



STATE OF ALASKA  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT  
DIVISION OF LIBRARIES, ARCHIVES & MUSEUM  
ALASKA STATE ARCHIVES | RECORDS AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT  
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## RECORDS RETENTION SCHEDULE CREATION AND UPDATES

### Introduction

A records retention schedule is a comprehensive list of record series stating the length of time each record type is to be maintained, along with their final dispositions. Schedules ensure records are retained as long as they are needed by a state agency for administrative, fiscal, legal, or historical purposes.

### What a schedule includes

A retention schedule lists the titles of records, describes their contents, defines retention periods (the length of time records must be maintained), and outlines final disposition instructions.

### Types of schedules

There are two types of schedules: General Schedules and Agency Specific Schedules. **General Schedules** are comprised of record series common to many government offices, and ensures consistent and standardized retention periods. **Agency Specific Schedules** are designed for records unique to an agency office. This guidance addresses agency specific records retention schedules only.

### Legal Justification

Alaska Statutes requires the Records and Information Management Service (RIMS) program of the Alaska State Archives to establish a records management program providing orderly management of current state and local public records. RIMS works directly with state agencies establishing and administering records management programs, and the development of effective and precise retention schedules is an essential duty of RIMS (Sec. 40.21.030. Duties of the state archivist):

- (b) In order to carry out the records management program, the state archivist shall
  - (10) establish standards for the preparation of records retention schedules providing for the retention of state records of permanent value and for the prompt and orderly disposition of state records no longer possessing administrative, legal, or historical value to warrant their retention;
  - (11) receive records retention schedules from the agencies and submit them to the attorney general for review and approval;

## RECORDS RETENTION SCHEDULE CREATION AND UPDATES

The responsibility of state agencies to create retention schedules falls under **Sec. 40.21.060. Duties of chief executive officers of state agencies:**

The chief executive officer of each state agency shall

(3) submit to the department, in accordance with the standards established by it, records retention schedules proposing the length of time which records having administrative, legal, or historical value shall be retained;

### Benefits of using retention schedules

When government agencies correctly use retention schedules to control and manage their records, they increase their efficiency reducing the possibility of incurring legal action for disposing of records improperly. The use of retention schedules ensures the agency will:

- Identify and preserve records of permanent historical value.
- Legally destroy records that have outlived their legal, fiscal, and/or administrative values.
- Use space effectively and save on the cost of new equipment or construction by systematically removing outdated records from file cabinets, office and storage space, and records centers.
- Increase efficiency by no longer having to handle obsolete materials.

### Establishing a Retention Schedule

Agency retention schedules are developed through a comprehensive analysis and appraisal process. Information included in each record series comes from inventory or audit forms, applicable laws and regulations, and consultations with archivists, legal counsel, and financial officers.

Check with your Records Officer to see if there are agency specific or general schedules already approved for your records. If you do not know who your Records Officer is, contact RIMS staff to provide contact information.

### The inventory/audit

If your records are not covered by retention schedules, you will need to collect information to develop a schedule by taking an inventory or audit. Records Audit forms and directions for both electronic and non-electronic records can be found on the RIMS website under Forms, [TO AUDIT/SURVEY RECORDS HELD](#).

Contact RIMS staff to set up an audit consultation or for further assistance in auditing your records at [rims@alaska.gov](mailto:rims@alaska.gov) or 907-465-2276.

## RECORDS RETENTION SCHEDULE CREATION AND UPDATES

### Analysis and appraisal

Once the audit is complete, use the collected information to establish values for each record series title and assign the retention periods. Analyze the information to decide, among other things, how long you will need the record for office use; whether or not the information is summarized elsewhere; and what laws or regulations might require you to hold the record for a specified period. You will also appraise the record to establish its administrative, fiscal, legal, or historical value. Since a record often has more than one value, these values are not mutually exclusive. Understanding the meaning of these different “values” is key to understanding the importance of using a records retention schedule, and, therefore, to operating a sound records management program.

- **Administrative value:** means the usefulness of a record to an organization in the conduct of its daily business. If records possessing administrative value were accidentally disposed of, it would directly affect an agency’s ability to carry out its duties.
- **Fiscal value:** the value of a record determined by a state and/or federal audit requirement, or by documenting an agency's financial transactions and obligations in the expenditure of public funds. Records with fiscal value include audit reports, bills of sale, receipts, and accounting records.
- **Legal value:** records containing evidence of legally enforceable rights or obligations of the government and its citizens, or ensuring compliance with relevant laws and regulations. Records with legal value may include maps and plans, permits and approvals, logs, indexes, and contracts.
- **Historical value:** the enduring value of records if the information they hold documents the development of government and its policies, provides unique evidence of the lives and activities of people, describes social and economic conditions, or records the development of community and business. Records with historical value may include tax rolls, deeds, building permits, census records, maps, and architectural drawings.

When you have completed each appraisal, fill in a minimum retention period in part 15, on the Record Audit Form. You may then return the completed audit forms to RIMS, and a records analysts will work with you to draft and finalize your retention schedules.

### Updating a Retention Schedule

RIMS staff can work with you, your Division Director, and your Records Officer to update existing retention schedules. Contact RIMS staff to schedule a consultation to review schedule changes. Be prepared to supply information for each record series being updated, including the analysis and appraisal values outlined above in *Establishing a retention schedule*.

# RECORDS RETENTION SCHEDULE CREATION AND UPDATES

## Format of retention schedules

Once RIMS staff works with you to update the retention schedule, they will provide an editable version of the schedule for your review. The body of the schedule may include the following items:

- **Agency Schedule #:** This number is found in the header section of the Records Retention Schedule and is unique to each schedule. The first two digits refer to the Department number; the next three digits to the agency ID number, and the last digit to the schedule update number since 2012. Example: 01-09.2 means:
  - 01: Office of the Governor
  - 09: Central Files
  - .2: 2nd update since 2012.
- **Item #:** The number on the schedule related to a specific record series.
- **Record Series Title:** The descriptive name appearing to the right of the item number.
- **Record Series Description:** The descriptive information referring to a group of similar records that are related as the result of being created, received, or used in the same activity, and that permits evaluation as a unit for retention scheduling purposes.
- **Arrangement:** Records arrangement descriptions may or may not be included under the Record Series Description. Records can be arranged alphabetically, numerically, alphanumeric, chronologically, etc.
- **Retention:** The length of time that records must be kept to meet administrative, fiscal, legal, or historical requirements.
- **Essential:** Records necessary to respond to an emergency; to reestablish normal operations after any such emergency; to protect the rights and interest of the agency and the individuals or entities served by the agency; to document the history of Alaska, its communities and its citizens; or that would require massive resources to reconstruct.
- **Retention Notes:** Retention notes include the type of action that should occur once the records have met their retention date. Other information includes:
  - **Cutoff period:** Date at which files should be closed to further additions, done at regular intervals (usually at the close of a fiscal or calendar year) to permit disposal or transfer.
  - **Record Disposition Instructions:** The final administrative action taken with regard to records, including destruction, transfer to another entity, or permanent preservation, at the end of the Retention period.
  - **Confidentiality:** Citations regarding records restricted from disclosure by statute, court order, or legally adopted rules and regulations.
  - **Retention citations:** State and federal citations that list retention periods in them.
  - **Office of Record:** The office responsible for maintaining the most complete set of a specific records series.

Records Retention Schedule				
Office of the Governor, Executive Offices, Central Files and Executive Office Staff		Schedule # 01-9.2	Agency ID #: 302	Page 2 of 2
Item #	Record Series Title and Description	Retention	Essential	Retention Notes
1	<b>Subject Files (Permanent Retention)</b> Consists of original correspondence backup and the signature authorization (green card) for all general correspondence sent from the Governor's Office. This series includes all high importance correspondence. File by subject (coded), then by date, then by addressee.	Permanent		Individually coded. Refer to Subject Code Index (Item #002) for retention and disposition requirements. Permanent, Intermediate, and Short-term retention is determined by Executive Office, in consultation with the State Archivist.
2	<b>Proclamations (Copy, Code 0118)</b> Subject coded copy, signature authorization card and original proclamation request with a reduced copy of signed proclamation. Arranged alphabetically by proclamation topic.	Permanent		Proclamations are posted on the Governor's web page. The Alaska State Library Information Services Section receives proclamations from the Office of the Governor and permanently retains the print copies. The Library also administers them on the website, archives.org, for additional access and backup purposes. In the event archives.org is no longer under contract with the State to provide its services, all State records and information will be transferred to the Alaska State Archives. Authority: AS 40.21.
3	<b>Subject Code Index</b> Numerical coding system for Governor's correspondence by subject, provided numerically and alphabetically.	Permanent		Current original is kept in office. A copy of the current and noncurrent codes is sent to the State Archives annually.

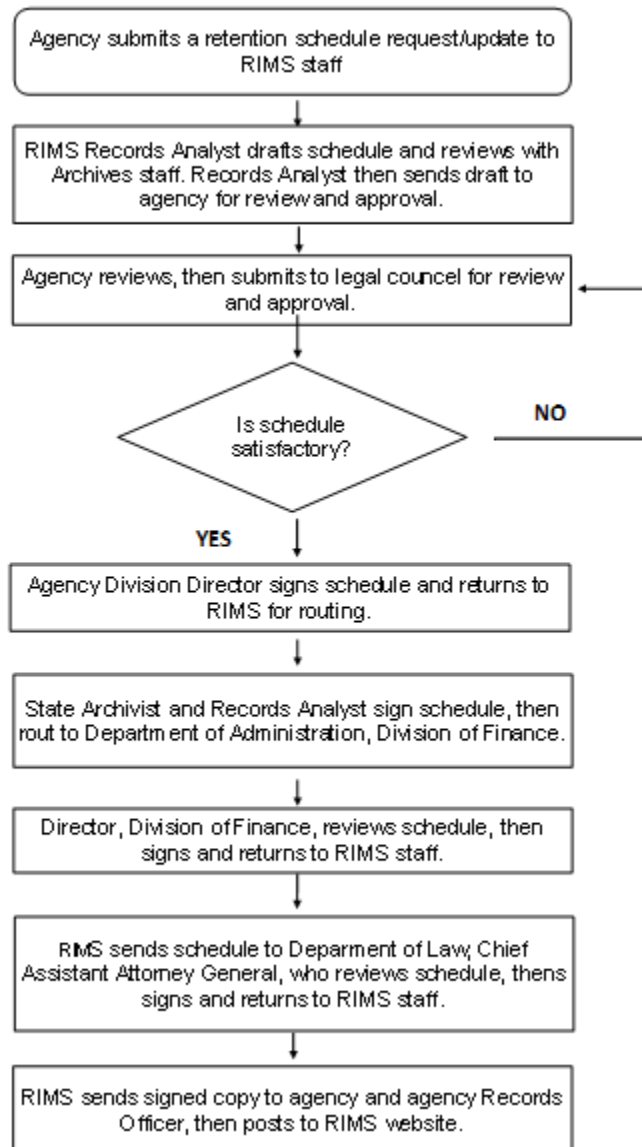
Inactive Records may be transferred to an approved records center at any time. Complete a Records Transfer List (RTL) and submit to your Records Officer for approval.  
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### Department of Law Review

Each agency is required to have their legal counsel review the retention schedule once agency and RIMS staff have a final draft available. Contact your Department of Law legal counsel to review your schedule. If you do not know who to contact, let your Records Officer or RIMS staff know and they will provide you with contact information. **All legal reviews must be documented in writing, and the documentation provided to RIMS upon final legal counsel review.** Retention Schedules *will not begin* the signature process until documented legal counsel review is provided.

### Retention Schedule Workflow



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### Signature Process

Once a final draft is approved by the agency, Department of Law, and RIMS, RIMS staff will send the schedule for signature approval. The signature process is as follows:

- RIMS staff sends to agency Division Director for signature. The signed schedule is then returned to RIMS.
- The State Archivist and Records Analyst sign the schedule.
- The schedule is sent to Department of Administration, Division of Finance for the Finance Director's review and signature. The signed schedule is then returned to RIMS.
- The schedule is sent to Department of Law, Chief Assistant Attorney General, for review and signature. The signed schedule is then returned to RIMS.
- RIMS staff will provide a fully signed copy to you and your agency Records Officer, and post the schedule to the RIMS webpage.

### For More Information

Contact the Alaska State Archives, Records and Information Management Service (RIMS), POB 110525, Juneau, AK 99811-0525. Telephone: 907-465-2276. Email: [rims@alaska.gov](mailto:rims@alaska.gov).