

Information Management Advice 9 Disposal of Scheduled Records

Introduction

The Archives Act 1983 stipulates that no government employee, or any other person, may dispose of records of any type without the written authority of the State Archivist.

An authorised disposal schedule is one of the formal approval instruments issued under the provisions of the Archives Act 1983 for records disposal – ‘scheduled records’ are those records covered by such a Disposal Schedule authorised by the State Archivist.

A disposal schedule identifies and describes:

- *disposal classes - groups of records which have the same function.*
- *status - i.e. permanent or temporary retention.*
- *disposal action - date for transfer or destruction.*

Disposal Classes

A disposal class is a group of records that document the same activity or transactional process, and have the same disposal action. It should be noted that where possible disposal classes are identified and described in functional terms which are independent of the format or medium in which the records are created.

Status

All disposal classes have either PERMANENT or TEMPORARY status. Records identified as PERMANENT are those that will be transferred to the Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office (TAHO) to be retained as State archives. TEMPORARY records are those that can be destroyed under the authority of a disposal schedule.

Disposal Action

All temporary records identified in an authorised disposal schedule will have a disposal action which specifies the length of time for which the record must be retained before it can be destroyed.

Frequently the disposal actions will refer to ‘after action completed’ which means after completion of the transaction to which the records relate. The disposal action ‘destroy when reference ceases’ authorises the destruction of records when all business needs to refer to the records have ceased.

Where records are held in electronic format, they must be kept readily accessible for the length of the retention period.

Transfer of Records to TAHO Disposal Classes

All records being transferred to the TAHO must be arranged in original order, listed on an Application to Dispose of State Records and placed in archival quality acid-free boxes or other suitable packaging. TAHO's *Advice No. 12 – Preparing records for transfer to TAHO* provides advice on preparing records for transfer.

Destruction of records

The destruction method chosen for records authorised for destruction in an authorised disposal schedule should be appropriate to the medium in which the record exists. It is the responsibility of the agency to ensure that the identified records are actually destroyed and that this process is confidential and secure and an entry made in the Register of Records Destroyed. For further information please refer to *State Records Guideline No.21 – Approved destruction methods for State records*.

Register of Records Destroyed

Central to the accountability process built into the disposal schedules is the requirement that agencies maintain a Register of Records Destroyed. It is important to recognise that the formal evidential record of destruction is contained in this registration process. The register is to be made available to the State Archivist (or nominee) on request.

It is expected that destruction authorised in the *Disposal Schedule for Short-term Value Records – DA No. 2158* will be a normal administrative practice and it is not necessary to make an entry in the Register of Records Destroyed.

The Register must be clearly identified as the Register of Records Destroyed (under Section 20(2)(b) of the *Archives Act 1983*) and should include the name of the agency. The register should not be used to list unscheduled records as these will be covered by a Destruction Authority issued by the State Archivist.

Agencies may construct the register to accommodate internal procedures for the disposal of records, however, the register must include the information detailed below. If the register is maintained in electronic format the access, security and validation controls should ensure accountability and authenticity of the register entries. A sample register (Excel worksheet) can be downloaded from TAHO's website.

The Register must contain the following information:

Schedule Reference - Note the name of the schedule (e.g. DA 2200 or DA No. 2157) and the reference number of the disposal class of the records being destroyed. This should not refer to disposal class heading or sub-heading (i.e. the final part of the reference number must not be zero).

Description - When only parts of the disposal class are being destroyed it will be necessary to specify item or file references. If the disposal class description accurately describes the records and includes all records for the date period specified, it is not necessary to add a further description.

Inclusive Dates – note the date range covered by the records

Date of Destruction – date the records were destroyed

Certification of the Relevant Authority - signature of the relevant authority or an officer to whom the relevant authority has delegated this authority, certifying that the records have been properly described by the schedule and have been destroyed. If the register is an electronic record the access, security and validation

controls should ensure the entries are acceptable as evidence of this certification process. The process of making entries should be monitored by an officer at an appropriate level of responsibility within the agency.

Further Advice

For more detailed advice please contact:

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Information Security Classification

This document has been security classified using the Tasmanian Government Information Security classification standard as PUBLIC and will be managed according to the requirements of the Tasmanian Government Information Security Policy.

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