

Recordkeeping for Good Governance Toolkit

The Disposal Schedule for
common administrative
records

Accra, Ghana

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Program

1. What is Disposal?
2. What is a disposal schedule
3. Intro to the PARBICA Model Disposal Schedule
4. Implementing the schedule
5. Practice using the schedule
6. How the schedule could be used in your country / organisation

Disposal Schedule

Recordkeeping for Good Governance Toolkit

GUIDELINE 7: Disposal Schedule



 PARBICA
Pacific Regional Branch International Council on Archives

- A system for making accountable decisions about when to dispose of files

Disposal Schedule

Recordkeeping for Good Governance Toolkit

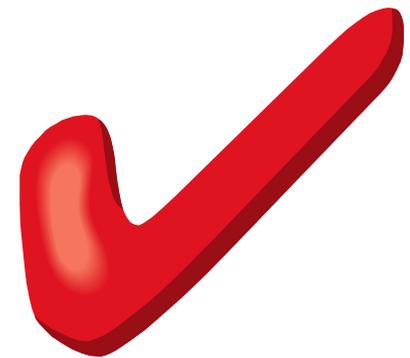
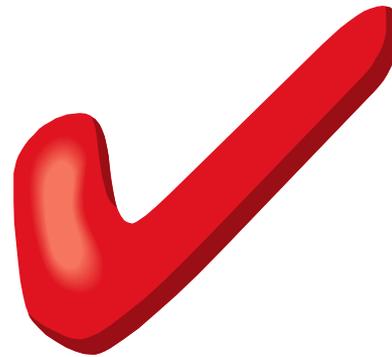
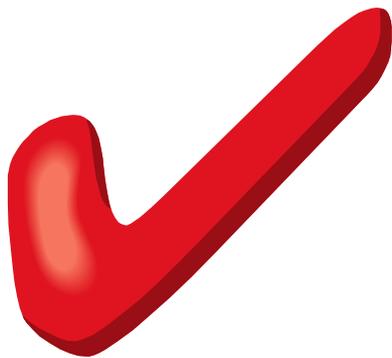
GUIDELINE 8: Adapting and Implementing the Administrative Disposal Schedule



 **PARBICA**
Pacific Regional Branch International Council on Archives

- A system for making accountable decisions about when to dispose of files

Having and implementing a disposal schedule ticks many recordkeeping capacity boxes.





Question 6: Does the organisation know what its recordkeeping requirements are?

- Recordkeeping requirements:
- Are a need to keep evidence of an organisation's actions and decisions
- Are usually identified in laws, policies, procedures, reviews etc
- Should be documented
- Should be regularly reviewed

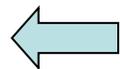


Question 8: Does the organisation abide by the government's rules for deciding when its records can be destroyed?

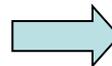
- Disposal rules:
- Require the government archivist's agreement
- Should help to preserve historical records
- Should be based on the organisation's recordkeeping requirements

What is disposal?

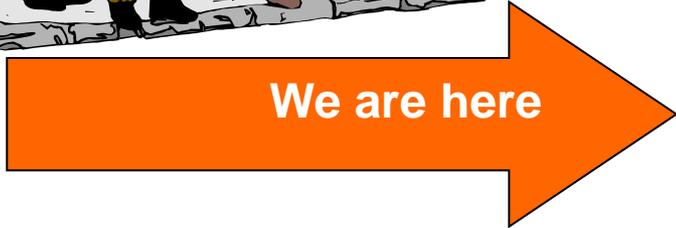
- ‘Disposal’ means what happens to a record when it reaches the end of its life:



Archive
OR
Destroy



Information management life-cycle



Creation & Control

Distribution

Active Use & Management

Inactive Storage

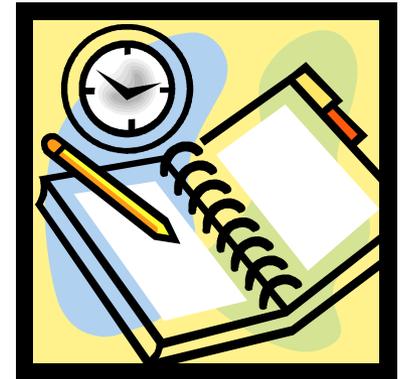
Final Disposal Decision

Destruction

Permanent Retention

What is a disposal schedule?

- A tool for people who look after records
- A timetable that tells you *when* a record is ready for *disposal* and *what* should happen to it
 - *When* = retention period - how long it is kept
 - *What* = disposal action – archive or destroy





When do you apply a disposal schedule to a record?

- Retention periods (how long you keep it) and disposal actions (what finally happens to it) are only *triggered* when a record becomes **INACTIVE**
- You can apply the schedule to existing **INACTIVE** records
- You can apply the schedule to **NEW** records when you create them, so you know what will happen to them when they become inactive

What does INACTIVE mean?

- The record is closed
- No papers are being added to it
- It may still be used for reference



Group activity: Let's
discuss why using a
schedule is a good
idea



Benefits of using a disposal schedule

- Save space
- Save money
- Save time (retrieval)
- Meet legal requirements
- Keep the right records
- Save records from accidental destruction
- Get rid of records you don't need at the right time



The PARBICA model administrative Disposal Schedule



The PARBICA model administrative Disposal Schedule

- Developed by the working group
- For use by Pacific Island government organisations
- For *common administrative records*:
 - The records that every organisation creates for managing itself
 - E.g. finance, personnel, information management
- It can't be used for core business records
- It is a model Disposal Schedule and you will have to adapt it to fit your organisation



What records does the Disposal Schedule cover?

- The common administrative functions covered by the Disposal Schedule are:
 - Assets and Resources Management
 - External Relations
 - Financial Management
 - Information Management
 - Personnel and Establishment
 - Strategic Management

What does the Disposal Schedule look like?

- A separate section for each common administrative function
- It is a table that lists:
 - Activity
 - Description of activity
 - Examples of records
 - Disposal action
 - Minimum retention period
 - What disposal criteria were used to decide the disposal action





Let's look at a page of the schedule

- The name of the function is at the top of the page with a description
- Each line in the table is what is called a disposal class
 - Function + activity + description + example + disposal action + retention period = disposal class
- Each disposal class has a reference number - this is just a shorthand way of talking about the class

How did we decide the disposal actions?

- We developed *disposal criteria* that helped us assess the value of the functions and activities



Disposal criteria

- Two basic characteristics that determine whether or not records should be archived –
 - evidence value
 - Information value



Group activity: Disposal actions – Archive/Destroy





Permanent Retention Exercise

- Why would you keep a record forever?



Destruction exercise

- Why would you destroy a record?



Disposal criteria

- Let's look at the disposal criteria developed by the PARBICA working group



Implementing the schedule



- This means applying the Disposal Schedule to your records
- You can *sentence* existing INACTIVE records and you can *tag* new records with their disposal class
- You don't have to be using the Toolkit Records Plan, because the Disposal Schedule can be applied to any filing system, but using the Record Plan might make it easier to use the schedule
- Remember the Disposal Schedule is only used for administrative records!

Applying the Disposal Schedule to existing records (1)

- To do this you need to list your records!
- You need to know *at least*:
 - The file name or type of record
 - The date of the first paper
 - The date of the last paper



Listing records

- Not all records have to be listed one by one
- You can list 'batches' or bundles of the same kind of record as 1 group; e.g. a bundle of receipts or a batch of invoices
- Files and folders of papers must be listed one by one



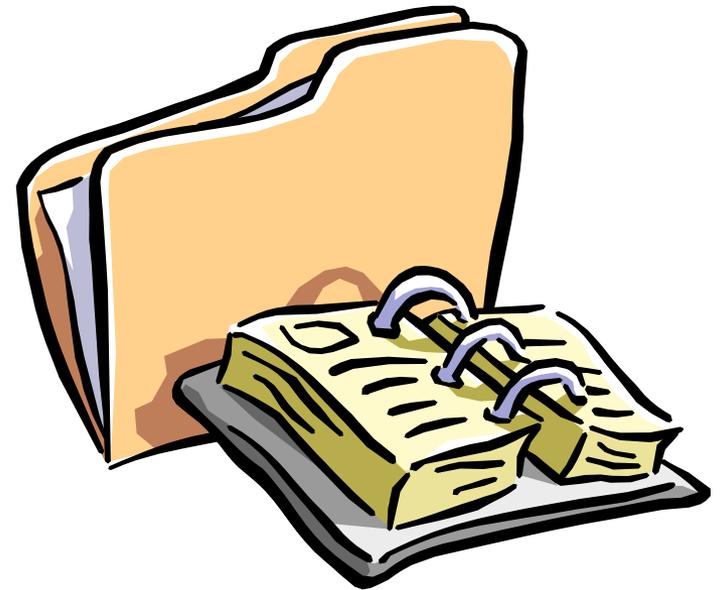
Applying the Disposal Schedule to existing records (2)

- Go through the list of records and find the class in the schedule that best fits the records
- Calculate the retention date using the date of last paper of the record and the retention period in the schedule
- Write the disposal class reference and the disposal date on the list



Calculating the disposal date

- Last date + retention period = disposal date
- For example:
 - Last date 2002
 - Retention period 7 years
 - = disposal date 2009



Finding the right disposal class



- Ask these questions:
 - What is the record called?
 - What is the record about?
 - What processes caused the record to be created or received?
 - Who is using or will use the record?
- Check the activity, description, and examples to see what best fits the record

What happens if a record fits in more than one disposal class?

- If the disposal action for one class is DESTROY and the other is ARCHIVE, then use the class that has the ARCHIVE disposal action
- If both disposal classes have a disposal action of DESTROY, but the retention periods are different, then use the class with the *longest* retention period





Applying the Disposal Schedule to records when they are created (1)

- You can *assign* retention periods and disposal actions to records when they are created so you know what their disposal will be
- Use the schedule to decide the disposal class
- Add the disposal action, retention period and reference number to your file list or index
- Add the disposal action, retention period and reference number to the file

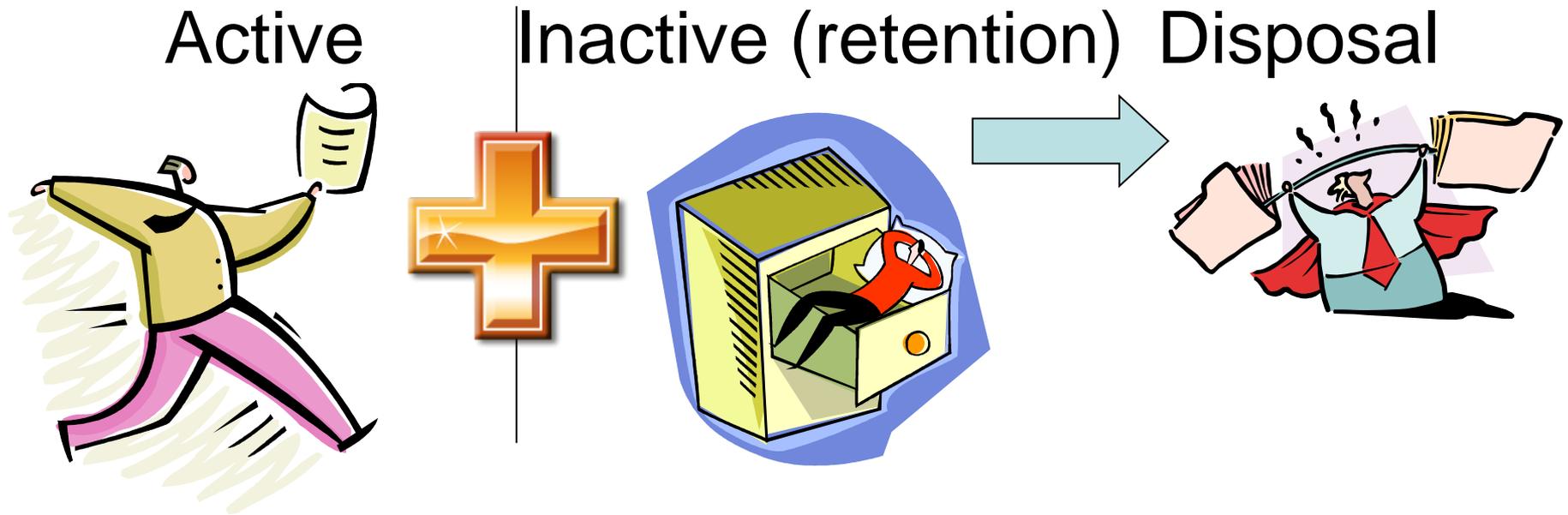


Applying the Disposal Schedule to records when they are created (2)

- You can only do this when records are created if you have an active records management program
- It will be easier to do if you are using the Toolkit records plan
- You will still have to wait until they are **INACTIVE** to calculate their final disposal date



Remember that disposal date is calculated once records are inactive



E.g. Opened 1999 ⇒ Closed 2003 ⇒ Inactive for 7 years ⇒ Disposal 2010

When do records become inactive?

- Different for different records/activities; e.g.
 - a personnel/staff file becomes inactive when employment ceases
 - A budget file becomes inactive at the end of the financial/fiscal year



When does a record become inactive?

- Think about the records you create and receive and think about when they become inactive/closed
- What is the trigger for this – an event/action or a time?



Group activity: Let's identify some trigger points for when records become inactive



Inactive triggers

- When a person ceases employment
- When a project is over
- When a case is closed
- At the end of a financial year
- When the file part or volume is full and a new part is opened





Activating retention periods and disposal actions

- Do disposal once a year, perhaps at the end of the year
- Separate inactive records from active records
- Separate records to be archived from records to be destroyed
- If possible organise them by disposal date (year)
- When the retention period is up, then get the records ready for disposal





Steps to carrying out disposal actions

- Create lists of the records that are ready for disposal – separate lists for Archive and Destroy records
 - Use your existing lists and separate out the records that are ready for disposal into
- Send out the lists to the people who use the records to get *authority to dispose*
- Then prepare records for transfer to National Archives or destruction



What's authority to dispose?

- The Disposal Schedule has already been agreed by the Permanent Secretary and the National Archives
- But now you are actually either destroying records or transferring them to National Archives
- You have to make sure that the records are not still required for reference by someone in the organisation
- It's ok to put off the disposal of a record if it is required for reference because of a specific case or event

Preparing records for transfer to Archives

- Ask your National Archives what instructions they have for boxing, listing and transferring the records
- Keep a copy of the list of records you have transferred
- Keep the paperwork associated with the transfer (such as transfer or deposit agreement)



Destroying records

- Keep lists of destroyed records
- Don't just put them in the rubbish!
- Burn them or shred them



Group activity: Let's practice applying the schedule



Apply the schedule to a list



- Use the list I will hand out
- Find the disposal class in the schedule that best fits the record
- Add the disposal action, retention period, and schedule reference number to the blank fields in the list
- Calculate the disposal date and add it to the field in the list for disposal date

How you can use the model Disposal Schedule



Adapting the model Disposal Schedule

- Before it can be used, the model Disposal Schedule must be adapted to fit local requirements
 - Add to or change the descriptions and examples so they are more relevant – use actual examples of records created in your government organisations
 - Adapt retention periods to follow local legislation
 - Remove classes that are not relevant

One schedule for all departments, adapted by the National Archives

- Advantages:
 - 1 disposal schedule for administrative records that all departments can use
 - Less time to adapt and approve the schedule than if each department did it individually
 - Consistent retention periods across government



Group activity: Let's discuss how you might use the disposal schedule in your offices



Summing up