



Retention Schedules

For State Government Paper & Electronic Records



THE GEORGIA ARCHIVES

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The Georgia Archives
Records and Information Management Services
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RIMS8: Retention Schedules for State Government Records

Using This Retention Schedule

This retention schedule lists records series by record category and title. The record categories used in this schedule are:

Common

- Accounting
- Administration
- Administrative Support
- Audits
- Budgeting
- Information Technology
- Legal
- Payroll
- Personnel
- Property
- Records Management
- Library, Archives and Museums
- Security and Safety

The record categories include records, such as budgeting and accounting records, which are created by **all** state agencies. The records listed are not necessarily found in the physical custody of the originating or responsible office, department or official. Law, usage, or space requirements may dictate their storage elsewhere. For example, records stored by an agency in the State Records Center are in the physical custody of the Georgia Archives, but are legally the records of the originating agency.

All retention schedules stated in this schedule are the *legally* required retention periods for which the records shall be maintained under normal business conditions. By statute,

“Approved retention schedules, once approved, shall be authoritative, shall be directive, and shall have the force and effect of law” (O.C.G.A. § 50-18-92(a)).

Litigation, audit, or special department requirements may require the maintenance of the records for a longer period of time.

Each schedule has an individual number to be used for reference and identification on transmittals and disposal forms. This number consists of a category number hyphenated with a record number. For example, Deduction Authorizations are record number 002 in the Payroll Category 07. The schedule number for Deduction Authorizations is 07-002.

What To Do About Records Not Covered by This Schedule

A state agency may have unique or specialized records not addressed by this Schedule. These records must be included in the agency’s retention schedules. By statute, the following requirements for state agency records management are established:

- O.C.G.A. § 50-18-94 (3): “Establish and maintain an active and continuing program for the economical and efficient management of records and assist the department [Archives] in the conduct of records management surveys;”
- O.C.G.A. § 50-18-94 (4): “Implement records management procedures and regulations issued by the department;”
- O.C.G.A. § 50-18-94 (5): “Submit to the department, in accordance with the rules and regulations of the department, a recommended retention schedule for each record series in its custody, *except that schedules for common-type files may be established by the department*. No records will be scheduled for permanent retention in an office. No records will be scheduled for retention any longer than is absolutely necessary in the performance of required functions. Records requiring retention for several years will be transferred to the records center for low-cost storage at the earliest possible date following creation;”
- O.C.G.A. § 50-18-94 (7): “Designate an agency records management officer who shall operate a records management program.” This designee will serve as the primary point of contact for the Archives.

Procedure

1. A government entity shall not dispose of (i.e., destroy or give away) any public record except in accordance with a retention schedule **approved by the State Records Committee and the Georgia Archives**.
2. At the agency’s request, the Georgia Archives will assist state agencies in implementing an enterprise-wide records management program including the review of retention schedules.
3. Requests for retention review should be sent to the Records and Information Management Services (RIMS) office of the Georgia Archives, 5800 Jonesboro Road, Morrow, Georgia 30260. The request should provide a title for the records series; a short description of the series; and the recommended minimum retention. RIMS will respond promptly to all such requests for review.
4. Every two years, the Retention Schedule will be reviewed and updated, adding new recommendations and revising others. The new edition will be distributed to all state agencies.

What To Do About Records Denoted as Permanent by This Schedule

In accordance with O.C.G.A. § 45-13-46, the director of the Division of Archives and History hereby certifies that any record identified as “Permanent” in this schedule is necessary to document the history, organization, functions, policies, decisions, or procedures of the agency or office. Such records must be placed for permanent preservation in the state archives when no longer in current use by the agency or office.

A state agency will have certain records in its custody that are denoted as permanent by this schedule. These records should be periodically transferred to the Georgia Archives for preservation as part of the state’s historical record. This retention schedule **does not** authorize the transfer of permanent records to any repository other than the Georgia Archives. **Agencies wishing to transfer records to any other repository must first secure the permission of the Georgia Archives.** By statute, the following responsibilities of the Georgia Archives are established:

- O.C.G.A. § 45-13-41 (1): “Ensure the retention and preservation of the records of any state or local agency with historical and research value by providing for the application of modern and efficient methods to the creation, utilization, maintenance, retention, preservation, and disposal of records;”
- O.C.G.A. § 45-13-41 (2): “Provide an archival and records' depository in which to assemble and maintain the official archives and other inactive records of the state not in current and common use;”

In addition, the following requirement of state officials are established by statute:

- O.C.G.A. § 45-13-46: “Any state, county, or other official is authorized, in his or her discretion, to turn over for permanent preservation in the Division of Archives and History any official books, records, documents, original papers, manuscript files, newspaper files, portraits, and printed volumes not in current use in his or her office. Any record created or received by a state agency, constitutional officer, or Speaker of the House of Representatives in the performance of a public duty or paid for by public funds and *certified by the director of the Division of Archives and History as necessary to document the history, organization, functions, policies, decisions, and procedures of the agency or office shall be placed for permanent preservation in the Division of Archives and History when no longer in current use by the agency or officer.* The Secretary of State shall provide for the preservation of said materials; and, when so surrendered, copies thereof shall be made and certified by the director upon the application of any person interested, which certification shall have the same force and effect as if made by the officers originally in custody of them and for which the same fees shall be charged.”

Who Owns Title to the Records?

The Georgia Archives operates two facilities—the State Archives and the State Records Center.

Records denoted by this schedule as permanent are to be transferred to the State Archives facility for preservation as part of the state’s historical record. Records denoted as temporary by this schedule may be stored at the State Records Center until eligible for destruction.

The State Records Center offers agencies a cost-effective, secure, off-site storage facility that frees valuable office space from use as filing storage. By statute, the following requirements for transfer of title are established:

- O.C.G.A. § 50-18-98 (a): “Title to any record transferred to the Georgia Archives as authorized by this article shall be vested in the department [Archives]. The department [Archives] shall not destroy any record transferred to it by an agency without consulting with the proper official of the transferring agency prior to submitting a retention schedule requesting such destruction to the State Records Committee. Access to records of constitutional officers shall be at the discretion of the constitutional officer who created, received, or maintained the records, but no limitation on access to such records shall extend more than 25 years after creation of the records.”
- O.C.G.A. § 50-18-98 (b): “Title to any record transferred to the records center shall remain in the agency transferring such record to the records center.”

State Archives. No active records may be transferred to the Archives. Once records have been transferred to the State Archives, they become the property of the Georgia Archives as the legal custodian of the state’s historical record. These records may be viewed by the public and by the agency during the operating hours of the Archives, **but may not be removed**. Should an agency require copies of its records, the Archives will be happy to provide them.

Protecting Vital Records

Georgia Code [O.C.G.A. 50-18-91 (10)] defines "Vital records" as “any record vital to the resumption or continuation of operations, or both; to the re-creation of the legal and financial status of government in the state; or to the protection and fulfillment of obligations to citizens of the state.” Records series identified as “Vital” in this schedule contain information that needs to be duplicated and stored offsite in case of an emergency or disaster. The information in question would be the most recent version of the record and would be necessary for the agency to continue its statutory function after a disaster. Examples of this are: the current list of unpaid taxes, current security passwords and protocols, current contracts and leases, recent deposit records, etc.

How to Read the Schedules

The seven columns in the schedules are:

RECORD TITLE	The common name of the records and the information contained therein. Record title is also used to describe the function that created the records.
DESCRIPTION	A brief summary of the records.
RETENTION	The period of time the record or information must be kept.
LEGAL CITATION	The specific Federal and/or State Code which stipulates the retention period. This information may not exist for certain records.
RETENTION CLASSIFICATION	One of four general classifications used to group records by disposition. The four classifications are:

These classifications can also serve as a guideline when selecting appropriate record formats (paper, film, electronic).	TRANSITORY	Information of a temporary nature that does not meet the requirements for longer retention prescribed by O.C.G.A. § 50-18-94(1).
	TEMPORARY-SHORT TERM	Information that needs to be retained less than fifteen years.
	TEMPORARY-LONG TERM	Information that needs to be retained for fifteen years or longer, but which does not need to be retained permanently.
	PERMANENT	Information that for legal, historical, fiscal, or administrative reasons needs to be retained forever.

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS Procedural instructions provided by the Georgia Archives to assist agencies in implementing permanent retention classifications. These instructions may also be connected to some temporary records that might contain historical information as well as to vital records needed in the event of a disaster.

NUMBER Individual number used to identify the records. This number should be grouped with the category number (the number following the header at the top of the page) to form a schedule number. For example, Deduction Authorizations are record number 002 in the Payroll Category (number 07). Therefore, the schedule number for Deduction Authorizations is 07-002.

After records designated for permanent retention have become inactive, they should be transferred to the

Contact Information

If you have questions about this schedule or about records management issues, please contact us.

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