

Guidelines on Bulk Relocation of Government Records

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 According to General Circular (GC) No. 3/2024 “Management of Government Records”¹, bureaux and departments (B/Ds) have the responsibility to ensure the safe custody of their records, including the time before, during and after the bulk² relocation of records.
- 1.2 These guidelines set out the measures to be adopted to ensure that records are properly handled before, during and after relocation; and are applicable to paper records and records in other physical format or media (such as tapes, CDs / DVDs and microfilm)³. These guidelines are not exhaustive but are provided to give B/Ds a general framework in dealing with bulk relocation of records. B/Ds should devise supplementary guidelines or measures where appropriate.
- 1.3 For the relocation of classified records, B/Ds should refer to the relevant provisions in the Security Regulations and may consult the Security Bureau (see *Section 4.1(c)*), where necessary.

2. RECORDS RELOCATION PLAN

- 2.1 B/Ds should plan ahead the bulk relocation of records and work out a relocation plan. The records relocation plan should be divided into three stages covering the following aspects where appropriate and relevant

¹ GC No. 3/2024 “Management of Government Records” is accessible at the records management theme page on Central Cyber Government Office at https://grs.host.ccgo.hksarg/file/c2024e_Mgt_of_Gov_Records.pdf or on the Government Records Service’s website at https://www.grs.gov.hk/pdf/c2024e_Mgt_of_Gov_Records.pdf.

² B/Ds are encouraged to follow these guidelines as far as possible when relocating a large quantity of records. As a general reference, a large quantity of records can be defined as at least 20 linear metre of records or 500 files.

³ B/Ds are encouraged to take note on the proper handling and storage of records in other physical format or media as stipulated in the guidelines of GRS such as “A Handbook on Preservation of Electronic Records” accessible at [https://grs.host.ccgo.hksarg/erm/pdf/A_Handbook_on_Preservation_of_Electronic_Records_\(July_2013\).pdf](https://grs.host.ccgo.hksarg/erm/pdf/A_Handbook_on_Preservation_of_Electronic_Records_(July_2013).pdf) or [https://www.grs.gov.hk/pdf/A_Handbook_on_Preservation_of_Electronic_Records_\(July_2013\)\(Eng_only\).pdf](https://www.grs.gov.hk/pdf/A_Handbook_on_Preservation_of_Electronic_Records_(July_2013)(Eng_only).pdf) and GRS’ Records Management Publication No. 5 “The Microfilming User Manual” accessible at [https://grs.host.ccgo.hksarg/file/2.4.5_P5\(2021-12\).pdf](https://grs.host.ccgo.hksarg/file/2.4.5_P5(2021-12).pdf) or [https://www.grs.gov.hk/pdf/P5\(2021-12\)\(Eng_only\).pdf](https://www.grs.gov.hk/pdf/P5(2021-12)(Eng_only).pdf).

documentation should be properly maintained for future reference.

(I) PREPARATION BEFORE THE RELOCATION

(a) Assigning roles and responsibilities

B/Ds should designate an officer not below the rank of Executive Officer II or equivalent to oversee the bulk relocation of records, which is a mandatory requirement stipulated in paragraph 37 of GC No. 3/2024. Where necessary, B/Ds may assign officers of higher ranks to oversee the relocation or put together a dedicated team to coordinate and monitor the records relocation exercises.

B/Ds should clearly define the roles of the responsible staff (e.g. the overseeing officer, the dedicated team and the branch(es) / division(s) / section(s) involved) for the bulk relocation exercise and ensure that all responsible staff thoroughly understand their responsibilities.

(b) Taking stock on records to be relocated

B/Ds should take stock on the records to be relocated. After the stock-taking, movement of the records to be relocated should be prohibited as far as possible. If the borrowing of records is absolutely necessary, the responsible staff should document the movement of the records clearly. In addition, the officer borrowing the records should ensure that the records would be relocated to the new premises, either by returning the records before packing for the relocation begins or keeping the records in safe custody and returning them on the new premises after the relocation.

(c) Preparing records storage equipment on the new premises

Proper records storage equipment (e.g. cabinets and racks) should be made ready on the new premises prior to the commencement of the relocation so that records relocated can be placed at the designated storage locations as soon as possible.

(d) Compiling a list of records to be relocated

A list of records to be relocated should be compiled, which should include at least four items, namely (i) file name, (ii) file reference number, (iii) records container number, and (iv) new storage location. B/Ds may add other items (such as the name of branch / division / section concerned) as

appropriate.

(e) Packing records and labelling records containers

Records should be packed securely in appropriate containers. Records in formats such as magnetic tapes, CDs / DVDs and microfilm may require suitable protective packaging materials or containers (e.g. bubble wrap or plastic cases) to protect them from damage in transit.

After packing the records, the records containers should be sealed properly and labelled clearly. Information such as the records container numbers and new storage locations should be included on the labels. The sealed records containers should be kept in safe custody.

(II) ACTIONS ON THE DAY OF RELOCATION

(f) Monitoring the relocation

B/Ds should deploy adequate staff to monitor the removal contractor in loading, transporting and unloading the records containers according to the list of records to be relocated to ensure that no records containers are left unattended inside or outside the old or new premises, left behind on the moving trucks, or tampered with during the relocation.

Any case of missing records containers discovered during the relocation should be reported immediately to the supervisory officer(s) so that prompt actions can be taken to trace the records containers. The follow up actions in **Section 3.1** should also be taken.

(III) FOLLOW UP ACTIONS AFTER THE RELOCATION

(g) Conducting records inventory check

After unpacking the records containers and placing the records at the designated storage locations on the new premises, a records inventory check should be conducted immediately. The responsible staff should also check the empty records containers to ensure that no records are left behind.

Damage to any records found after the relocation should be reported immediately to the supervisory officer(s) for prompt actions. In case any loss of records is discovered, the follow up actions in **Section 3.1** should be taken.

(h) Updating the records inventory

The storage location on the records inventory should be updated immediately after the relocation.

3. LOSS OF RECORDS

- 3.1 **Any loss of records discovered before, during or after the relocation should be immediately reported to the Departmental Records Manager and GRS simultaneously, i.e. within two weeks upon the discovery of the case(s) (including suspected case(s) which B/Ds may continue with the search of the missing records after reporting),** which is a mandatory requirement stipulated in paragraph 38 of GC No. 3/2024 “Management of Government Records”.

4. ENQUIRY

- 4.1 For further enquiries on the guidelines, please contact:-

- (a) General issues on the guidelines
Senior Executive Officer (Records Management)1
(Tel. no.: 2195 7789)
- (b) Issues relating to classified records
Senior Executive Officer (Emergency Support Unit) /
Security Bureau
(Tel. no.: 2810 2227)

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