

# **Guidelines on Bulk Relocation of Government Records**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Records are valuable resources of the Government. Government bureaux and departments (B/Ds) which will undergo relocation should implement measures to protect their records in the relocation exercise.
- 1.2 These guidelines provide advice on procedures to be adopted for the relocation of records. The guidelines are not exhaustive but are provided to ensure that the records to be relocated are properly handled and under safe custody before, during and after the relocation.
- 1.3 For relocation of classified records, B/Ds may consult Security Bureau (see *Section 6.1(c)*).

## **2. RECORDS RELOCATION PLAN**

- 2.1 Records relocation should be planned ahead. The arrangement of records relocation should be part of the departmental relocation plan.
- 2.2 The roles and responsibilities of the affected branches/divisions in a B/D and each officer involved in the records relocation should be clearly defined. A schedule should also be worked out to implement the tasks as set out in *Sections 3 to 5* below. Relevant documentation should be properly kept for future reference.
- 2.3 Paragraph 21 of General Circular (GC) No. 2/2009 entitled “Mandatory Records Management Requirements” (accessible at <http://ref.ccg.hksarg/csogc/en/c200902e.pdf>) requires B/Ds to designate an officer not below the rank of Executive Officer II or equivalent to oversee the bulk relocation of records. B/Ds should consider assigning officers of a higher rank to coordinate and

oversee the relocation of records having regard to the scale and complexity of their relocation exercises.

### **3. PREPARATION BEFORE THE RELOCATION**

#### **3.1 Preparing an accurate records inventory**

3.1.1 An accurate inventory of the affected records should be prepared. The records inventory maintained in accordance with paragraph 6 of GC No. 2/2009 will serve such purpose. In brief, a records inventory on files should at least include (i) file title; (ii) file reference number; (iii) date opened and date closed; and (iv) storage location. B/Ds may consider maintaining the inventory in an electronic form, such as in an Excel file, to facilitate future updating.

3.1.2 Physical check of the records against the inventory should be conducted before the relocation to ensure accuracy.

#### **3.2 Disposing of time-expired records**

3.2.1 To minimise records to be relocated, time-expired records should be disposed of before the relocation as far as possible.

3.2.2 Based on the records inventory, B/Ds should conduct a review for the purpose of disposing of time-expired records according to Records Management Publication No. 4 “General Administrative Records Disposal Schedules” (accessible at [http://grs.host.ccgo.hksarg/file/2.4.4\\_P4\(Oct\\_2013\).pdf](http://grs.host.ccgo.hksarg/file/2.4.4_P4(Oct_2013).pdf)) for administrative records and approved records disposal schedules for programme records<sup>1</sup>.

3.2.3 In accordance with paragraph 18 of GC No. 2/2009, **B/Ds must obtain the prior agreement of the Government Records Service**

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<sup>1</sup> B/Ds should refer to Chapter 4 of Records Management Publication No. 1 “A Practical Guide to Records Scheduling and Disposal” (accessible at [http://grs.host.ccgo.hksarg/file/2.4.1\\_P1.pdf](http://grs.host.ccgo.hksarg/file/2.4.1_P1.pdf)) for the procedures on establishing records disposal schedules for their programme records.

**(GRS) Director before they destroy any government records.**

3.2.4 The “Flow Chart Showing Major Steps to Dispose of Records” extracted from Appendix III to GC No. 2/2009 is reproduced at the **Annex** for reference.

3.2.5 For those records not yet ready for disposal and having low retrieval rate, B/Ds may make use of the intermediate storage service for inactive records provided by the Records Centre of GRS in accordance with approved records disposal schedules<sup>2</sup>.

**3.3 Compiling a list of records to be relocated**

3.3.1 After completing *Sections 3.1* and *3.2* above, a “Records Relocation List” covering records to be relocated should be compiled based on the records inventory. In addition to the information contained in the records inventory, the following items (to be updated at appropriate time) may be included -

- (i) date of move;
- (ii) branch/division;
- (iii) destination (e.g. building, floor, room number); and
- (iv) records container number.

3.3.2 To facilitate monitoring and control on the day of move, a simplified list without showing details of records stored in a container should be prepared. This list should also include the responsible officer, his/her post and contact telephone number.

**3.4 Identifying appropriate packing materials**

3.4.1 Records should be put in suitable containers (e.g. carton boxes) for transportation.

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<sup>2</sup> For more information on the use of Records Centre services, please refer to Chapter 5 of Records Management Publication No. 1 (accessible at [http://grs.host.ccgo.hksarg/file/2.4.1\\_P1.pdf](http://grs.host.ccgo.hksarg/file/2.4.1_P1.pdf)). All inactive records transferred to the Records Centre for intermediate storage should be covered by approved records disposal schedules.

3.4.2 Records in formats such as magnetic tapes, CDs/DVDs, microfilm may need appropriate protective containers/materials (e.g. plastic cases, poly bubble padding) to protect them from damage during transit.

### 3.5 Packing records

3.5.1 Ample time should be allowed to pack records, particularly when a large quantity of records is involved.

3.5.2 Records containers should not be overloaded to avoid damage of records stored therein.

3.5.3 An officer should be assigned to check the records stored in the containers against the “Records Relocation List”.

3.5.4 Records containers should be properly sealed and labelled (please see **Section 3.6** below for labelling records containers) after inventory check.

3.5.5 The “Records Relocation List” should be updated after packing.

3.5.6 Packed containers which may easily be damaged, e.g. carton boxes, should not be stacked on floor as far as possible to minimise the risk of water damage to the records stored therein in case of flooding or water seepage.

3.5.7 Magnetic tapes/floppy disks should not be stored near any magnetic substance to avoid corruption of data.

### 3.6 Labelling records containers

3.6.1 Records containers should be clearly and consistently labelled with at least the following information -

- (i) records container number;
- (ii) B/D and branch/division;
- (iii) destination (e.g. building, floor, room number); and

(iv) B/D contact telephone number.

3.6.2 Adhesive labels should be used to label at least the top and one side of the records container.

### 3.7 Preparing records storage equipment in the new office premises

3.7.1 Proper records storage equipment (e.g. cabinets, racks) should be ready in the new office premises for storing records to be moved from the old office premises.

3.7.2 Records storage locations in the new office premises should be assigned beforehand so that records moved from the old office premises can be unpacked as soon as possible after the relocation in order to minimise any interruption to normal office operation.

### 3.8 Designating a team of staff to monitor the move

3.8.1 A team of staff should be designated to monitor the move of records containers on the day of relocation to ensure that no containers are left unattended inside/outside the old/new office premises, or are tampered with during the move.

3.8.2 It is recommended that members of the team should be deployed at strategic locations in the old and new office premises to escort the removal contractor's staff during the move. The number of staff in the team should be one of the operational considerations of B/Ds.

3.8.3 Members of the team should be properly briefed beforehand and furnished with the necessary information, including but not limited to -

- (i) an action check list;
- (ii) the "Records Relocation List"; and
- (iii) a contact list of team members, supervisory officers, responsible officers in the old and new offices, removal contractor, etc.

## **4. ACTIONS ON DAY OF RELOCATION**

### **4.1 Monitoring the move**

- 4.1.1 The designated team mentioned in *Section 3.8* above should stand by prior to the arrival of removal contractor.
- 4.1.2 The responsible staff should ensure that only records containers on the “Records Relocation List” are allowed to be taken out from the old office premises by the removal contractor.
- 4.1.3 The responsible staff should ensure that the records containers loaded to removal contractor’s vehicle(s) match with those on the “Records Relocation List”.
- 4.1.4 When arriving at the new office premises, the responsible staff should ensure that all records containers are unloaded from the vehicle(s).
- 4.1.5 Records containers should not be left unattended during the move.
- 4.1.6 The responsible staff should check that the records containers relocated to the new office premises match with those on the “Records Relocation List”.
- 4.1.7 Any case of missing records containers discovered during the move should be reported immediately to the supervisory officer so that prompt action can be taken to trace the containers in question.

## **5. AFTER RELOCATION**

### **5.1 Unpacking records containers in the new office premises**

- 5.1.1 To minimise interruption to normal office operation, records containers should be unpacked as soon as possible after arrival at the new office premises.

5.1.2 A team of staff should be assigned to unpack the records containers.

## 5.2 Conducting records inventory check

5.2.1 When unpacking a records container, staff should check its content against the “Records Relocation List” to see if there are any records missing or damaged.

5.2.2 Any case of irregularity should be reported immediately to the supervisory officer for prompt action.

5.2.3 Unpacked records should be loaded to designated storage equipment as soon as possible.

5.2.4 The records inventory should be updated accordingly.

## 5.3 Conducting check in the old office premises

5.3.1 After removal, all records storerooms in the old office premises should be thoroughly checked to ensure that no records have been left there.

## 6. ENQUIRY

6.1 For further enquiry on the guidelines, please contact -

(a) General issues on the Guidelines

Senior Executive Officer (Records Management)<sup>1</sup>  
(Tel. no.: 2195 7789)

(b) Disposal of records/Records Centre services

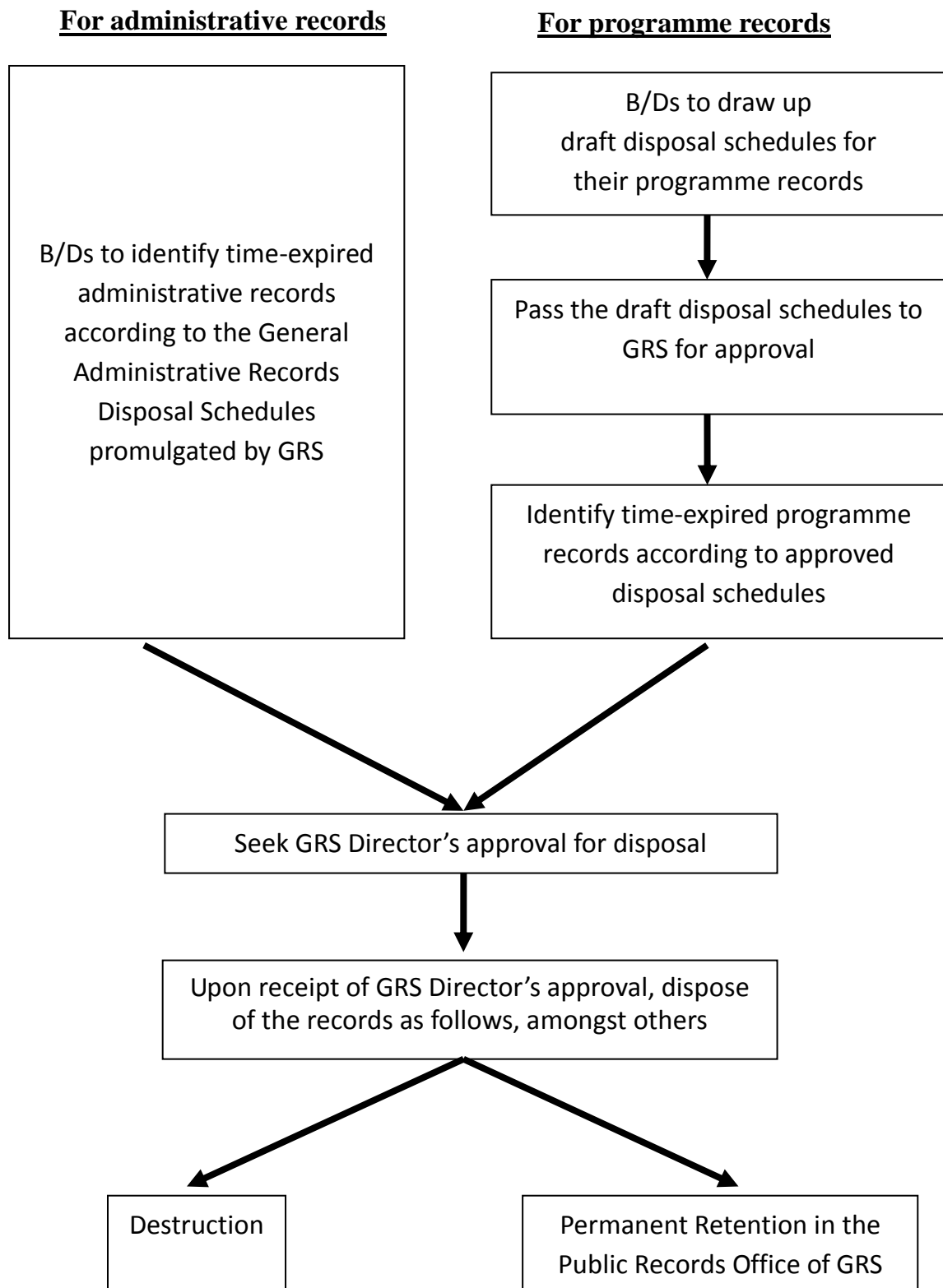
Senior Executive Officer (Records Management)<sup>2</sup>  
(Tel. no.: 2460 3760)

- (c) Issues relating to classified records  
Senior Executive Officer (Emergency Support Unit) /  
Security Bureau  
(Tel. no.: 2810 2227)

**Government Records Service**  
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### Flow Chart Showing Major Steps to Dispose of Records



*(Note: Extracted from Appendix III to GC No. 2/2009)*