

824. A transfer of records **custody** means that the day-to-day management responsibility of records will be transferred from the Government to a quasi-government or private organization. In such a case, the Government retains the intellectual and other property rights over the records while the receiving organization holds the records physically and is responsible for their management and use. A transfer of custody does not change the Government's legal ownership of these records which are still subject to government regulatory requirements.
825. A transfer of records **ownership** means that the Government will relinquish all legal, physical and intellectual rights over the records which will no longer be subject to the in-house regulatory or administrative requirements of the Government.
826. When a bureau or department outsources to a private party to deliver services on its behalf, ownership of the records arising from delivery of the services or contract supporting services is normally vested with the Government. It is the responsibility of the bureau or department to ensure that the private party will meet government recordkeeping requirements.
827. Any bureau or department involved in an organizational or administrative change that requires the transfer of either the custody or ownership of government records should inform the GRS in advance for authorization and appropriate disposal action. It is the role of the GRS to ensure that records needed by the Government or important to the community would remain under the ownership of the Government.
828. The transferring bureau or department is required to make recommendations to the GRS in respect of the future custody and ownership of the records and, as appropriate, to include any conditions to be attached to the transfer of the records.
829. Sometimes to meet the record needs of the organization which takes up the transferred or sold government functions, it may be appropriate to adopt the following alternatives :
- a. Making copies available to the organization;
 - b. Making arrangement for temporary transfer of custody of records that will be returned to the Government after an agreed period of time; or
 - c. Allowing the organization to access the records while the Government keeps custody.
830. Detailed requirements concerning the transfer of custody and ownership of records to non-government agencies are discussed in ***Records Management Publication No. 2 - Managing Active Records.***

Transfer of Employment Related Personal Data

836. When the functions of a bureau or department are outsourced, privatized or corporatized, those employment related personal data which were collected for purposes directly related to employment may be transferred to the non-government agencies. Practical steps should be taken to protect employment related personal data from unauthorized or accidental access or disclosure.
837. When there is a need to transfer employment related personal data from one bureau or department to another due to staff movement such as posting and redeployment, there should be documentation on the transfer of such records. Adequate security should also be provided to guard against loss, damage and unauthorized alteration and access to the records.
838. Bureaux and departments should observe the statutory requirements of the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance and the mandatory provisions in the *Code of Practice on Human Resource Management* issued by the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data.

Chapter 9

MONITORING RECORDS MANAGEMENT

Records Review

900. Where circumstances warrant, the Government Records Service (GRS) will review the records management function of bureaux and departments to ensure compliance with records management policies, procedures, directives and disposal authorities.
901. The selection for records review will be based on perceived needs by the GRS or specific requests by bureaux and departments.
902. The GRS will notify the selected bureaux or departments in writing the intent to conduct a records management review at least **3 months** in advance.

903-905

Records Study and Survey

906. The Government Records Service Director (GRS Director) may conduct records management studies and give such instructions and advice so as to ensure accurate and complete documentation, safe retention, and efficient and cost-effective management of records as considered necessary.
907. The GRS Director will from time to time coordinate with the heads of bureaux and departments in conducting service-wide surveys of records and records management practices.
908. Bureaux and departments should implement the recommendations from the above mentioned reviews, studies and surveys as far as practicable to promote economy and efficiency in the selection and use of resources, including staff, space, technology and systems, equipment, and supplies, etc. for improving the management of government records.

909-914

Internal Assessment and Evaluation

915. In addition to the reviews and studies carried out by the GRS, it is important for the records management function to be examined by the departmental management periodically. It is recommended that the Departmental Records Manager in each bureau or department should, as far as possible, conduct an evaluation of the records management function every **5 years** or more often.
916. In conducting the internal evaluation, bureaux or departments may make reference to the provisions in this Manual as yardsticks to assess the effectiveness of its records management programme.
917. ***Records Management Publication No. 7 - Checklist for Proper Records Management Practices*** also provides a useful framework and essential tips for bureaux and departments to assess the status of their records management programme. It should be adopted for use whenever applicable.

**List of Records Management Publications
by the Government Records Service**

1. Publication No. 1: *A Practical Guide to Records Scheduling and Disposal* (revised and retitled, 2000)
2. Publication No. 2: *Managing Active Records: File Management*
3. Publication No. 3: *Subject Filing*
4. Publication No. 4: *General Administrative Records Disposal Schedules (GARDS)*
5. Publication No. 5: *The Microfilming User Manual*
6. Publication No. 6: *Manual on Vital Records Protection*
7. Publication No. 7: *Checklist for Proper Records Management Practices*
8. Publication No. 8: 《中文檔案管理指引》
9. *Handbook on Records Management*

Records Management Glossary

Access

Right, opportunity, or means of finding, using, or retrieving information.

Accountability

Principle that individuals, organizations, and the community are required to explain their actions to others.

Active records

Records needed to perform current operations and are usually stored near the users.

Administrative records

Administrative records are defined as those records created or received during the course of day-to-day administrative activities that deal with finance, accommodation, procurement and supply, establishment, personnel and other general administrative activities. They include all records that perform the functions as described irrespective of the records medium (media) used. Records of this nature are common to government bureaux and departments.

Alienation

Unlawfully transferring records or losing custody of them to an unauthorized organization or person.

Archives

1. Also known as archival records, they are the documents and materials created or received and accumulated by a person or organization in the course of conducting affairs, and are preserved because of their continuing or permanent value.
2. The agency or programme responsible for selecting, acquiring, preserving, and making them available for use. The Public Records Office of Government Records Service is the designated central archives of the HKSAR Government.

Audit Trail

Listings or notations that trace the creation, movement and use of a record.

Automated records/information system

Any system that applies computer technology to any or all of records management tasks.

Backup copy

A copy of document made in order to preserve the information it contains in case the original is lost, damaged, or destroyed.

Classification

Systematic identification and arrangement of business activities and/or records into categories according to subject matters, logically structured conventions, methods, and procedural rules represented in a classification scheme.

Classification scheme

A plan or list in which the records of an organization are categorized according to its business functions, contents of the records and a coding system expressed in symbols (i.e. alphabetical, numerical, alpha-numerical, or decimal, etc.).

Coding

Act of assigning file designation to records as they are classified.

Content classification

Classification of records according to their content to facilitate organization of related papers and materials and future retrieval.

Contextual information

Information that is in addition to the actual text of the document such as date sent, sender's identity, addressee's identity and routing information, etc.

Copyright

The right vested by law in the author of a document and his/her heirs or assigns to publish or reproduce the document.

Corporatization

The process of turning the functions of a government agency to become a government business enterprise.

Cross-reference

A notation in a file or on a list showing that a record has been filed or stored elsewhere or as an entry directing attention to one or more related items.

Custody

The responsibility for the care of document based on their physical possession. Custody does not always include legal ownership, or the right to control access to records.

Data

Group of characters representing a specific value or condition. They provide the building block of information.

Destruction

Process of permanently eliminating or deleting data, documents and records.

Disposal

See **Records disposal**

Document

1. Recorded information regardless of medium or characteristics. Sometimes used interchangeably with the word “record”.
2. A single record item (letter, memo or report) consisting of one or more pages.

Electronic records

Electronic records are any information recorded in a form that only a computer or other electronic devices can retrieve and process, and that satisfies the definition of record given in this Manual.

Electronic records management

Applying records management principles to electronic records that are located on disks, tapes, or any form of magnetic, optical or electronic media.

Evidence

Information contributing to proving a fact and/or a process.

File

A collection of related records put together in a named/coded folder.

Floor load

The capacity of a floor area to support a given weight expressed in terms of weight per unit of area.

Government agency

Government agency means any bureau, department, office, division, or unit established and operated under the HKSAR Government.

Government record

A government record is any recorded information or data in any physical format or media created or received by a government bureau or department during its course of official business and kept as evidence of policies, decisions, procedures, functions, activities and transactions.

Inactive records

Inactive records are those records which are no longer or rarely required for action or reference. As a general yardstick, records are inactive if they have not been referred to for two years or their average retrieval rate is lower than three references per linear metre per month. This yardstick may be varied or re-defined according to individual office's operational consideration.

Index

A systematic guide that allows access to specific items contained within a records list, scheme or plan.

Indexing

Process of establishing access points to facilitate retrieval of records and/or information.

Information

Data that has been given value through analysis, interpretation, or compilation in a meaningful form.

Life cycle

The span of time of a record from its creation or receipt, through its useful life to its final disposal or retention as a historical record.

Long-term records

Records that have specific value(s) that warrant to be retained for at least 30 years.

Media (Storage)

The various types of storage materials on which information is recorded such as paper, microform, magnetic and optical.

Migration

Usually involved moving records, while maintaining authenticity, from one electronic system to another without major conversion or inputting of data.

Misfile

A file or a record item being inadvertently placed in an incorrect location within the recordkeeping system.

Non-record

Non-record materials are documentary materials that do not meet the conditions of record status. They may include library or museum materials intended solely for reference or exhibit, stocks of publications, extra copies of documents generated for convenience or reference, drafting material or working papers provided the official record copy is properly filed, and routing slips, etc.

Outsourcing

The process of contracting out those activities not related to agency's core business or primary mission.

Ownership

The possession of legal, physical and intellectual rights over the records.

Permanent records (archival records)

Information that has been designated for permanent retention or as long as possible because of specific value or importance.

Personal papers

Documents or materials not related to or have any effect upon the conduct of agency business are excluded from the definition of government records.

Preservation

The processes and operations involved in the stabilization and protection of records.

Privatization

The process of selling, transferring or changing the functions of a government agency to a private organization.

Programme records

Programme records are defined as those records created or received by a government bureau or department whilst carrying out the primary functions, activities or missions for which the agency was established. Records of this nature are unique to each government bureau or department.

Record

Recorded information regardless of physical format or media created or received in the course of official business and maintained for reference and as evidence of such business.

Record copy or official copy of record

The designated copy of record retained for legal, fiscal, operational or historical purposes.

Recordkeeping

Recordkeeping is making and maintaining complete, accurate and reliable evidence of business function and transactions in the form of recorded information.

Recordkeeping requirements

Recordkeeping requirements of a government agency are requirements for maintaining complete, accurate and reliable evidence in the form of recorded information to protect legal, financial and public rights and interests relating to the functions, transactions and activities of the organization.

Recordkeeping system

Recordkeeping system is a manual or automated information system in which records are collected, organized and categorized to facilitate their retrieval, distribution, use, disposal or preservation.

Records centre

A low-cost centralized area for housing and servicing inactive records whose reference rate does not warrant their retention using expensive office space and equipment. The Records Management Office of the Government Records Service

provides centralized records centre services for government bureaux and departments.

Records disposal

The actions taken on inactive records which have little or no values to bureaux and departments. Records disposal takes the forms of records destruction, records transfer to the Public Records Office of the Government Records Service for permanent preservation, records transfer to temporary inactive storage, records migration to different formats or systems and transfer of records outside government control.

Records inventory

1. A detailed listing that may include the types, locations, dates, volume, classification schemes, equipment and usage of an organization's records.
2. A complete list of titles, dates and quantity of all records.

Records management

Records management includes planning, directing, organizing, controlling, reviewing, training, and other managerial activities involved with respect to the creation, classification and indexing, distribution, handling, use, tracking, storage, retrieval, protection and disposal of records to achieve adequate and proper documentation of government policies, decisions and transactions as well as efficient and effective operation of government agencies.

Records retention and disposal schedules

A systematic listing or description of an organization's records which indicates the arrangements to be made for their custody, retention, and final disposition. Records disposal schedules of government agencies should be drawn up with the concurrence of the Government Records Service Director.

Records retrieval

Process of recalling specific records from storage.

Records scheduling

The action for developing records retention and disposal schedules which specify the length of time that records should be retained and the ways they are to be disposed of.

Records survey

A survey that gathers basic information on the records of an agency with respect to their quantity, type, functions, locations, storage facilities, rate of accumulation and uses for the purpose of planning records management activities.

Records tracking

Capturing and maintaining information about the movement and use of records.

Relative index

A dictionary-type index which lists all possible words and combinations by which a document or a record may be requested and cross referenced to a file location.

Retention period

The time period records are kept according to requirements including operational, legal, regulatory and fiscal.

Security classification

A classification placed on records limiting their accessibility to those having specific authority to receive, read or use them.

Storage medium

See media

Tracking

See **Records tracking**

Transfer

1. Change of physical custody, ownership or responsibility for records.
2. Moving records from one location to another.

Vital records

Records which contain information essential to the survival and continued operation of a bureau or department during and after an emergency or disaster.

Vital records list

A detailed list containing information such as titles, subject matters, dates, reference numbers and location on vital records.

Vital records schedule

A document or plan which identifies the series of vital records, their locations, protection methods and instructions, and updating and disposal requirements.

Vocabulary control

The use of a regularized or standardized list of terms to increase consistency or uniformity.

Appendix C

Major Duties of the Departmental Records Managers

- a. Ensure that the design of the recordkeeping system, the choice of equipment and the use of resources and space are as efficient and cost-effective as possible;
- b. Establish, implement and document departmental records management practices and procedures according to the guidelines and instructions of the Government Records Service;
- c. Provide records management staff with appropriate expertise, training and guidance;
- d. Appoint Assistant Departmental Records Manager(s) (ADRM), where necessary, to monitor records management routines;
- e. Introduce the use of technology in a cost-beneficial manner to any aspect of the records management function that improves operation of the organization and helps achieve the records management policy of the government;
- f. Use the Records Centre run by the Records Management Office of the Government Records Service (GRS) as far as practicable to store, service and dispose of inactive records;
- g. Facilitate records appraisal and records access review conducted by the Public Records Office (PRO) of the GRS and ensure prompt and systematic transfer of archival records to the PRO for preservation;
- h. Identify and protect vital records so as to ensure their availability in the event of any emergency or disaster;
- i. Foster cooperation between records management personnel and other staff to facilitate the most effective management of departmental records;
- j. Cooperate with the GRS in evaluating and improving the effectiveness of the records management programme on a regular basis; and
- k. Consult the GRS when records management advice is required.

INDEX

SUBJECT	PARAGRAPH NO.
Access	See Records access
Accountability	103, 206, 221, 500, 600, 813
Administrative change(s)	800, 802, 828
Administrative records	418, 419, 611-612
Alienation	502, 628
Archives	200(f), 220(f-h), 465-471, 522, 600, 626, 632, 636-639
Archives (as an institution)	318
Classification	402, 403, 414-434
Classification scheme(s)	402, 415-423
Code on Access to Information	122, 461-464
Coding	402, 424
Content classification	414-424
Contextual information	312, 709
Corporatization	800, 821-830
Custody	See Records custody
Destruction	See Records destruction
Departmental records management	210-211
Departmental Records Manager	210-213, 443, 803, 915
Disposal	See Records disposal
Document(s)	317, 405, 406, 412, 433, 434, 443
Electronic record(s)	107, 123, 313(g), 522(c), 638, 709
Electronic records management	107, 123, 709
Evidence	115-116, 118, 405, 826
File	315, 403
Floor loading	520
Government publications	220(h), 631-632
Government records	115-117, 404, 411, 413, 461, 468, 600, 602, 605, 606, 625, 632, 637
Government records management policy	107, 200, 822
Government Records Service, responsibilities	201, 220, 602
Inactive records	601, 625, 628, 630
Index(es)	424, 450, 451, 708, 806
Internal assessment and evaluation	915-917
Life cycle	460
Long-term records/value	220(h), 632, 522
Migration, recordkeeping system/records	480, 620

Non-record	404-406
Outsourcing	800(d), 821, 826
Ownership	See Records ownership
Permanent records	See archives
Personal data	303, 472, 836, 838
Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance	303, 472, 838
Personal papers	410-413
Preservation	314, 471, 632
Privatization	821-830
Programme records	417, 611, 613, 615
Public Records (Access) Rules	461, 465
Public Records Office (PRO)	318, 465, 466, 467, 468, 470, 626, 631-632, 637-639, 807
Record copy or official copy of record	404, 406(d)
Recordkeeping	118, 826
Recordkeeping requirements	120, 616
Recordkeeping system(s)	119, 311, 401, 402, 404, 480, 482, 806
Records access	460-472, 815
Records Centre	629, 630
Records custody	443, 821-824, 827, 828, 829(c), 830
Records destruction	601, 605, 606, 627, 630, 807
Records disposal	600-604, 610-613, 618, 625-632, 730, 801-803, 807, 813(b), 821, 827
Records inventory	422, 423
Records management	104, 105, 108, 200, 201, 917
Records Management Office (RMO)	615, 616, 629, 630, 807
Records ownership	821- 828, 830
Records regulatory framework	122
Records retention and disposal schedules	604, 610-620, 629, 636
Records retrieval	311, 450-452
Records review	468, 900-902
Records scheduling	602-604, 610-620
Records storage	500-523
Records storage equipment	517-520
Records study and survey	906-908
Records survey	See Records study and survey

Records tracking	480-482
Security classification	430-434, 460, 503
Security downgrading	440-443
Storage	See Records storage and Records storage equipment
Tracking	See Records tracking
Transfer, archives	See Archives
Transfer, functions	800-801, 810-815
Transfer, Records Centre	See Records Centre
Vital records	700-730, 806
Vital records, categories	See Vital records identification and categories
Vital records disposal	730
Vital records identification and categories	706-710
Vital records list	402, 806
Vital records, protection methods	716-718
Vital records schedule	728
Vocabulary control	420(d)