###### RECORDS DISPOSITION AUTHORITY

**<RDA Number>**

**<*Department>, <Division or Program*>**

**OPERATIONAL RECORDS CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM**

**ON-GOING SCHEDULE**

This records disposition authority was prepared by the <name of department> in <mmmm dd, yyyy>.

This records disposition authority applies to records created after <mmmm dd, yyyy>.

1. The Records Manager of the Department of Infrastructure has reviewed the ORCS and recommends approval by the Deputy Head or designate.

Records Manager, Date

Department of Infrastructure

1. The Territorial Archivist of Education, Culture and Employment approves the final disposition actions identified in this ORCS.

Territorial Archivist, Date

Education, Culture and Employment

1. RDA <RDA #> is approved for use, by:

Deputy Head or Designate Date

**SUMMARY OF CHANGES**

Changed sections are marked by an “X.” An “X” in the New column indicates that this is a new primary or secondary. An “X” in the discontinued column indicates that the primary or secondary has been discontinued and cannot be used to classify or schedule new records.

| **Primary Number** | **Secondary Number** | **New** | **Discontinued** | **Title** | **Scope Note** | **Cross References** | **Notes** | **Master File Schedule** | **Copy File Schedule** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
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**GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**

**RECORDS DISPOSITION AUTHORITY *<RDA Number>***

<***Department***>

<***Division or Program***>

**ON-GOING SCHEDULE**

#### Effective Date of the Records Disposition Authority:

<MMMM DD, YYYY>

**Purpose of Records Disposition Authority <RDA NUMBER>**

This records disposition authority is an integrated records classification system and records retention schedule for <name of department, division/program>. It follows the Operational Records Classification System (ORCS) standard format. As a classification system, ORCS is used to identify operational records, place them into logical groups, and provide a system for physical arrangement. A records classification system is designed to improve records retrieval and creation. It does this by standardizing the way that records are created, named, and organized by government employees. As a records retention schedule, ORCS assigns a timetable to the life cycle of all of the records described in the classification system. The retention schedules provide for the systematic and timely transfer of records to lower cost storage in a records centre. The retention schedule also provides for regular and systematic disposal of records through transfer to the Northwest Territories Archives, destruction, or another process.

A records management program supports the delivery of the Department’s programs and helps to protect both the interests of the public and of the GNWT. ORCS supports the Department’s records management program by providing a mechanism for identifying, controlling, and tracking the department’s records, and thereby reducing retrieval times. It helps to reduce duplication by identifying the department’s master record and by providing a mechanism for disposing of copies in a timely fashion. It supports the Department’s mandate by ensuring that records can be located and retrieved when required. ORCS also helps the Department meet its responsibilities under the *Archives Act,* the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, the *Financial Administration Act*, and other legislation.

Organizational Profile

The <department/division> was established in <date>. It reports to the Minister of <Minister’s title>. Previously the <division, program> existed as part of <name of old department>. The goals of the <department/division/program> are to <insert goals>. These goals are fulfilled through the delivery of various programs and services, including <list programs/services>. Service delivery is provided in Headquarters (<name of community, e.g. Yellowknife>) by <name of division> and in the regions by <name(s) of regional office(s) or division(s)>.

<Insert organizational chart for department/division>

Regulatory Environment

The following legislation and regulations govern the mandate of the <name of department> and the delivery of programs and services by the department, or otherwise affect the management of records by the Department.

* <list legislation>
* <list regulations associated with the legislation, if applicable.>

The following policies affect the mandate of the department, the delivery programs and services, and the management of records.

* <list policies>

The following standards and guidelines affect the management of records described in this ORCS.

* <list standards and guidelines, e.g. Generally Accepted Accounting Principles>

**Description of records**

This ORCS describes and schedules records relating to <name of programs, functions or divisions>. It includes records regarding <brief description that points to the different sections and/or primaries>. This ORCS applies to records in all media, as defined by the *Archives Act.*

**External Review and Advice**

While developing this ORCS, the department identified the requirement to consult with outside experts regarding the retention and disposition of the records. The following experts were asked to review or provide advice regarding this ORCS:

* <name of expert, position title, department or organization>. <Provide a summary of the reason why the expert was consulted.>
* <name of expert, position title, department or organization>. <Provide a summary of the reason why the expert was consulted.>

**Other records disposition authorities**

The department has the following approved records disposition authorities:

* <list schedules by RDA number, department, and division.>

The following records disposition authorities are repealed by the approval of this ORCS:

* <list schedules by RDA number, department, and division. Indicate if the records created under the old RDA will continue to be scheduled under the old authority, if they will be scheduled under the new ORCS, or if they will be scheduled using a One-Time Records Disposition Authority.>

#### Office of Primary Responsibility

The Office of Primary Responsibility (OPR) for this Records Disposition Authority is <name of division/section>.

**Definitions**

***Case File***

A file containing material relating to a specific action, event, person, project, location, etc., and which is filed by that name, project, location, etc. All case files in a particular series usually contain the same type of record material.

Copy File

A record that is a copy of and is maintained in addition to the master file. A copy file is kept for reference purposes and is not used or relied upon as the department’s official record of its actions, business transactions, decisions, policies, and approvals.

Master File

A record that is created or received, maintained, used, and relied upon as the department’s official record. A master file provides evidence of the department’s actions, business transactions, decisions, policies, and approvals.

***Office of Primary Responsibility (OPR)***

The program unit within a department that has primary responsibility for a category of records or holds the master copy of any records series. The OPR maintains the official master copy of the records in order to satisfy operational, financial, legal, audit, and other requirements. All other copies are considered duplicates and have a shorter retention period.

Record

A record of information, regardless of its form and characteristics, the means by which it was created and the media on which it may be stored and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes (a) a document, book, ledger, photograph, image, audiovisual recording, x-ray, map and drawing, and (b) a record created or stored in digital or other intangible form by a electronic means, but does not include software or a mechanism that produces records. (*Archives Act*, .S.N.W.T. 1999, c.21, s.2(2); S.N.W.T. 2007, c.2, s.2)

Subject File

The collection of record material on a specific subject placed together, usually in date order, within a single file folder.

**Abbreviations**

The following abbreviations have been used throughout this ORCS:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| A | Active Record | The record is required by the department or division on a regular basis. Because active records are used frequently, they should be kept in the office where they were created.  |
| AS/D | Archival Selection/Destroy | The record will be transferred to the Northwest Territories Archives for selection and appraisal. Those records not selected for archival preservation will be destroyed. |
| D | Destroy | The record will be destroyed in a manner that will prevent it from being reconstructed. |
| FD | Final Disposition | The final action taken with regard to a group of records after their semi-active phase has ended.  |
| FR | Full Retention | These records must be retained permanently by the department. The Northwest Territories Archives may also identify a copy of these records for archival preservation.  |
| Nil | Zero Years | The record will not be retained for any length of time during this phase in the life cycle, and proceeds directly to the next phase in its life cycle. |
| S/O | Superseded or Obsolete | Records for which no active retention period can be assigned because their retention is dependent upon the occurrence of some event. |
| SA | Semi-Active Record | A record that is no longer required for constant referral in the course of daily business, but which is still of some use to the department. The record may be required for occasional consultation and may be retained because of administrative or legal requirements. |

#### Full Retention Plan

The following secondaries have been designated for full retention by the department:

* <list secondaries. Give the primary number, secondary number, and secondary title.>

At the end of the semi-active period, the department will <describe how the department plans to maintain the records over time, including any plans to convert the records to another medium, such as microfilm, and any plans to destroy originals once they have been converted>.

**HOW TO USE ORCS <RDA number>**

#### Purpose and Scope

This Operational Records Classification System (ORCS) is a block numeric classification system and records retention schedule for <name of department/division>. ORCS describes and schedules operational records, which are those records that are created or collected in support of the Department’s mandated programs, and services. Operational records are contrasted with Administrative records, which are records that support common administrative or “housekeeping” functions, such as finance, human resources, information management, and building and equipment maintenance. Administrative records are classified and scheduled in the Administrative Records Classification System (ARCS). Together ARCS and ORCS provide a comprehensive description, classification system, and retention schedule for all of the records belonging to the Department.

#### ORCS as a Classification System

Classification systems are systems for organizing objects, concepts, or records. ORCS is a system for organizing records. ORCS follows the principle that information is classified from the general to the specific. As one moves down through the classification hierarchy, each level become more specific and definitive. This hierarchical structure creates a quick and easy way to access and retrieve information. It has three levels of records classification: sections, primaries, and secondaries. Departments may create lower classification levels, known as tertiaries and quaternaries, but these levels are not identified in the ORCS.

Sections

This ORCS is divided into <insert number of sections>sections. Sections classify and describe a subject or function at its broadest level, and consist of groups of related primaries. Each section is allotted a block or range of primary numbers. The sections in this ORCS are:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Primary Numbers | Section Title |
| <xxxx-yyyy> | <insert section title. If the ORCS consists of only one section, give the range of numbers applied to the ORCS and the title of the ORCS> |

Other ORCS belonging to the Department contain the following sections:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Primary Numbers | Section Title | RDA Number | **Approval Date** |
| <xxxx-yyyy> | <insert section title. If the ORCS consists of only one section, give the range of numbers applied to the ORCS and the title of the ORCS> | <YYYY-##> | <mmmm dd, yyyy> |

Primaries

Sections are divided into primaries, which classify specific subjects or functions. Each primary is assigned a unique title that identifies the function or subject matter of the records that are to be classified under the primary. The first primary is the general primary and contains records which cannot be classified into a more specific primary within the section, or which relate to more than one subject or function in the section. Primaries are usually arranged in alphabetical sequence, except for the first primary within the section. Each primary is assigned a four-digit primary number that uniquely identifies the primary. Gaps are left between each primary number so that the alphabetical arrangement of the primaries can be maintained if the ORCS is amended and new primaries are added.

Each primary has a scope note that describes the function or subject of the primary. It identifies the types of records that are to be classified in the primary, and may identify records that should not be classified in the primary. The scope note is designed to help users identify the correct primary and secondary when they classify records.

Cross references, or “see” references, are included in many primaries to point users to the correct primary in cases where there may be confusion between two primaries.

Additional notes may be used to explain how the primary should be used or implemented.

Secondaries

Primaries are divided into secondaries. Secondaries are used to classify specific series or types of records, such as policy and procedures, general and routine files, subject files, and case files. Each secondary is assigned a two-digit classification number. The primary and secondary numbers together create a number that uniquely identifies the secondary. Gaps are left between each secondary to allow for expansion. At minimum, records are classified to a primary and a secondary. Secondaries are usually arranged alphabetically, except for the two reserved secondaries (see below).

The secondaries that belong to each primary are listed in a table on each primary page.

There are two types of secondary numbers within ORCS. They are:

**Reserved Secondary Numbers:** Two secondary numbers have been reserved throughout ORCS. Secondary number -00 is always reserved for “Policy and Procedures” that relate to the function or subject of the primary. Secondary number -01 is always reserved for “General”, which is used to classify records that cannot be classified in one of the specific subject or case file secondaries. General files are not normally divided into tertiaries.

**Prescribed Subject or Case File Secondaries:** Subject secondaries are used for records about specific subjects. A subject file usually brings together records and information on one topic in order to facilitate information retrieval. Case file secondaries series of related pertaining to a specific time-limited entity, such as a person, event, project, transaction, product, or organization. The component records within each file in a case file series are generally standardized. Examples of case files include client files and personnel files. Most of the records created by an organization are case files. Specific secondaries are numbered from -02 through -99.

#### *Coded Series and Tertiaries*

Reserved, subject, and case file secondaries may be subdivided using codes or tertiaries.

**Coded Case File Series:** When a case file secondary is coded, the result is a coded case file series. Codes that may be used in a case file series include project numbers, employee numbers, case numbers, or some other code that is assigned to the case to distinguish it from similar records. Case file series are sometimes arranged by the full name or title of the case (e.g. person, event, project, transaction, product, or organization) but are, for the purposes of abbreviation and identification, more commonly arranged by a numeric or alphabetical codes (abbreviations) which correspond to the entities to which the files relate.

**Coded Subject File Series:** When a subject secondary is coded, the result is a coded subject file series. Although case files are the most common example of coded series, codes may also be used to arrange subject secondaries when coding will facilitate retrieval.

**Tertiary Number and Title:** When a reserved, subject, or case file secondary requires further subdivision, a tertiary number may be added. The tertiary number is added to the primary and secondary numbers to form a complete file number. It is important to note that records classified under tertiary numbers must meet the retention requirement of the secondary under which they are classified. If they do not, a new secondary is required.

The 01 General secondary is not usually divided into tertiaries. The usual rule is that if three to five documents on a topic accumulate in the General secondary, a file, or tertiary, should be opened under a specific secondary.

#### Records Retention and Disposition Schedule

Retention schedules in ORCS are assigned to each secondary. Schedule information for each secondary is provided in the six columns to the right of the secondary numbers and titles. There are two sets of retention schedule columns: Master File and Copy File. The master file retention schedule is used to schedule the department’s master record, while the copy file retention schedule is used to schedule copies other than the master record. Both the master file and copy file retention schedules are divided into three columns. These columns are headed A (active), SA (semi-active), and FD (final disposition). They correspond with the active, semi-active, and inactive phases of the record life cycle.

**Active Retention Period Column:** The active (A) column describes the event that closes a record and the length of time a record should be retained in active storage in the office after the records have closed. Active records are records which are referred to regularly and required constantly for current use in the conduct of business and which need to be retained and maintained in the office space and equipment of the user. Closed records may be kept in active storage for a period because they are needed for reference purposes.

**Semi-Active Retention Period Column:** The semi-active (SA) column indicates the length of time a record should be retained in the semi-active or inactive phase of its life cycle. Semi-active records are records that are not required constantly for current use and need not be maintained in the expensive office space and equipment of the agency responsible for them. Semi-active records retain administrative, operational, fiscal, audit, or legal value. Storage of semi-active records in the Records Centre until all values have lapsed results in considerable savings.

The active and semi-active retention periods ensure that records are kept as long as required to meet any operational, administrative, legal, audit, or other primary values, which the records may hold. By retaining records for the retention periods specified in the retention schedule, departments will comply with statutory, regulatory, and policy requirements to maintain certain types of information and data.

**Final Disposition Column:** The final disposition (FD) column identifies the final action that will be taken when the records have completed their active and semi-active phases. The purpose of the final disposition column is to ensure that those records that have residual historical values are preserved and that those records that have no historical values are destroyed.

#### How to Read the Records Retention and Disposition Schedule

An example of a retention schedule is presented below. The first two columns, labeled “Secondaries,” contain the secondary classification numbers and secondary titles that belong to the primary. The next three columns are labeled “Master File,” and contain the master file retention schedules, described above. The final three columns, labeled “Copy File,” contain the copy file retention schedules, also described above. Retention schedules are read across the table from left to right.

The master and copy file retention schedules for the reserved secondaries, -00 and -01, are usually standardized across all of the primaries.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| SECONDARIES | MASTER FILE | COPY FILE |
|  | A | SA | FD | A | SA | FD |
| 00 | Policy and Procedures | S/O | 10 | AS/D | S/O | Nil | D |
| 01 | General | 2 | Nil | D | 2 | Nil | D |
| 10 | License Applications | 2 | 8 | D | 2 | Nil | D |
| 20 | Project Files | S/O\* | 10 | AS/D | S/O | Nil | D |

S/O\* = project completed or terminated

Active Column

The active (A) column contains an abbreviation, a number, or a combination of an abbreviation and a number. The abbreviation identifies the retention trigger for the records classified into a particular secondary. A retention trigger is an event that closes the records and starts the retention period described in the retention schedule. The two most common triggers are Superseded/Obsolete and End of the Fiscal Year.

**S/O:** Superseded or obsolete. S/O is a retention trigger that describes an event that closes a record. S/O retention triggers are assigned for records for which an active retention period cannot be predetermined because the closure of the file is dependent upon the occurrence of some event. For instance, policy and procedures files close when the policy or procedures is replaced (superseded) or is no longer in effect (obsolete). An asterisk next to the S/O (S/O\*) indicates that there is a note attached to the retention schedule that describes the event that triggers the closing of the record. In the example above, secondary –20 has a retention trigger of S/O\*. A note below the table indicates that the files will remain open until the project has been completed or until the department decides to end the project.

**End of the Fiscal Year:** If the active column only contains a number, then the files close at the end of the fiscal year (March 31st for GNWT departments). The files will be retained in active storage after it closes for the number of years shown by the number in the active column. In the example above, secondary -01 closes at the end of the fiscal year, and is retained for an additional two years in the office before moving on to the next phase in its life cycle.

Occasionally the active column will show both a retention trigger and the number of years that the records should be retained in the office after they have closed, e.g. S/O+2. The purpose of placing both a retention trigger and the length of the active period in the active column is to show that the records should not be transferred to off-site storage as soon as they are closed.

Semi-Active Column

The semi-active column shows the length of time in years that the records may be kept in off-site storage in a records centre. In the examples above, records classified into secondary -00 can be kept in off-site storage for ten years. If departments do not transfer the records to the Records Centre right away, the length of time that they remain on site after the semi-active phase has begun will be subtracted from the semi-active retention period. For instance, if a department decides to keep closed policy files (-00) in the office for two years after the policy has been superseded; the files will be kept in the records centre for just eight years. The records will be kept for a total of ten years after they have closed.

**Nil:**  records are retained for zero years during this phase of the life cycle. The records proceed directly from their active phase to final disposition.

Final Disposition

The final disposition column contains an abbreviation that describes the fate of the records when they have completed the active and semi-active phases of the life cycle. There are three possible final dispositions:

**AS/D:** Archival Selection/Destroy. The records are transferred to the custody of the Northwest Territories Archives, where the records will either be selected for preservation as a historical record or appraised as having no historical value and destroyed.

**D:** Destroy. The records will be destroyed.

**FR:** Full retention by the Department. The Department will take action to permanently preserve the records.

Total Retention Period

The total retention period for a record consists of the addition of the active and semi-active periods. For instance, in the example above, records classified into secondary -00 are retained for a total of ten years after they have been superseded or have become obsolete (S/O+10 years). A policy file that closes in 2000 will be retained until the year 2010, when it will be transferred to the NWT Archives. License applications are retained for a total of 10 years after the end of the fiscal year during which the records were created (2 years active + 8 years semi-active). A license application that was created during the 1999/2000 fiscal year closes on March 31, 2000. It becomes eligible for destruction on March 31, 2010.

<Insert Section Title>

<Insert Block of Primary Numbers assigned to Section>

<Insert Section Scope Note. Example: The <section title> section classifies and schedules records relating to <function or subject>. It contains information about <describe significant programs, services or series of records>. It also includes information about <describe less significant programs, services, or series of records>.

<Insert Section cross references. Section cross references should point to another section or records disposition authority>

<Insert Block of Primary Numbers Assigned to Section or ORCS>

LIST OF PRIMARIES

<TITLE OF SECTION OR ORCS>

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| <primary #> | <list primary titles> |
|  |  |
|  |  |
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**<PRIMARY TITLE> <PRIMARY NUMBER>**

<Secondary Scope Note>

<**List Cross References>**

<**NOTE:** Insert procedural notes>

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **SECONDARIES** | **MASTER FILE** | **COPY FILE** |
|  | **A** | **SA** | **FD** | **A** | **SA** | **FD** |
| 00 | Policy and Procedures | S/O | 7 | AS/D | S/O | Nil | D |
| 01 | General | 2 | Nil | D | 2 | Nil | D |
| <##> |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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<insert explanations of retention triggers (S/O\*)>