



STATE OF ALASKA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT
DIVISION OF LIBRARIES, ARCHIVES & MUSEUM
ALASKA STATE ARCHIVES | RECORDS AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT
PO BOX 110571, Juneau, AK 99811-0571
Phone: (907) 465-2270
rims@alaska.gov

FILING AND STORING RECORDS

Filing and Storing Active Records

Active records are those records that are used regularly by your agency and need to be retained within your agency office for ease of retrieval.

With the increasing amount of information held across the state, it is important that records are filed accurately and consistently across all formats i.e. hardcopy, electronic and email. This guidance document provides rules and practical tools for you to improve the way you file records.

Organizing Filing Locations

A filing location is anywhere records are stored and accessed. It does not need to be a communal location - an individual's filing cabinet or desk drawer is included. Importantly, it also includes the locations where electronic records are stored e.g. shared drives on the network and your email folders.

One important thing to remember is not to hoard records at your desk after you have used them. Always return files to their proper storage location (as stated on the file) so others can access them when required.

To establish more efficient filing and storage of records within your agency, you should follow these rules (these apply to both active and inactive records storage within your agency):

Give all filing locations a unique number or other reference e.g. 1, 2, FC1 (Filing Cabinet 1), FC2 (Filing Cabinet 2), S1 (Shelf 1) etc...

1. Label all filing locations used to store records. NOTE: You may wish to draw a layout of your office showing where these storage locations are.
2. Write down where series of records are found (refer to your agency records retention and disposition schedule and all relevant general records retention and disposition schedules for these). Use the File Plan Template and File Plan Instructions at the end of this guidance to do this. These are also found separately on the [Records and Information Management homepage](#).
3. Label your active hardcopy files using the information in the next section "Label for Hardcopy Files."

Labels for Hardcopy Files

One key initiative to use, which will aid quick retrieval and re-filing in your agency, is to make sure that files are labeled with the relevant information.

All files should be labeled with the following information:

Title	Remarks	Example
File Code	State the file code as specified in your agency's file plan.	RM-001; LW-001-002
Series Title	State the records series title as stated on the records retention and disposition schedule and sub-series as found on your agency's file plan (if applicable).	School Construction Reimbursement File
RRDS No.	State the records retention and disposition schedule number relating to the records stored in the file.	05-125.1
RRDS Item No.	State the records retention and disposition schedule item number relating to the records held within the file.	4
Inclusive Dates	State the inclusive dates of the records that are held within the file.	1995 - 2000
Location	State the location of where the file should be kept - this will typically be the active location as stated on your agency's file plan.	FC2/3 (Filing Cabinet 2, Drawer 3)

Storing Inactive Hardcopy Records in Your Agency

Inactive records are records that are no longer used regularly by your agency but still need to be retained. These records should not be kept in your active filing locations and should be stored elsewhere in your agency either for the total retention period or until the records are transferred to a records center or the State Archives.

Labels for Storage Boxes

When storing inactive records, it is important that there is adequate information on the box to be able to identify the contents of the box without opening the box and examining the contents. All storage boxes should be labeled with the following information:

Title	Remarks	Example
Agency Box No.	State your own agency box number (if applicable).	
Department Name	State your department's name.	Department of Natural Resources
Division Name	State your division's name.	Division of Mining, Land & Water
Agency Name	State your agency's name.	Water Resources
Records Series (as stated on the relevant records retention and disposition schedule)	State the records series title as stated on the records retention and disposition schedule. Please ensure, where possible, that you put only one records series per box.	Dam Safety Files
RRDS No.	State the records retention and disposition schedule number relating to the records stored in the file.	10-452.1
RRDS Item No.	State the records retention and disposition schedule item number relating to the records stored in the file.	3
Inclusive Dates	State the inclusive dates for all records stored in the box.	2008 - 2010
Retain Until	State the date when the records will either be destroyed or transferred.	2011
Action	Choose either of these three options: a) Destroy b) Transfer to Records Center c) Transfer to State Archives	Transfer to Records Center
Location	State the storage location of the storage box.	Row 1, Unit 2, Shelf 3

File Plans

Records that are alike are called a record series and should be filed together. This makes it easier to identify information contained in these series and it also means that it is easier to identify records that need to be destroyed, transferred to a records center or transferred to the State Archives.

A file plan is a list of records series and sub-series and details the appropriate records retention schedule that applies to them and where these records are kept using the locations as described in page 1, **Organizing File Locations**.

A significant advantage of using a file plan is that it organizes records across all formats as it is based on the contents of the records. This means that all records should be filed in the same way whether they are in hardcopy, electronic or email.

How to Design a File Plan

You can use up to four levels of descriptors in your file plan.

Level	Title	Remarks	Example
1	Record Series	Your agency records retention and disposition schedule and any applicable general records retention and disposition schedule will give you the records series for the first level that you will need to create your agency file plan.	Alaskan Issuer Files (from the Division of Banking & Securities - Securities Section records retention and disposition schedule).
2	Sub-series	This will be a sub-series as part of the larger series.	Prospectus
3	Secondary sub-series	This is an additional sub-series. This is typically chronological, by surname etc...	2011; 2010; Smith, John
4	File	Free text - individual file. If the file is electronic or is an email, use the naming conventions as found in the separate guidance document <i>How to Name Electronic Files and Folders</i> .	

If there are paper records, a hardcopy file should be created with a label containing the information detailed on page 2, **Labels for Hardcopy files**.

If there are emails relating to a records series, an email folder should be created with the same title as the hardcopy file and sub-folders created to replicate the way the hardcopy file is arranged.

If there are electronic files that are retained, then an electronic folder should be created and it should reflect the arrangement or organization of the email folder/sub-folders and the hardcopy file.