

## Information Management Advice 69 Register of Records Destroyed

### Introduction

It is a requirement (Section 20 of the *Archives Act, 1983*) that all agencies maintain a Register of Records Destroyed (RRD). It is important to recognise that the formal evidential record of destruction is contained in this registration process.

Staff or contractors that have not completed our disposal training should not undertake disposal.

### Recording Destruction

Agencies may use the sample register on our website or create a Register to accommodate internal procedures for the disposal of records. The Register must contain the following information;

- Schedule reference - The name of the Schedule (eg DA2200 or DA2157 etc) and the reference number of the relevant disposal class. (Eg I.6.2). It must be always a disposal class reference, not a Function or Activity (ie the number must not end in a zero).
- Description - this may be the description of an individual item or a series of items. Files relating to individuals or discrete information such as addresses, are usually written individually. This is because you may need to prove (for example to a Court of Law) that the file in question has been legally destroyed. Sometimes however, the quantity of individual entries may be so large, that you can request permission from TAHO for a bulk entry. This will be decided on a case by case basis. Some series of records can easily be listed in bulk.

Examples of listing below:

Personnel file - Winter, Alexander John dob 1 March 1935
Building Application - 763 William Street Oatlands.
Flex sheets 1974 - 2000
Petty Cash receipts 1980 - 2005

- Inclusive dates - the date range covered by the record. If an actual date is recorded, then use the actual date. If you only have a month you must ensure that the retention period covers that month. Example;

If a record has a retention of Temporary 2 years after action completed, and the last date on the record was September 2000 then the record can be disposed of *after* September 2002.

If a record only shows a year date you must ensure that it is retained for the whole year.

Example;

If a record has a retention of Temporary 2 years after action completed, and the last date on the record was 1999 then the record can be disposed of *after* 2001 ie in 2002.

- Date of destruction - the date the record was actually destroyed. Destruction must be carried out in accordance with Guideline 21.
- Certification of the relevant authority - signature of the relevant authority or delegated officer, certifying that the records have been properly described in the Register and have been destroyed. If the register is electronic the access, security and validation controls should ensure that the entries are acceptable as evidence of this certification process.

## Maintaining the Register

The Register of Records Destroyed is a **Permanent value** record **maintained in the agency**.

It is more efficient if there is one central Register for the whole agency, if feasible. For example, an agency may have three offices, the head office in Hobart, and offices in Launceston and Burnie. Disposal may be carried out on each site, and a register created on each site. It would be best if the Registers from the regional offices were forwarded to the head office when they were updated, or annually. Then there is only one copy of the Register that will need to be migrated to each new recordkeeping system, in order to keep it accessible. A staff member may need to be allocated to the task of ensuring that each outpost of an agency completes their RRD and forwards it to head office.

It is important that the Register is checked by a senior officer before the records are actually destroyed, in order to;

- check the appropriateness of the disposal classes selected to ensure authorised disposal
- ensure any mistakes are rectified before the records are beyond saving.

## Auditing the Register

Previously the Register of Records Destroyed was audited by TAHO on a yearly basis. Now that TAHO are carrying out full Recordkeeping Audits on each agency, we will not request your RRD annually, but instead will inspect the RRD as part of the recordkeeping Audit. At that time the RRD for the whole agency will need to be produced, unless TAHO is only auditing part of the agency (for example auditing the Supreme Court as a business unit of the Department of Justice).

## Legal Discovery, Right to Information and Commissions of Inquiry

Agencies have an obligation to produce their records under Legal Discovery, Commissions of Inquiry and Right to Information requests. The only acceptable defence to not being able to produce requested records is if the agency can prove that they have been legally disposed of under the Archives Act 1983. An entry in the agency's Register of Records Destroyed is an agency's proof of legal disposal.

## Recommended Reading

Disposal of Scheduled records (2005: Advice 9)

Disposal of Unscheduled records (2012: Advice 10) Checklist to accompany Advice 10

Retention and Disposal of State records (2005: Guideline 2)

Approved destruction methods for State records (2013: Guideline 21)

## Further Advice

For more detailed advice, please contact:

Government Information Strategy Unit  
Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office  
91 Murray Street  
HOBART TASMANIA 7000  
Telephone: 03 6165 5581  
Email: [gisu@education.tas.gov.au](mailto:gisu@education.tas.gov.au)

## 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.

## Document Development History

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### Amendments in this Release

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**Ross Latham**  
State Archivist