

**Missouri Secretary of State
Records Management Division
Records Appraisal and Scheduling Standard for State Agencies**

Approved by State Records Commission June 15, 2005

Purpose and authority. This standard is established to guide the development of records retention schedules for state agencies that will provide for the preservation of state records of continuing archival value and for the prompt and orderly disposal of state records no longer possessing sufficient administrative, legal, historical, or fiscal value to warrant their future keeping. This standard is issued under authority of RSMo109.230(3).

Policy. It is the policy of the State Records Commission that records retention schedules shall be created in such a way as to:

- maximize the efficient use and maintenance of records that state agencies create or receive in conducting their business;
- ensure that state agency records provide adequate and proper documentation of and accountability for the actions of agency officials;
- provide for prompt disposal of records which have no further useful value; and,
- ensure the identification and continued preservation of records of historical and archival value.

Records Scheduling Principles.

Purpose of Records Retention Schedules. The efficient and effective management of records requires that all records created or received by a state agency in the course of performing its responsibilities must be identified and listed on a *records retention schedule*. The retention schedule serves many purposes: records inventory, functional outline of agency operations, guidance to agency employees who work with the records, compliance with statutory and legal recordkeeping requirements, retention periods of closed records based on analysis of business processes, legal authorization to destroy obsolete records, and transfer of permanent records to the State Archives for preservation.

All records of an agency must be listed on either a General Records Schedule (GRS) issued by the Secretary of State's Records Management Division (RMD) or on an agency-specific records schedule developed jointly by the agency and RMD. General Records Schedules cover records that are common to most agencies. Any state agency may use the authority of the GRS for the retention and disposition of their records that match the GRS description. Under state law, RSMo109.260.1, *agency records may not be legally destroyed unless and until they are listed on an approved GRS or agency-specific records retention schedule.*

Records Series. Records related to or generated by an agency's current activities are typically collected together into files, for ease of access and use. Two major categories of files are *case files* and *subject files*. Case files hold all documents related to a particular client, project, event, building, person, or other *thing*. Case files may remain open or active for many years or for only a short time. Typically, each case file will have an ending event or determination that will terminate further agency activity on the case and cause the case file to be closed.

Subject files serve to collect documents and records that deal with a particular *subject*. The individual documents within the file may not have any direct relationship to other documents in

the file, except that the content of each generally deals with the subject matter of the file. Subject files are manually closed on a periodic basis, such as at the end of a fiscal year, and new subject files set up, so that obsolete material does not continue to accumulate.

Case files of the same type, and subject files that have similar characteristics, are grouped together into *records series*. Records retention schedules describe and set retention periods and disposition instructions for records *at the records series level*, rather than at the document level or file folder level. This same principle of aggregation and scheduling at a record series level applies equally to electronic and other forms of records as to paper records.

Records Cutoff. The retention period described in the records schedule begins only when the records become inactive or closed; it does not apply to open records that are being used by the agency in its current business. The step of determining that a particular set of records is closed, and that the retention period of those records is beginning, is called *cutoff*. Records schedules may in some cases indicate the records cutoff implicitly within the description of the records series, or they may specifically define the cutoff date or action. Often, the end of the fiscal year is used as the cutoff, to facilitate the setting up of new subject files and the movement of manageable-sized groups of closed records to inactive or off-site storage locations.

Definitions. The following definitions apply to this standard and to records retention schedules developed under this standard.

Appraisal – the process of determining the administrative, fiscal, legal, and historical value of a series of records – based on an analysis of work processes, legal requirements, and other factors – to determine the retention period and disposition of closed records.

Administrative Value - in records appraisal, the value of records based on their usefulness for carrying out the agency's current business. Administrative value typically derives from the information contained in the record.

Fiscal Value – in records appraisal, the usefulness of records in documenting an agency's financial transactions and obligations.

Legal Value – in records appraisal, the usefulness of records in documenting legally enforceable rights or obligations, both those of a government agency or other organization and those of persons directly affected by the agency's activities.

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. Historical value is usually based on the evidential and/or informational value of the records.

Collections Policy – the guidelines of the Missouri State Archives describing the kinds of records sought for and accepted into the Missouri State Archives collection.

Closure – 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, etc.

Cutoff – breaking, or ending, files at regular intervals, usually at the close of a fiscal or calendar year, to permit their disposal or transfer in complete blocks and, for subject files, to permit the establishment of new files. The cutoff date marks the beginning of the

records retention period. Case files are generally cut off at the end of the year in which the case is closed.

Disposition – the action taken with records which have met their retention period and which are not needed for ongoing business or litigation purposes. Disposition usually involves the destruction of temporary records or the transfer to the Missouri State Archives of records with historical value.

Destruction – the normal disposition of records whose administrative, fiscal, and legal value has expired and they have no historical value.

Transfer to Archives – the normal disposition of records with historical value that are appraised as permanent.

Temporary Record – records approved for destruction on a records schedule, either immediately or after a specified retention period.

Permanent Record – records appraised as having sufficient historical or other value to warrant continued preservation beyond the time they are needed for administrative, legal, or fiscal purposes. Sometimes called *archival records*.

Records Schedule – a listing and description of the record series maintained by all or part of an organization, prescribing the period of time that each series is to be maintained after no longer needed for current business, and when such series may be reviewed for disposition. A records schedule provides for the retention of state or local records of continuing value and for the prompt and orderly destruction of state or local records no longer possessing sufficient administrative, legal, fiscal or historical value to warrant their future keeping. Also called *records control schedule*, *records disposition schedule*, *records retention schedule*, *records retention and disposition schedule*, or *schedule*.

Record Series – file units or documents arranged according to a filing system or kept together because they relate to a particular subject or function, result from the same activity, document a specific type of transaction, take a particular physical form, or have some other relationship arising out of their creation, receipt, or use. Also called *series*.

Retention Period – the length of time a record series is to be kept after no longer needed for current business. Normally expressed either as a time period (e.g., 4 years), an event or action (e.g., completion of audit), or a combination (e.g., 6 months after completion of audit). Retention period begins at record series cutoff unless otherwise specified.

Record – 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. RSMo 109.210(5).

State Record – any record designated or treated as a state record under state law. RSMo 109.210(7).

Roles and Responsibilities.

State Agencies. State agencies are required to make and maintain records containing adequate and proper documentation of the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, and essential transactions of the agency. Such records shall contain sufficient information to protect the legal and financial rights of the state and of persons directly affected

by the agency's activities. Agencies draft and submit to the Records Management Division schedules proposing the length of time each state records series warrants retention for its administrative, fiscal, legal, or historical purposes.

Records Management Division, Office of Secretary of State. Records Management Division (RMD) establishes standards, procedures, and techniques for the effective management of records and, with the approval of the State Records Commission, establishes standards for the preparation of records schedules. RMD works with state agencies to refine their draft records schedules, and submits the final draft schedules to the State Records Commission for approval. RMD maintains all approved agency-specific records retention schedules. RMD also develops General Records Schedules, and submits new GRS items to the State Records Commission for approval.

State Records Commission. The State Records Commission reviews and approves or disapproves records series retentions and dispositions submitted on draft agency schedules and General Records Schedules. The Commission promulgates through the Records Management Division the procedures for developing and submitting draft records schedules.

Records Scheduling Procedures.

1. RMD will develop additional General Records Schedule records series that will describe records common to most agencies. RMD will seek to expand the use of the General Records Schedule to the fullest practical extent, due to its efficiency in reducing duplication on numerous agency-specific records schedules and consistent application among all agencies.
2. RMD Records Analysts will work with officials of their assigned agencies to develop schedules of records unique to each agency. Either RMD or the agency may initiate a request to add or amend items on an agency-specific schedule. The Records Analyst will help the agency determine appropriate retentions and dispositions, based on the work process to which the record relates and the expected need to reference the closed records over time.
3. The full RMD Records Analyst Staff and Director will review all draft schedules and make recommendations for changes before the draft schedule is presented to the State Records Commission for approval. Schedules become effective when approved by the State Records Commission.
4. The format of Records Schedules developed or revised after adoption of this standard will include, at a minimum: the record series Title; a detailed Description of the records, including the closure event and description of all related copies of the record; the Cutoff date or event; the Retention period for each relevant copy; and the Disposition action for each relevant copy.
5. Retention periods represent the *minimum* time records must be held after cutoff. Disposition action should normally be taken promptly after the retention period has been met. However, an agency should suspend the disposition of records that have met their retention period if the records are involved in a current or anticipated litigation, audit, or regulatory action, or the agency has other ongoing use for the records.
6. For effective management, retention periods should be established as short as possible to meet expected business needs, in order to promptly eliminate useless materials and minimize records storage costs. Retention periods can be amended by contacting RMD to ask for a reappraisal if experience shows they are either too long or too short.

7. Most records are temporary, and will be destroyed when they no longer have any administrative, legal, or fiscal value. Maximum use of recycling is encouraged.
8. Records having historical value beyond their administrative, legal, or fiscal usefulness will be appraised as Permanent. Permanent records will be scheduled for transfer to the Missouri State Archives at the end of their retention period. The agency and RMD will determine how long the agency needs to retain the records before they are transferred, and include that retention period in the draft schedule. The Missouri State Archives will review and concur on all Permanent items in draft record schedules in accordance with their Collections Policy. If the State Archives does not concur in the Permanent retention, the agency and RMD will establish an appropriate retention and disposal date.
9. Schedules in effect before adoption of this standard will remain in effect until their next review and revision. However, all Permanent items in existing schedules will be reviewed by RMD and the State Archives to ensure that they are based on historical value. If the Permanent item is determined not to have historical value, the Records Analyst will work with the agency to determine an appropriate retention period.