use.

Records in a database system that have reached their maximum retention period should be routinely purged or migrated, depending on their ultimate disposition.

Records management staff and those within the units that use electronic records with long-term value should contact the State Archives for guidance on approaches for preserving records in digital formats for long-term accessibility.

It's likely that multiple copies exist of each electronic record. Documents may have been saved by multiple people to individual computer hard drives or to different locations on the organization's network. Backup copies may exist of database records or records saved to a network or cloud-based file system. Records management staff should partner with their IT colleagues to identify the locations of each copy of electronic records scheduled for destruction and determine the best way to eliminate access to all copies.

Some organizations schedule regular destruction of emails beyond a certain age. For example, your system administrator may have set a rule that causes nightly deletion of all email over 90 days old from all staff accounts. Organizations that implement such rules should ensure that procedures and guidelines are in place to preserve and protect electronic mail messages that must be retained beyond the routine purge cycle used for the electronic mail system.

### Records Disposition Made Easy

The most difficult aspect of records retention and disposition isn't determining how long to keep certain records, but rather disposing of unneeded records regularly to avoid developing a backlog. To make discarding records easier, try following these simple suggestions.

#### Make sure you're familiar with using your retention schedule

Knowing how to find a retention period will make staff more likely to follow it. Retention schedules should be clear and approachable; if simply confirming how long a record must be kept is difficult or confusing, they're much less likely to discard records.

#### Set aside time for records disposition

You are busy; everyone you work with is busy. This is the main reason people don't get around to discarding obsolete records. A good way to encourage records disposition and limit the volume of records that must be reviewed at once is to periodically block off time to dispose of all obsolete records. Scheduling an organization- or unit-wide "disposition party" during a time when work is slow can turn the chore into a pleasant communal break from normal duties.

### Organize your files to facilitate disposition

Often when you create and file records (whether paper or electronic), you don't think about how or when you will discard the records. You consider only how badly you need the records right now. For instance, many organizations sensibly remove personnel folders from filing cabinets once these files become inactive. But the permanent record card, which summarizes an employee's entire work history, is usually the only permanent record in each file. So you could pull out the permanent record cards, store them separately from the other records, and discard the remaining records six years after the employee leaves.

Likewise, consider how long records need to be kept when creating your electronic filing structure. For example, records related to assignment of fleet vehicles can be disposed of more frequently than those describing vehicle maintenance. Maintaining separate folders for each record type will make it easy to routinely dispose of the assignment files.

Marking the dates of disposition (or at least the dates of the contents) directly on file folders allows you to scan them quickly to determine retention periods. Taking time at the outset to consider how to make disposition easier will ultimately reduce the amount of time spent disposing of records later on.

Writing each box's disposition date on the same side of the box as the label will make it easy to identify obsolete records and determine which boxes can be disposed of. This not only speeds the disposition process, but removes the need to periodically consult an inventory or the box contents to determine whether records can be discarded.

### Set up office retention schedules

Putting together such a schedule can be time-consuming, so many people avoid doing it. Once everyone in your organization has a list of the retention periods for the records in their specific office, though, records disposition will be as easy as looking up dates on a sheet of paper or in a database.

### Consider the consequences

Allowing obsolete records to pile up not only makes it more difficult to identify and locate the documents that you need to do your job; it also dramatically impacts how you use your office space. Rooms designated for storing excess records may be better used for meeting space or staff offices. By disposing of no longer needed records promptly, you may find that your office can reduce the amount of offsite storage used, reducing annual costs.

Retaining records that are no longer needed can also significantly increase the difficulty of meeting disclosure obligations. All records responsive to subpoenas, discovery demands, and FOIL requests must be identified and reviewed for possible release, even if they are past their disposition date. Making disposition routine is the most efficient way to eliminate obsolete records.

## Appendices

### Appendix A: Sample Office Retention Schedules

- [Manual or Semi-Manual Schedules](#)
- [Database- or Records Management Software-Produced Office Retention Schedules](#)
- [Case File Retention Sheets](#)



## Manual or Semi-Manual Schedules

### *Example 1: Office for the Aging Retention and Disposition Schedule*

<b>Record Title</b>	<b>Retention</b>	<b>Item in LGS-1</b>
Abstract of Claims Program Expense Books Voucher Books	PERMANENT	Department Decision
Accounting Register	6 years after last entry	[505]
Agenda	1 year	[48]
Agreements, Legal	6 years after expiration or last payment	[32]
Applications, Job Unsuccessful candidates	4 years	[693]
Audit	PERMANENT	[472a]
Budget, Final	PERMANENT	Department Decision
Budget, Preliminary	6 years	[489]
Budget Preparation Materials	3 years	[489]
Certificate of Insurance	6 years after expiration	[582]
Certification of Eligible List Sent to Appointing Agency	6 years after expiration of eligible list	[692b]
Claims, Payment	6 years	[495]
Claims, State Aid Reimbursement	6 years	[496]
Clients: Individual, EISEP	6 years after last entry	[85]
Clients: HEAP (Duplicate copies)	3 years	Department Decision
Complaints/Requests for Service (for routine services)	1 year after disposition	[77]
Contracts	6 years after expiration or last payment	[32]
Correspondence: Cover Letters and Transmittals	1 year	[53c]
Correspondence: General	6 years	[53b]
Correspondence: Policy Making	PERMANENT	[53a]
Daily Cash Record (includes Donations, Lifeline Receipts)	6 years	[508]

### Example 2: School Transportation Office Retention Schedule

This list is a records retention schedule designed specifically for the records of the district transportation office and should help the office manage its records more efficiently. By using this schedule conscientiously and by discarding and transferring records to the records center on an annual basis, the office should be able to control its records better. Comments indicate more specific retention actions that the office must make. The records are listed in order by series title. If you have any questions about this schedule, contact Mike DiFrancisco at extension 899.

SERIES	OFFICE RETENTION	STORAGE RETENTION	SCHEDULE & NUMBER
Bids, successful	2 years	+ 4 years	LGS-1: 547
Comments: Keep in office two years for reference, then transfer to the records center.			
Bus driver handbook documenting policies and procedures	until separation	Permanent	LGS-1: 52
Comments: Send one copy of handbook to records center when it is superseded.			
Bus driver qualification file, including driver training certificates and character references	1 year after separation	6 years after separation	LGS-1: 1001
Bus route schedule or diagram: GIS version	update annually	n/a	LGS-1: 996a
Comments: These records are updated annually; keep GIS version for current schedules and diagrams; maintain paper records for extra six years.			
Bus route schedule or diagram: Paper printouts from GIS	2 years	+ 6 years	LGS-1: 996a
Comments: Keep two years of paper versions in office for reference.			
District-wide consumption and dispensing records for vehicle fuel and oil	6 years	n/a	LGS-1: 820
Comments: Since records are not voluminous, dispose from office.			
Driver's daily log report	2 years	+ 4 years	LGS-1: 1004
Employees' payroll report slips detailing sick, personal and other leave	1 year	+ 5 years	LGS-1: 529
Employees' time cards / sheets	1 year	+ 5 years	LGS-1: 528
Field trip report	1 year	+ 5 years	LGS-1: 1007
Grant program files	2 years	+ 8 years	LGS-1: 55a&b
Comments: Keep records in office for two years; then records center will keep records for six additional years, to ensure all files are kept at least "6 years after renewal or close of grant or denial of application" (as required in LGS-1 schedule).			
Legal agreements, including contract, lease and release involving district vehicles	until expiration	+ 6 years	LGS-1: 32
Comments: Keep records in office until expiration or final payment, then transfer to records center.			

Maintenance, testing, service and repair records for vehicles: Cumulative summary for vehicle	6 years after vehicle is no longer in use	n/a	LGS-1: 817a
Comments: Records kept in office because of reference needs; segregate service records into files by year once they are superseded or become obsolete.			
Maintenance, testing, service and repair records for vehicles: Individual report when posted to summary report	1 year	6 years	LGS-1: 817b
Maintenance, testing, service and repair records for vehicles	until log is filed	+ 6 years	LGS-1: 817d
Transportation records, non-public schools, including parental requests and consents	3 years	n/a	LGS-1: 1005
Personnel case file, master summary record	6 years after separation	Permanent	LGS-1: 636a
Comments: Personnel records should be segregated from the active personnel files once they become inactive and filed by the year they became inactive. See special personnel case file retention sheet for specifics about what records are considered part of the district's "master summary record."			
Personnel case file, other records	6 years after separation	n/a	LGS-1: 636b
Comments: These non-permanent records should be weeded from the personnel files before forwarding the files to the records center. See special personnel case file retention sheet for specifics about which records should be weeded from the file.			
Purchase orders (duplicates)	2 years	n/a	LGS-1: 58
Comments: Accounts payable maintains original for 6 years.			
Report of theft, vandalism, arson, or property damage to bus garage or vehicles	6 years after vandalism	n/a	LGS-1: 26
Comments: These records are uncommon, so maintain them in office until time to discard them.			
Request for use of vehicle (when a chargeback is involved)	3 years	+ 3 years	LGS-1: 821a
Comments: Keep in office for three years, long enough to accumulate one full box of records.			
Request for use of vehicle (when no chargeback is involved)	1 year	n/a	LGS-1: 821b
Seniority list ranking employees by length of service	4 years after superseded or obsolete	n/a	LGS-1: 697
Comments: Office should segregate lists into files by year once they are superseded or become obsolete. Discard from office.			
Vendor listing printout	As updated	n/a	LGS-1: 548
Warehouse requisition form for supplies (duplicates)	1 year	n/a	LGS-1: 58

Comments: Warehouse maintains original for 6 years.

### *Example 3: Tax Assessor's Office Retention Schedule*

Each department is required to adhere conscientiously to the retention policy of the town under the guidance and with the assistance of the town clerk, as authorized in board resolution 93-10. Town Clerk Mary Sanibel's office has developed this office retention schedule, with the help of Town Assessor Anne McGuire, to ensure that each department can easily identify those records that should be disposed of or moved to storage each January.

The "Active" column shows the total number of years, beyond the current year, to keep the record in the office. The "Semi-Active" column shows the total number of years, including active retention, to keep the records in the first-floor hall storage area. The "Storage" column shows the total number of years (including active and semi-active storage) to keep the records. Comments indicate when the Tax Assessor's office is responsible for records destruction, whether a record is an official or a secondary copy, and other comments. In a few instances, the comments indicate when the Town Assessor and Records Advisory Board agreed to keep a record longer than the retention period required by the State Archives' *LGS-1* retention schedule. These increased retention periods and this office schedule became part of the town's official retention policy upon its effective date.

The Tax Assessor's office is responsible for making sure it adheres to this retention schedule but should feel free to contact Town Clerk Mary Sanibel or Records Clerk Tom Loquante if any questions arise.

Series	Item No.	Format	Active	Semi-Active	Storage	Comments
Annual assessment report	<i>LGS-1</i> , 1043	Paper	2 yrs.	n/a	10 yrs.	Official copy
Assessment rolls, final	<i>LGS-1</i> , 58	Elec. (Dup.)	2 yrs.	n/a	n/a	Delete from computer
Assessment rolls, final, unwarranted	<i>LGS-1</i> , 1045b	Paper	1 yr.	n/a	10 yrs.	
Assessment working documents	<i>LGS-1</i> , 58	Elec. (Dup.)	0	n/a	n/a	Only part of the series
Assessment working documents	<i>LGS-1</i> , 1044	Paper	0	1 yr.	2 yrs.	Official copy
Certificates of mortgage tax apportionments	<i>LGS-1</i> , 1056a	Paper	3 yrs.	n/a	n/a	Dispose from office
Commercial property record cards	<i>LGS-1</i> , 1029	Elec.	<b>Perm.</b>	n/a	n/a	Keep electronic version of record cards

						on LAN
Commercial property record cards	LGS-1, 58	Paper	2 yrs.	n/a	n/a	Secondary copy; keep for need to verify information
Change of assessment notices	LGS-1, 1040	Paper	0	1 yr.	10 yrs.	Kept 4 yrs. beyond LGS-1
Correspondence	LGS-1, 53b	Paper	2 yrs.	n/a	6 yrs.	Treat all corresp. as 6 year retention
Cross-reference tax listing	LGS-1, 61	Paper	1 yr.	n/a	n/a	Dispose from office
Deeds & building permits	LGS-1, 58	Paper	3 yrs.	n/a	n/a	Duplicate copies
Equalization rate records	LGS-1, 1035b	Paper	3 yrs.	n/a	n/a	Dispose from office
Equalization rate records	LGS-1, 1035a	Paper	2 yrs.	6 yrs.	Perm.	
Grievance forms	LGS-1, 1040	Paper	2 yrs.	6 yrs.	n/a	Dispose from hall storage
Invoices	LGS-1, 495	Paper	2 yrs.	6 yrs.	n/a	Dispose from hall storage
Minutes, town board	LGS-1, 58	Paper	2 yrs.	n/a	n/a	Dispose from office; duplicate
Property record cards	LGS-1, 1029	Elec.	Perm.	n/a	n/a	Keep electronic version on LAN permanently
Property records cards	LGS-1, 58	Paper	2 yrs.	n/a	n/a	Secondary copy; keep for need to verify information
Property sales book	LGS-1, 1024	Paper	2 yrs.	n/a	6 yrs.	Dispose from office
Property sales book report	LGS-1, 58	Paper	1 yr.	n/a	n/a	Dispose from office
Property valuation records	LGS-1, 1031	Elec.	4 yrs.	n/a	n/a	Delete from LAN
Real property tax lien sales	LGS-1, 1051	Paper	2 yrs.	4 yrs.	Perm.	
Tax escrow files	LGS-1, 1049	Paper	4 yrs.	n/a	6 yrs. after account termination	Review and weed each year
Tax exemption files	LGS-1, 1039	Paper	2 yrs.	6 yrs.	n/a	Dispose from hall storage
Tax exemption	LGS-1,	Paper	2 yrs.	n/a	n/a	Dispose from

register	61					office
Tax exempt market value estimates	LGS-1, 1031	Elec.	4 yrs.	n/a	n/a	Delete from LAN
Tax exempt market value estimates	LGS-1, 58	Paper	0	n/a	n/a	Secondary copy
Tax maps	LGS-1, 1036	Paper	6 yrs.	n/a	Perm.	
Tax map index	LGS-1, 61	Elec.	Perm.	n/a	n/a	Maintain on LAN
Tentative assessment roll	LGS-1, 1045	Paper	1 yr.	5 yrs.	n/a	Dispose from hall storage
Unpaid tax files	LGS-1, 1048	Elec.	6 yrs.	n/a	n/a	Delete from LAN

approved by Tax Assessor Anne McGuire, 27 February 2000  
approved by Records Advisory Board, 14 March 2000  
Updated to reflect issuance of LGS-1, 2 January 2021

## Database- or Records Management Software-Produced Office Retention Schedules

### *Example 1: Office Retention Schedule for Purchasing*

This retention schedule lists the retention periods the State Archives has identified for records held by the Purchasing Department, how long we will retain those records in the office, and for how many years we will keep the records in total. Those records marked with an asterisk (\*) we've decided to keep longer than the minimum indicated by the State Archives retention schedule.

<b>Records Series</b>	<b>Archives Schedule</b>	<b>Retention Minimum</b>	<b>Office Retain</b>	<b>Storage Retain</b>
Annual department reports	LGS-1/58	0 (duplicate)	6 years*	n/a
Board meeting minutes	LGS-1/53b	0 (duplicate)	2 years	n/a
Correspondence and memos	LGS-1/403	6 years	6 years	n/a
Hazardous contact	LGS-1/654a	40 years after contact	1 year	40 years after contact
Insurance policies	LGS-1/579	6 years after expiration	2 years after expiration	8 years after expiration
Invoices	LGS-1/495	6 years	2 years	6 years
Performance guarantees	LGS-1/549	6 years after expiration	2 years after	8 years after expiration
Property acquisition / sale file	LGS-1/803	PERMANENT	2 years	PERMANENT
Purchasing files	LGS-1/547	6 years	4 years	8 years*
Purchasing requisitions	LGS-1/546	6 years	2 years	6 years
Vendor files	LGS-1/548	0 after superseded	Replace every year	n/a

*Example 2: County Clerk's Department Office Retention Schedule*

Title:	Administrative file (Records Management)
Schedule item:	LGS-1, General Administration, 53c: correspondence
Office retention:	1 year
Total retention:	1 year
Appraisal:	N/A
Title:	Adoptions
Schedule item:	OCA, Civil Court & County Adoptions, 20010
Office retention:	PERMANENT
Total retention:	PERMANENT
Appraisal:	Retain paper copy in office; microfilm use copy in Records Center.
Title:	Affidavits and orders
Schedule item:	OCA, Civil Court Supreme & County: other case files, 20230
Office retention:	10 years
Total retention:	PERMANENT
Appraisal:	Maintained permanently in records center.
Title:	Annual report of the Board of Excise
Schedule item:	LGS-1, General Administration, 74
Office retention:	3 years
Total retention:	PERMANENT
Appraisal:	Keep only three years in office since reference drops off quickly.
Title:	Annual reports of corporations
Schedule item:	LGS-1, General Administration, 298
Office retention:	3 years
Total retention:	PERMANENT
Appraisal:	Keep only three years in office since reference drops off quickly.
Title:	Application to use records (Records Management)
Schedule item:	LGS-1, Archives/RM, 94a
Office retention:	6 years
Total retention:	6 years
Appraisal:	LGS-1 gives retention as "0 after no longer needed." Six years allows enough time to discover any thefts or destruction and allow us to find the perpetrator.



## Case File Retention Sheets

### *Example 1: Personnel Case File Retention Sheet*

Since our district does not have centralized personnel functions, each department must maintain and weed their own department's personnel records. This sheet lists all the types of records found in personnel folders and whether they should be discarded six years after the employee has left the district employ or whether the records are permanent and should be retained and forwarded to the records center for microfilming. In those few cases where an employee is disputing or otherwise having trouble with retirement benefits or is in litigation against the district, you must retain the entire file for at least six years after the matter has been brought to a conclusion.

Application form and letter	Discard
Appointment letter	Permanent
Benefits information	Discard
Contracts (for superintendent)	Permanent
Declination to join retirement system	Permanent
Job descriptions	Permanent
Insurance information	Discard
Letter of recommendation from district	Discard
Letter of resignation from employee	Discard
Memos (relating to discipline, etc.)	Discard
Oath of office	Permanent
Reference letters	Discard
Resume	Discard
Salary information	Permanent
Teaching certificate	Permanent
Transcript from college	Permanent

Note: Many records identified as permanent on this sheet are not scheduled as permanent on the State Archives' *LGS-1*. These are examples of local decisions to increase retention periods. You should not assume this sheet represents the Archives' recommendations.

*Example 2: Developmental Disabilities Services Office Retention and Disposition Schedule*

Below is a retention and disposition schedule for managing inactive records. The retention period refers to individuals who are beyond the age of majority. The Health Information Management Office will provide you with a list of our younger population for whom this schedule DOES NOT APPLY. DO NOT DESTROY FORMS THAT ARE NOT LISTED.

**IDENTIFYING DATA SECTION**

Requirement Citation	Record Type	Retention Period
IPP 4 22.1A Med.	Diagnostic Report	Destroy (Current kept in Active File & originals in HIM Office)
AHR 116	Disposition Report	Destroy all - Obsolete
43, 43	Notice of Status and Rights	Destroy (Current kept in Active File & originals in HIM Office)
41, 42, 43	Legal Papers	Destroy (Current kept in Active File & originals in HIM Office)
WDC 139	Clinic Treatment Program Referral	Retain 7 years; destroy others
WDC 19	Community Services Plan	Destroy (Current kept in Active File)
STAT 31	Change in Statistical Data	Retain 1 year in Active File; Destroy others
WDC 395	Addendum to Community Services Plan	Destroy (Current kept in Active File)
WDC 394	Residential/Day Program Changes	Destroy (Current kept in Active File)
WDC 80	Respite Agreement	Destroy (Current kept in Active File)
WDC 99	Respite Consent	Destroy (Current kept in Active File)
WDC 101	Medication List and Consents	Destroy (Current kept in Active File)
WDC 112	Respite; Client Information Summary	Destroy (Current kept in Active File)
WDC 58	Consent to Release Information	Destroy (Current kept in Active File)
WDC 44	Consent for Photograph	Destroy (Current kept in Active File)
WDC 403	Money Management Consent	Destroy (Current kept in Active File)
OMR 170	Personal Allowance Record Option	Destroy (Current kept in Active File)
DMH 5	Notification of Referral for Services, Verification of 620 Eligibility	Retain 7 Years (Destroy others)

## Appendix B: Destruction of Cancelled Obligations

### Basic Concepts

- The Office of the State Comptroller has issued requirements for the destruction of cancelled corporate stock, notes, and coupons, and **most** cancelled bonds ("obligations").
- The *Retention and Disposition Schedule for New York Local Government Records (LGS-1)* does not include schedules for these records.
- Two types of bonds – surety and performance bonds – are included in the *LGS-1*.
- Bonds or other obligations that predate 1910 may be historically significant and deserving of permanent retention.
- Contact the Office of the State Comptroller for more information about destroying cancelled obligations.

### Relevant Law and Regulation

**Section 63.10 of the Local Finance Law** outlines the legal authority for destruction of these records. This law states that "they shall be cancelled or destroyed in such a manner as the State Comptroller shall prescribe."

**Part 55 of 2 NYCRR** outlines how to cancel obligations (by stamping and perforation) and how the cancelled obligations may then be destroyed (by "burning, pulverizing or shredding").

### Pre-1910 Obligations

Certain local governments may have bonds or other obligations that predate 1910. These were often issued in conjunction with railroad and turnpike construction in the nineteenth century. Such bonds may possess archival value. If ornately engraved, they may possess intrinsic value that necessitates preservation in their original format. Bonds with intrinsic value should not be mutilated or otherwise destroyed without the approval of the State Archives. Contact your State Archives [Records Advisory Officer \(RAO\)](#) for advice on proper preservation of older bonds.

### Contact Information

Questions concerning destruction of cancelled obligations should be directed to the Office of the State Comptroller's Division of Legal Services at (518) 474-5586.