

Glossary of Terms

[| Table of Contents](#) | [| Subject Index](#) | [| Forms Index](#) | [| Status Document](#) |

Schedules: [| 1](#) | [| 2](#) | [| 3](#) | [| 4](#) | [| 5](#) | [| 6](#) | [| 7](#) | [| 8](#) | [| 9](#) | [| 10](#) | [| 11](#) | [| 12](#) | [| 13](#) | [| 14](#) | [| 15](#) | [| 16](#) | [| 17](#) | [| 18](#) | [| 19](#) | [| 20](#) | [| 21](#) | [| 22](#) | [| 23](#) | [| 30](#) | [| 31](#) | [| 32](#) |

access

the availability of, or the permission to consult or obtain, records.

access category

a numerical designation assigned to three types of BLM information (public, discretionary, non-public) that defines the releasability of the records. See BLM Manual 1278 for a detailed explanation.

case files

records in any media that document a specific action, event, person, place, project, or other matter.

cutoff

the division of a file, regardless of media, at regular periodic intervals to facilitate continuous disposal or transfer of the series; also called "file break."

confidential record

a record or information that requires protection against unauthorized disclosure.

disposition

the actions taken with regard to noncurrent records following their appraisal, whether by transfer to a records center for temporary storage, transfer to NARA, donation to an eligible depository, reproduction on microfilm, or destruction.

disposition authority

legal approval by NARA (and in some cases by GAO) empowering an agency to transfer permanent records to NARA or to carry out the disposal of temporary records.

Federal Records Center (FRC)

a facility operated by NARA for the economical storage and servicing of records pending their ultimate disposition.

file

(1) an accumulation of records or nonrecord materials arranged according to a plan; (2) a unit, such as a folder, microform, or electronic medium, containing such records or nonrecord materials; (3) storage equipment, such as a filing cabinet; (4) in electronic recordkeeping, an organized collection of related data, usually arranged into logical records that are stored together and treated as a unit.

General Records Schedules (GRS)

a NARA-issued records disposition schedule governing the disposition of specified records common to several or all federal agencies.

National Archives and Records Administration (NARA)

the agency responsible for appraising, accessioning, preserving, and making available permanent records.

nonrecord materials

government-owned informational materials excluded from the legal definition of records or not meeting the requirements of that definition. Included are extra copies of documents kept only for convenience or reference, stocks of publications and of processed documents, and library or museum materials intended solely for reference or exhibition.

office of record

an office designated as the official custodian of records for specified programs, activities, or transactions of an organization; see "record copy."

Glossary of Terms

official file copy

see "record copy."

permanent records

records appraised by NARA as having enduring value because they document the organization and functions of the agency that created or received them and/or because they contain significant information on persons, things, problems, and conditions with which the agency dealt. Permanent records are ultimately transferred to the legal custody of NARA.

Privacy Act

a law providing that no agency shall disclose any record that is contained in a Privacy Act "system of records" by any means of communication to any person or to another agency, except pursuant to a written request by, with the prior written consent of, the individual to whom the record pertains.

Privacy Act system of records

a group of any records under the control of any agency from which information is retrieved by the name of an individual or by some identifying number, symbol, or other identifier assigned to the individual. See Section C, of this Appendix for a listing of current Privacy Act systems of records.

record copy

the official or record document that is so marked or recognized, complete with enclosures or related papers; also known as "official file copy." The record copy does not have to be an original unless specified.

record series

file units or documents arranged according to a filing system or kept together because they relate to a particular subject or function, result from the same activity, document a specific kind of action, take a particular physical form, or because of some other relationship arising out of their creation, receipt, or use. Generally handled as a unit for disposition purposes.

records schedules

a document governing, on a continuing basis, the mandatory disposition of recurring records series of an organization or agency; also known as a records control schedule, retention schedule, or records disposal schedule.

reserved

There are groups of item numbers marked as "reserved" throughout the schedules. These items are place-holders to be used for future records or records that have been recently moved to another schedule.

series

see "record series."

scheduling

the process of developing a document that provides mandatory instructions for what to do with records (and nonrecord materials) no longer needed for current government business.

temporary records

information that does not have permanent value and which will ultimately be destroyed. Even though records may have very lengthy retention periods, they are still considered temporary records.

transfer

the act or process of moving records from one location to another, especially from office space to agency storage facilities or to federal records centers, from one federal agency to another, or from office or storage space to NARA for permanent preservation.

unscheduled records

records for which no disposition authority has been approved by NARA.

Glossary of Terms

vital records

records containing information that is essential for: (1) emergency operations during a disaster or a national emergency; (2) resumption and/or continuation of operations; (3) reestablishment of the legal, financial, and/or functional status of an agency; and (4) determination of the rights and obligations of individuals and/or corporate bodies with respect to an agency.

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