

CHAPTER 2. USING THE RETENTION SCHEDULE

2-1. USING THIS ORDER.

Each item in this order is in the following format:

Item No.	Title and Description of Records <small>(All Records Series are temporary except where indicated)</small>	Disposition	Authority
-------------	--	-------------	-----------

a. **Item Numbers.** Items are numbered using Order 0000.1, FAA Standard Subject Classification System. This numbering system should also be used to file the related documents.

b. **Title and Description of Records.** The title and description of records describes in general terms names and contents that may cover several record series and accommodate minor differences in naming and arranging local files. Broad terms generally, the records are not identified with specific organizations so that similar records will follow the same standards. Standards should not be stretched to cover records that are obviously not related to the records described. When data is microfilmed or created electronically, provisions for maintaining those specific file formats are covered.

(1) General correspondence files. General correspondence file standards are usually provided within standards for major program records. This correspondence consists of letters, memos, reports, etc., related to the principle function of the program office. General correspondence files are usually arranged by the FAA Standard Subject Classification System.

a. Files at various organizational levels. Standards give varied retention periods when related records are kept by national, regional, and local offices. While there are some exceptions, most permanent records are kept only by the agency office of primary interest. Such offices or activities are responsible for agencywide policy, plans, programs, and procedures in their functional areas.

c. **Disposition.** Final actions related to record materials that are no longer valuable to the agency in conducting current business.

(1) Permanent Retention. Records which have enduring value to the agency will be protected for historical and reference purposes. Records which are identified as permanent also reflect the amount of time that they remain under the legal control of the agency prior to transfer of custody to the National Archives.

(2) Temporary Retention. Most files fall into this category, and are maintained for a specified period of time, and then destroyed in accordance with the guidelines in this order. Destruction dates may relate to the passage of time, or a particular event. In Real Property cases, for instance, records are retained until the property is transferred from government control. Other disposition instructions indicate specific time periods, such as Time & Attendance Source Records are destroyed when they are 6 years and 3 months old.

(a) **On-Site Storage and Destruction.** For items that have short life cycles, it may be more convenient or more economical to maintain them at the facility and destroy them on-site.

(b) **Off-Site Storage and Destruction.** Inactive records may be transferred to off-site storage facilities if on-site storage is not available. Records should only be sent if they are not referred to more than once a month per drawer, and they are of sufficient value to warrant the additional expense of transporting and storing records off-site for the period.

d. **Authority.** The authority listed is the number assigned to the NARA approved SF-115, Request for Record Disposal Authority, or the General Records Schedule (GRS) item number. Without disposition authority signed by the Archivist of the United States, records cannot be destroyed.

2-2. APPLYING RETENTION STANDARDS.

a. **Administration.** Each activity shall be responsible for setting up its records for orderly disposition in accordance with standards provided in this order. Effective programming requires:

(1) The determination of disposal authorization to apply to each file or records series the activity accumulates.

(2) The establishment of suitable cut-off periods and transfer dates.

(3) The development of appropriate retention periods for records not covered by disposal authorizations and the submission of recommendations through channels as provided in Order 1350.14, Records Management.

(4) The annual inspection and audit by the cognizant records officer, of the activity's records and related disposition procedures and practices to ensure that:

(a) All records accumulated are covered by items in this order,

(b) Proper disposal authorizations are being applied to the records, and

(c) Records are actually disposed of when they become eligible for destruction and transferred to storage when they become no longer useful for current agency business.

b. **File Division.** Records should be disposed of in a "block" whenever possible. Documents that must be maintained for substantially longer or shorter periods than other portions of the file should be physically separated and filed as individual records series. While a physical separation of these records is preferred, some files, such as general correspondence files, may contain materials having different retention values. When the file volume is small and when the differences in retention periods is not substantial, the entire file may be retained as a 'block' and disposed of upon expiration of the longest retention period. When the differences are substantial, each file category should be identified for disposal as a separate series of records.

c. **Accidental Destruction of Records.** The accidental destruction of records will be reported to the Agency Records Officer in APF-100. This report will include:

- (1) A complete description of the records destroyed, including dates of records if known.
- (2) Volume destroyed in cubic feet; if machine readable cite the number of reels.
- (3) The office of origin.
- (4) A statement of the circumstances surrounding the destruction.
- (5) A statement of the safeguards and planned procedures to prevent further instances of loss of documentation.

d. **Questions.** If you have any questions about the procedures or descriptions in this order, please contact the Records Management Officer for your organization, or contact the Agency Records Officer in APF-100. It is recommended that if you are not sure if an item is a record or not, err on the side of caution, and maintain the record until such time that an opinion may be obtained from a records professional, or from NARA.