

Records disposal schedule

COVID-19 Pandemic

Disposal Schedule No. 2024/2

September 2024

For information and advice, please contact
Records Service
Department of Corporate and Digital Development
GPO Box 2391
Darwin NT 0801

Email: NTG.RecordsPolicy@nt.gov.au
Telephone: 08 8999 1746
Website: <https://dcdd.nt.gov.au/government-records>

Contents

Preamble	iv
Introduction.....	iv
Structure of a Records Disposal Schedule	iv
Function	v
Activity	v
Record class.....	v
Status and disposal action.....	v
About this Records Disposal Schedule	vii
Purpose	vii
Scope	vii
Responsibility.....	vii
Authority.....	vii
Regulatory framework	vii
Related documents	viii
Normal administrative practice	viii
Acknowledgement.....	viii
Compliance checklist	ix
Disposal Schedule	1
1. COVID-19 Pandemic	1
1.1 Emergency Management Response.....	1

Preamble

Introduction

The *Information Act 2002* states that public sector organisations must safeguard their records and must not delete or otherwise dispose of a record unless authorised to do so¹. Disposal of records is permitted through the use of records disposal schedules and enable regular, planned and authorised disposal of records controlled by an agency.

Records retention decisions are based on:

- the current and future business needs of the organisation
- compliance with legal and governance requirements of the organisation
- the current and future needs of internal and external stakeholders, including the wider community.

Records disposal schedules provide continuing authorisation for the legal disposal of records and are authorised by the records service, archives service and chief executive of the public sector organisation responsible for the schedule.

Records disposal schedules apply to records created and maintained in any format, including electronic records, records in business systems, and parts of records.

In the Northern Territory Government (NTG) there are two types of records disposal schedules:

- general records disposal schedules that apply to records common to most or all NT public sector organisations
- functional records disposal schedules that apply to records specific to an NT public sector organisation or function.

Functional records disposal schedules should be used in conjunction with general records disposal schedules.

Structure of a Records Disposal Schedule

Records disposal schedules set out minimum requirements for the creation, maintenance, retention or destruction actions to be taken in relation to existing or future records described in each class. Records disposal schedules specify:

- whether a class of record has temporary or permanent status
- the retention period for a temporary class of record
- authorised disposal actions for a class of record.²

Each class of records created by an agency is described using classifications based on business analysis.

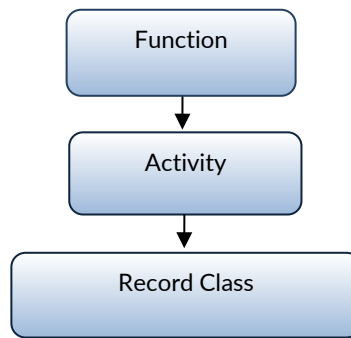
Disposal schedules are developed using the functional structure based on the classification scheme of the *Keyword AAA: A Thesaurus of General Terms* produced by the State Records Authority of NSW and modified for use by NTG public sector organisations.

Within the schedule, functions are documented as the highest level terms and business activities under the functions, followed by record classes, as shown in diagram 1.

¹ S.145 Information Act 2002

² S.136A(3) Information Act 2002

Diagram 1



Function

The function or keyword is the highest level in the classification scheme in this disposal schedule. The function is indicated at the start of each section and a description (scope note) provided.

Activity

Activities are the processes or operations that make up the business function. This is the second level in the classification scheme in this disposal schedule. The description (scope note) provides details of the transactions that take place in relation to the activity, for example, REPORTING or POLICY.

Record class

A record class is a group of records that relate to the same activity, function or subject and require the same disposal action. The descriptions can relate to one record (such as a register) or a group of records documenting a particular set of business transactions.

Status and disposal action

The appraisal status of a record class is assigned as either permanent or temporary.

Permanent records: records appraised with permanent status have been identified as archives and must be transferred to the NT Archives Service for their preservation and eventual public access.

The retention period for permanent records is the maximum period before the records must be transferred to the NT Archives Service. Permanent records must be transferred no later than 30 years after creation in accordance with the *Information Act 2002*, unless exemption has been granted (see Archives Management Standards Transfer of Archives, and Exemption from Compulsory Transfer of Permanent Records to the NT Archives Service). An Application to Transfer Records form must be submitted to the NT Archives Service before records will be accepted for transfer.

Temporary records: the retention period for temporary records is the minimum period before the records can legally be destroyed. The retention period is calculated after an event or a disposal trigger such as 'date of action completed', 'date of audit' or 'date of birth'. Destruction should be done following consultation with relevant operational business employees responsible for the records.

Retention periods for temporary records in a records disposal schedule are minimum periods only and agencies may keep records for a longer period if considered necessary for business requirements.

Reasons for longer retention could include:

- administrative need or agency directives
- legal requirements such as current or pending legal action

- relevance to an investigation or inquiry which is in progress
- is subject to an Information Access application
- subject to a disposal freeze.

Records created prior to 1 July 1978 must not be disposed of without the authorisation of the NT Archives Service in accordance with Archives Management Standard Records Created Prior to 1978, unless specified in a schedule.

Sentence records with this records disposal schedule using the following five steps:

1. Determine the appropriate function and activity of the records. This can be done by examining an existing record or when creating a new record.
2. Identify the disposal class.
3. From the disposal action in the class, identify the trigger event and a date when the record can be disposed of, alternately, identify that the record is to be retained permanently as archives.
4. If the trigger event has already occurred (such as action is completed), confirm and implement the disposal action.
5. If the trigger event has not occurred (e.g. the record is still in active use), set a review date for the future.

About this Records Disposal Schedule

Purpose

The purpose of this Records Disposal Schedule is to enable regular, planned and authorised disposal of COVID-19 pandemic records by Northern Territory public sector organisations and Northern Territory local authorities as defined in section 5 of the *Information Act 2002*.

Scope

Application of this Records Disposal Schedule is mandatory for COVID-19 pandemic records of all Northern Territory public sector organisations and Northern Territory local authorities.

This Records Disposal Schedule applies to COVID-19 pandemic response records in all formats.

Refer to the Emergency Management Cross Reference Guide to assist with records that fall under general administrative functions and other functional records, such as the Public and Environmental Health, Centre for Disease Control, Patient and Client Medical records, Policing and Crime Detection, Northern Territory Emergency service, Northern Territory Emergency Management Arrangements and the National Critical and Trauma Response Centre.

Responsibility

The chief executive officer of each NT public sector organisation is responsible for the content and implementation of this Records Disposal Schedule including the provision of advice and training, and for monitoring compliance.

Authority

This Records Disposal Schedule is authorised in accordance with section 136B of the *Information Act 2002*.

Disposal Schedule No. 2024/2 was approved by the Senior Director of Library and Archives NT (the Archives Service) and the Director of Digital Policy and Data Strategy (the Records Service) on 13th September 2024 and is effective immediately.

Regulatory framework

The regulatory basis for this Records Disposal Schedule is defined in:

- *Biosecurity Act 2015 (Cth)*
- *Emergency Act 2013*
- *Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 2012*
- *Notifiable Diseases Act 1981*
- *Privacy Amendment (Public Health Contact Information) Act 2020*
- *Public and Environmental Health Act 2011*
- *Information Act 2002*
- NT Government Records Management Standards
- NT Government Archives Management Standards
- Australian Standards AS ISO 15489:2002-Records Management.

Related documents

This Records Disposal Schedule is to be read in conjunction with:

- NT Government Records Management Standard – Records Disposal
- policies and procedures of public sector organisations
- current authorised disposal schedules for all public sector organisations
- current authorised general disposal schedules

Normal administrative practice

NT public sector organisations are permitted to dispose of some short term or ephemeral documents under the authority of the Disposal Schedule for Short Term Value Records. These include:

- duplicate (e.g. information or reference copy)
- obviously unimportant (e.g. telephone message slips)
- of short term facilitative value (e.g. compliment slips)
- a combination of these.

The guiding principle is that organisations should be sure that destroying these records will not destroy evidence that might be needed.

Records that have been captured into a recordkeeping system should be destroyed using the Disposal Schedule for Short Term Value Records unless the class of records has been identified in a specific disposal schedule.

Acknowledgement

The NT Archives Service and the Records Service acknowledge that material produced by National Archives of Australia, State Records Authority of New South Wales, State Records of South Australia, Public Records Office of Victoria, Territory Records Office and Standards Australia was used in the development of this schedule.

This work is copyright. Apart from any use as permitted under the *Copyright Act 1968*, no part may be reproduced by any process without prior written permission of the Archives Service. Requests and enquiries concerning reproduction and rights should be directed to the Director, Archives Service. The terms in the classification scheme are based on the Keyword AAA: A Thesaurus of General Terms (Government of New South Wales, 1998), and are produced under a licence agreement between the NT Archives Service and the State Records Authority of New South Wales.

Compliance checklist

<p>Implement a records disposal program to ensure regular appraisal, sentencing, destruction and transfer of all records.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Stop applying sentences from previous schedules that have been revoked or amended.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Assign responsibility for the management and application of regular records disposal action using authorised records disposal schedules, to an appropriately skilled records manager who consults with the Archives Service and Records Service.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Retain all records in good order and condition to be available for retrieval during the retention period.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Identify and sentence all records described in this schedule in all formats including electronic records and records in business systems, copies of records and parts of records.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Identify and update control records so that you can demonstrate what happened to each record, whether paper or electronic.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Ensure all copies of temporary records are destroyed in any format (including backups), unless otherwise stated in a disposal schedule.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Dispose of all records sentenced according to this schedule in all formats including electronic records and records in business systems, copies of records and parts of records.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Apply this records disposal schedule to records in the organisation’s records management systems, including systems for the management of paper records, electronic records, or records in any other format.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Transfer records of permanent value to the Archives Service for retention as archives not later than 30 years after creation.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Apply this records disposal schedule to records in the organisation’s business systems, either directly or by linking the business system to a records management system.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Inactive records can be transferred to offsite service providers providing they have been sentenced.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Implement quality assurance mechanisms to periodically check that the disposal class originally assigned at the creation of the records is still applicable at the time of sentencing of the record.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Destroy time expired temporary records in a secure manner that ensures complete deletion/destruction beyond any possible reconstruction.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Implement review or quality control procedures in recordkeeping systems to ensure disposal actions are implemented correctly.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Do not destroy records that are not described in an authorised records disposal schedule.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Identify records that require re-sentencing where a previous disposal schedule has been superseded.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Do not destroy any records created prior to 1 July 1978 without specific authorisation from the Archives Service.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Disposal Schedule

1. COVID-19 Pandemic

The function of managing COVID-19 related records that are unique to records managed under the function of Whole of Government Emergency Management. Records include border entry forms, border exemptions, quarantine registration forms, quarantine compliance checks and visitor and staff screening registers.

1.1 Emergency Management Response

The activities associated with specific emergency management response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Includes committees, taskforces and working groups, formal agreements, specific registers, safety plans, border entry forms and records in relation to the Covid Safe Application.

Class No.	Description of Records	Status and Disposal Action
1.1.1	<p>Intergovernmental agreements</p> <p>Records documenting the establishment and negotiation and review of agreements with other government bodies in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic response, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National Partnership on COVID-19 Response - Centre for National Resilience (CNR) <p>Includes ministerials, performance reports, invoices, remittance advices and other related correspondence.</p>	<p>PERMANENT</p> <p>Transfer to the Archives Service 30 years after action completed</p>
1.1.2	<p>Centre for National Resilience (CNR)</p> <p>Records documenting the CNR emergency management operational plans for the support provided to Australian Residents, including repatriation of Australian residents, permanent Australians, residents or visa holders with immediate family in Australia at the CNR, such as physical and mental health treatment and care, welfare support, meals, security and quarantine needs.</p> <p>Records include situation reports to the Territory Controller, Emergency Operations Centre, Chief Health Officer and the Joint Steering Committee with regards to the health and wellbeing of quarantined residents and any health services provided to quarantined residents, standard operating procedures, infection prevention and control procedures, induction training arrangements, risk management assessments, outbreak management plans, internal audits on infection prevention control arrangements, site operational plans and emergency evacuation plans.</p>	<p>PERMANENT</p> <p>Transfer to the Archives Service 30 years after action completed</p>
1.1.3	<p>Humanitarian Efforts</p> <p>Records documenting humanitarian efforts as per an agreement by the Australian Government to facilitate repatriation services to Australian citizens, including people other than Australian citizens such as foreign diplomats, foreign military, refugees and family members of Australian citizens during the COVID-19 pandemic. Includes repatriation of the Australian Olympic Athletes Team.</p> <p>Includes flight manifests, business memoranda, ministerials, briefing papers, minutes of meetings, agreements and related correspondence.</p>	<p>PERMANENT</p> <p>Transfer to the Archives Service 30 years after action completed</p>

1. COVID-19 Pandemic

The function of managing COVID-19 related records that are unique to records managed under the function of Whole of Government Emergency Management. Records include border entry forms, border exemptions, quarantine registration forms, quarantine compliance checks and visitor and staff screening registers.

1.1 Emergency Management Response

The activities associated with specific emergency management response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Includes committees, taskforces and working groups, formal agreements, specific registers, safety plans, border entry forms and records in relation to the Covid Safe Application.

Class No.	Description of Records	Status and Disposal Action
1.1.4	<p>CHO Directions - Border Entry Forms</p> <p>Records documenting border entry forms that detail travellers from low, medium to high-risk areas entering the Northern Territory that include personal details, including contact details, travel details and border exemptions.</p> <p>Includes records created in business systems, such as JIRA and C19C.</p>	<p>TEMPORARY</p> <p>Destroy 3 years after action completed</p>
1.1.5	<p>CHO Directions - CNR Registration Sheets – Residents</p> <p>Completed registration sheets by residents of the CNR that includes personal details, dietary requirements and medical needs.</p> <p>Includes records created in business systems, such as JIRA and C19C.</p>	<p>TEMPORARY</p> <p>Destroy 3 years after the resident quarantine period has lapsed</p>
1.1.6	<p>CHO Directions – Compliance Records – Community</p> <p>Records documenting activities of compliance by the public, business and services in accordance with direction given under the <i>Public and Environmental Health Act 2011</i> by the Chief Health Officer.</p> <p>Includes COVID-19 Management Plans, Covid-19 event safety plans, mitigation risk plans, hygiene and cleaning practices, outbreak management plans, extracts from manifests, movements and logbooks for commercial vessels, commercial vehicles and commercial travel flights, vessel crew change and movements, and person's written declarations.</p>	<p>TEMPORARY</p> <p>Destroy 3 years after action completed</p>
1.1.7	<p>CHO Directions - COVID-19 Quarantine Compliance Checks</p> <p>Records documenting COVID-19 Quarantine Compliance check forms completed by compliance officers, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - arrivals quarantine checks - Person of Interest (POI) complaint response - close-contact quarantine check. <p>Includes personal details such as full names, dates of birth, gender, contact details, quarantine periods, location of quarantine and printed reports of persons of interest and registered food businesses subject to compliance checks.</p> <p>Includes records created in business systems, such as C19C and JIRA.</p> <p>May include requests for health assistance, welfare assistance, medical assistance or police assistance and written records of communication and advice exchanged.</p>	<p>TEMPORARY</p> <p>Destroy 28 days after date of collection</p>

1. COVID-19 Pandemic

The function of managing COVID-19 related records that are unique to records managed under the function of Whole of Government Emergency Management. Records include border entry forms, border exemptions, quarantine registration forms, quarantine compliance checks and visitor and staff screening registers.

1.1 Emergency Management Response

The activities associated with specific emergency management response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Includes committees, taskforces and working groups, formal agreements, specific registers, safety plans, border entry forms and records in relation to the Covid Safe Application.

Class No.	Description of Records	Status and Disposal Action
1.1.8	<p>CHO Directions - Visitor and Staff Screening – Sign in Registers Records documenting visitors and staff entering a building, collected for the purpose of contact tracing as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, includes visitor sign in sheets, building security logs, and contractor logbooks.</p> <p>Includes data from check in applications, health screening forms and lists or registers containing personal contact details. Includes names, business names, dates, location, mobile phone number and arrival and departure time.</p>	<p>TEMPORARY Destroy 28 days after date of collection</p>
1.1.9	<p>CHO Directions - CRN Declaration Residents Completed declarations by residents of the CNR that states they have not been in a declared hot spot.</p> <p>Includes records created in business systems such as JIRA.</p>	<p>TEMPORARY Destroy 28 days after date of collection</p>
1.1.10	<p>COVID Safe App Data Records collected or generated through the operation of the COVIDSafe application which is downloaded/extracted for the purpose of supporting contact tracing.</p>	<p>TEMPORARY Destroy after 28 days, or immediately following the declaration of the end of the COVIDSafe data period, whichever is sooner</p>