

# Standard for Records Appraisal and Development of State Agency Retention Schedules

Approved by State Records Commission on July 31, 2024, superseding the standard approved on June 15, 2005.

## Purpose and Authority

This standard guides the development of records retention schedules for state agencies. It ensures the preservation of state records with continuing archival value and facilitates the prompt and orderly disposal of records that no longer possess sufficient administrative, legal, historical, or fiscal value to warrant future retention. This standard is issued under the authority of 109.230(3) RSMo in order to:

- Maximize the efficient use and maintenance of records created or received by state agencies.
- Ensure that state agency records provide adequate and proper documentation of, and accountability for, the actions of agency officials.
- Provide for the prompt disposal of records that no longer have useful value.
- Ensure the identification and preservation of records with historical and archival significance.

## Definitions

The following definitions apply to this standard.

### Appraisal

The process of determining the value of records based on the analyses of work processes, legal and professional requirements, and other factors in order to determine the appropriate retention period, disposition action, and overall management of records. The levels of value assessed during appraisal are:

#### Administrative Value

In records appraisal, the value of records based on their usefulness for carrying out the agency's current business.

#### Fiscal Value

In records appraisal, the value of records in documenting an agency's financial transactions and obligations.

#### Legal Value

In records appraisal, the value of records in documenting legally enforceable rights or obligations.

#### Historical Value

In records appraisal, the value records have to warrant their permanent retention beyond the time they are needed for their normal administrative, fiscal, or legal purposes.

### Cutoff

A specific event, action, or condition that causes a case file to be officially closed, such as final payment on a contract, sale of an asset, retirement of an employee, or close of a case. The cutoff may also be a specific time, such as the end of a fiscal or calendar year. The cutoff date marks the beginning of the retention period.

### Disposition

The action taken with records which have met their retention period and are not needed for ongoing business or litigation purposes. Disposition involves the destruction of temporary records or the transfer of permanent records to the Missouri State Archives. The disposition action occurs promptly after the retention period has been met. However, agencies can

suspend the disposition of records if they are involved in a current or anticipated litigation, audit, or for other valid business need.

**Destroy**

The typical disposition of temporary records.

**Permanent - Transfer to Missouri State Archives**

The typical disposition of permanent records.

**Temporary Records**

Records appraised as appropriate for destruction after a specified retention period.

**Permanent Records**

Records appraised as having sufficient value to warrant their preservation in perpetuity, or records mandated as permanent via state or federal regulation.

**Records Schedule**

A listing and description of all record series maintained by an organization, prescribing the period of time that records under the series must be maintained, how the records should be handled at time of disposition, and other details about the management of the records.

**Record Series**

Categories of records grouped together because they relate to the same subject or function, result from the same activity or transaction, or have some other common relationship arising out of their creation, receipt, or use.

**Retention Period**

The minimum length of time records under a particular record series are to be kept after the record closes. Retention period begins after the record series cutoff happens unless otherwise specified.

**Official Record**

Per 109.210(5) RSMo, any document, book, paper, photograph, map, sound recording or other material, regardless of physical form or characteristics, made or received pursuant to law or in connection with the transaction of official business.

**Non-record**

Per 109.210(5) RSMo, library and museum material made or acquired and preserved solely for reference or exhibition purposes, extra copies of documents preserved only for convenience of reference, stocks of publications, and processed documents are not included within the definition of records as used in sections 109.200 to 109.310. Non-records are omitted from retention schedules and can be discarded when no longer needed.

**Processed Documents**

Documents that have undergone a conversion process where their information is captured and stored in another format or system, allowing the original documents to be discarded because the content has been preserved and made accessible in the new format.

[Records Scheduling Principles](#)

[Retention Schedules](#)

A retention schedule serves multiple purposes, including:

- Providing an inventory of records created or received by an agency.

- Outlining agency operations.
- Ensuring employee compliance with statutory and legal recordkeeping requirements.
- Granting legal authorization to destroy temporary records or transfer permanent records to the State Archives.

Per 109.260 RSMo, official agency records cannot be legally destroyed or otherwise disposed of unless evaluated and approved for disposition by the State Records Commission (SRC).

All state agency records must be listed on SRC-approved general or agency-specific records schedules. Agency-specific schedules are developed by the agency in collaboration with the Records Management and Archives Services to cover records unique to the agency. The General Records Schedules (GRS) cover records common across agencies. The Records Management Division (RMD) consults with agencies as necessary to revise the GRS. GRS revisions require the same review and SRC-approval process as agency retention schedules.

Any state agency may use the authority of the GRS for the retention and disposition of records appropriately covered by it. RMD will seek to expand the use of the GRS to the fullest practical extent. This approach enhances efficiency by reducing duplication across numerous agency-specific records schedules and ensures consistent application among all agencies.

Retention schedules should be reviewed and, if necessary, revised if the series approval date is more than ten years old. Regularly reviewing the schedule is crucial for ensuring that it complies with current regulations and standards.

### Records Series

Records series are categories of records that can be organized together because they share a commonality. Retention schedules set retention periods and disposition instructions for records at the series level rather than at the document or file level. All records under a series will have the same retention and disposition requirements. The records series schema developed by this standard includes: series title; a detailed description of the records; cutoff event; retention period; and disposition action.

Any revisions to the language or terms of new or existing series, including changes to the title, description, cut-off, retention period, or disposition action, must be approved by the SRC. However, administrative changes to the series organization within the agency, or to the overall organization of the agency in the records tracking system, resulting from statute, executive order, or internal agency reorganization, do not require SRC approval. Written approval from the agency will suffice to authorize these organizational changes within the records tracking system. Additionally, RMD can edit series to correct misspellings and grammatical errors without prior SRC approval.

RMD is authorized to make series obsolete during the revision process if the series is no longer needed or if its records can be encompassed by another series, rendering the series unnecessary. SRC approval is not required for the obsolescence of series.

### Records Cutoff

The retention period of a record begins when it becomes inactive or closed; it does not apply to active records that are being used by the agency. The point at which the record closes is called the “cutoff”. Before the cutoff happens, the record is active. Active records are treated like permanent records because they cannot be disposed until the record closes and the retention period has been met.

### Format Neutrality

Records series are written using format-neutral language to ensure they encompass the records they describe “regardless of physical form or characteristics,” as defined by 109.210(5) RSMo. This format flexibility, prescribed by statute, safeguards the definition by ensuring it applies to records stored in any format, now or in the future.

## Roles and Responsibilities

### State Agencies

State agencies are required to create and maintain records that provide adequate and proper documentation of their organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, and essential transactions. These records must contain sufficient information to protect the legal and financial rights of the state and individuals directly affected by the agency's activities. Agencies collaborate with the Records Management Division to develop the language for each series on their agency retention schedule.

### Records Management Division (RMD)

The RMD establishes standards, procedures, and techniques for effective records management. With the approval of the State Records Commission, RMD sets standards for the preparation of records schedules. RMD collaborates with state agencies to refine record series language and presents the final versions to the State Records Commission for approval. RMD develops and submits GRS series to the SRC for approval. Additionally, RMD maintains the record copy of all SRC-approved record series.

### State Records Commission (SRC)

The SRC holds the authority to set state-wide records management policies. This includes reviewing, amending and approving records series. The SRC, through the RMD, promulgates the procedures for developing and submitting draft records schedules.

## Records Scheduling Procedures

1. **Developing Retention Schedules:** RMD staff will collaborate with agency officials to create agency-specific retention schedules. Requests to add or amend items on these schedules can be initiated by either RMD or the agency. Records Analysts will assist in determining appropriate retention periods and dispositions based on the records' value and statutory requirements.
2. **Reviewing Proposed Revisions:** RMD staff will review all proposed series revisions and provide recommendations before presenting the draft schedule to the SRC for approval.
3. **State Archives Review:** The State Archives will review all items in draft record schedules to evaluate them for permanent value.
4. **Signing Approval Forms:** The agency will sign an SRC Approval Form with the final draft of the series.
5. **Commission Review and Approval:** The State Records Commission (SRC) will review the SRC Approval Forms during the Commission meeting and will either approve, amend, or table the series. If a series is tabled, it requires further review before the SRC can make a final decision. The revision process will then restart to address the SRC's concerns, allowing the series to be presented again at a subsequent meeting. Schedules become effective upon SRC approval and remain in effect until the completion of their next review.
6. **Notification of Results:** Agencies will be informed of the SRC meeting outcomes and, if applicable, provided with copies of the new or updated series promptly after the meeting concludes.
7. **Records Tracking System Update:** RMD will update the records management tracking system with all SRC-approved changes within three working days of the Commission meeting.