



Records & Information Management Service (RIMS)

Filing and Storing Records

Authority: AS 40.21 (Public Records Act) and 4 AAC 59 (Archives & Records)

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1. FILING AND STORING ACTIVE RECORDS

Active records are those records that are used regularly by your agency and need to be retained within your agency office for ease of retrieval.

With the increasing amount of information held across the State, it is important that records are filed accurately and consistently across all formats i.e. hardcopy, electronic and email.

This guidance document provides rules and practical tools for you to improve the way you file records.

1.1 Organizing Filing Locations

A filing location is anywhere records are stored and accessed. It does not need to be a communal location - an individual's filing cabinet or desk drawer is included. Importantly, it also includes the locations where electronic records are stored e.g. shared drives on the network and your email folders.

One important thing to remember is not to hoard records at your desk after you have used them. Always return files to their proper storage location (as stated on the file) so others can access them when required.

To establish more efficient filing and storage of records within your agency, you should follow these rules (these apply to both active and inactive records storage within your agency):

Rule 1: Give all filing locations a unique number or other reference e.g. 1, 2, FC1 (Filing Cabinet 1), FC2 (Filing Cabinet 2), S1 (Shelf 1) etc...

Rule 2: Label all filing locations used to store records.

NOTE: You may wish to draw a layout of your office showing where these storage locations are.

Rule 3: Write down where series of records are found (refer to your agency Records Retention Schedule and all relevant General Records Retention Schedules for these).

Use the *File Plan Template* and *File Plan Instructions* at the end of this guidance to do this. These are also found separately on the RIMS homepage.

Rule 4: Label your active hardcopy files using the information in section 1.2 below.

Rule 5: Label your storage boxes for inactive records using the information in section 2.1 below.

1.2 Labels for Hardcopy Files

One key initiative to use, which will aid quick retrieval and re-filing in your agency, is to make sure that files are labeled with the relevant information.

All files should be labeled with the following information:

Title	Remarks	Example
File Code*	State the file code as specified in your agency's file plan.	RM-001; LW-001-002
Series Title*	State the records series title as stated on the Records Retention Schedule and sub-series as found on your agency's file plan (if applicable).	School Construction Reimbursement File
RRS No.*	State the Records Retention Schedule Number relating to the records stored in the file.	51604
RRS Item No.*	State the Records Retention Schedule item number relating to the records held within the file.	4
Inclusive Dates*	State the inclusive dates of the records that are held within the file.	1995 - 2000
Location*	State the location of where the file should be kept - this will typically be the active location as stated on your agency's file plan.	FC2/3 (Filing Cabinet 2, Drawer 3)

* Mandatory

2. STORING INACTIVE HARDCOPY RECORDS IN YOUR AGENCY

Inactive records are records that are no longer used regularly by your agency but still need to be retained. These records should not be kept in your active filing locations and should be stored elsewhere in your agency either for the total retention period or until the records are transferred to a Records Center or the State Archives. Where they should be stored is shown on your agency Records Retention Schedule. You can find this on the RIMS homepage at: http://www.archives.state.ak.us/for_state_agencies/for_state_agencies.html.

2.1 Labels for Storage Boxes

When storing inactive records, it is important that there is adequate information on the box to be able to identify the contents of the box without opening the box and examining the contents.

All storage boxes should be labeled with the following information:

Title	Remarks	Example
Agency Box No.	State your own agency box number (if applicable).	
Department Name*	State your department's name.	Department of Natural Resources
Division Name*	State your division's name.	Division of Mining, Land & Water
Agency Name*	State your agency's name.	Water Resources
Records Series* (as stated on the relevant Records Retention Schedule)	State the records series title as stated on the Records Retention Schedule. Please ensure, where possible, that you put only one records series per box.	Dam Safety Files
RRS No.*	State the Records Retention Schedule Number relating to the records stored in the file.	101001
RRS Item No.*	State the Records Retention Schedule item number relating to the records stored in the file.	3
Inclusive Dates*	State the inclusive dates for all records stored in the box.	2008 - 2010
Retain Until*	State the date when the records will either be destroyed or transferred.	2011
Action*	Choose either of these three options: a) Destroy b) Transfer to Records Center c) Transfer to State Archives	Transfer to Records Center
Location*	State the storage location of the storage box.	Row 1, Unit 2, Shelf 3

* Mandatory

3. FILE PLANS

Records that are alike are called a record series and should be filed together. This makes it easier to identify information contained in these series and it also means that it is easier to identify records that need to be destroyed, transferred to a Records Center or transferred to the State Archives.

A file plan is a list of records series and sub-series and details the appropriate records retention schedule that applies to them and where these records are kept using the locations as described in section 1.1 above.

A significant advantage of using a file plan is that it organizes records across all formats as it is based on the contents of the records. This means that all records should be filed in the same way whether they are in hardcopy, electronic or email.

3.1 How to Design a File Plan

You can use up to four levels of descriptors in your file plan.

Level	Title	Remarks	Example
1	Record Series	Your agency Records Retention Schedule and any applicable General Records Retention Schedule will give you the records series for the first level that you will need to create your agency file plan.	Alaskan Issuer Files (from the Division of Banking & Securities - Securities Section Records Retention Schedule).
2	Sub-series	This will be a sub-series as part of the larger series.	Prospectus
3	Secondary sub-series	This is an additional sub-series. This is typically chronological, by surname etc...	2011; 2010; Smith, John
4	File	Free text - individual file. If the file is electronic or is an email, use the naming conventions as found in the separate guidance document <i>How to Name Electronic Files and Folders</i> .	

If there are paper records, a hardcopy file should be created with a label containing the information detailed in section 1.2 above.

If there are emails relating to a records series, an email folder should be created with the same title as the hardcopy file and sub-folders created to replicate the way the hardcopy file is arranged.

If there are electronic files that are retained, then an electronic folder should be created and it should reflect the arrangement or organization of the email folder/sub-folders and the hardcopy file.

No.	Section	Remarks	Example
1	Header	Enter your department's name and then your division or your agency name.	Department of Public Safety: Aircraft Section File Plan
2	Page of	Enter the current page number and the total number of pages in the file plan.	Page 2 of 6
3	File Code	Enter the file code reference - this is usually an alpha-numeric number. This is generate for the top level descriptor or records series	TP-001
4	Series Title	<p>Enter the series of records covered - this should be the same as the series title in your agency records retention schedule and/or one of the General Records Retention Schedules.</p> <p>Include details of how records are arranged e.g. alphabetically, by year then surname etc...</p> <p>This records series can be further broken down into sub-series. Each sub-series will have its own file code based on the</p>	<p>TP-001 Airport Project Files (records series)</p> <p>TP-001-01 Plans (sub-series)</p> <p>TP-001-02 Specifications & Drawings (sub-series)</p> <p>TP-001-03 Correspondence (sub-series)</p> <p>Arranged by project title.</p>
5	RRS#	Enter the number of the Records Retention Schedule that covers the records series stated in section 4.	122502
6	Item#	Enter the item number in the records retention schedule that covers the records series stated in section 4.	5
7	Active	Enter the location where the records are stored when they are still considered active i.e. still used frequently.	<p>CF11/3 (Filing Cabinet 11, Drawer 3)</p> <p>S4 (Shelf 4)</p>
8	Inactive	Enter the location where records are stored when they are considered inactive i.e. not used frequently but are still required to be kept as per a records retention schedule. Frequently these are boxed and stored in a separate storage area.	<p>Storage Room 1, Shelf 2</p> <p>AAA Archives</p>

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Function		Records Retention Schedule (RRS)		Location		
File Code	Series Title	RRS#	Item#	Active	Inactive	
RM-001	Records Management Reference Requests Arranged chronologically.	54805	1	FC12/2	-	
RM-002	Records Retention Schedules					
RM-002-01	Current Retention Schedules	54805	2	FC3/1	-	
RM-002-01	Obsolete Retention Schedules Arranged by department and then by schedule number.					
RM-003	Records Retention Schedule Development Files Arranged by department the division then by agency ID.	54805	3	FC1/1-3 P: RM01	-	
RM-004	Records Transfer Lists Arranged by agency ID then numerically.	54805	5	FC7/3&4	Room 1, Shelf 2	
GA-005	Special Projects					
GA-005-01	RIMS Manual	100.3	78	P: RM04/2011/ Brown	-	
GA-005-02	SharePoint Arranged by subject.					
GA-006	Training Materials					
GA-006-01	Face-to-Face	100.3	92	P: RM04/2011/ Brown	-	
GA-006-02	Online Modules					
GA-007	Personnel Files Arranged by surname.	100.3	101	FC1/2 & FC9/1	-	