

GENERAL RECORDS SCHEDULE 20

Electronic Records

This schedule provides disposal authorization for certain electronic records and for specified paper, microform, or other hard copy records that are integrally related to the electronic records.

This schedule applies to electronic records created or received by Federal agencies including those managed for agencies by contractors. It covers records created by computer operators, programmers, analysts, systems administrators, and all personnel with access to a computer. Disposition authority is provided for certain master files, including some tables that are components of data base management systems, and certain files created from master files for specific purposes. In addition, this schedule covers certain electronic records produced by end users in office automation applications. These disposition authorities apply to the categories of electronic records described in GRS 20, regardless of the type of computer used to create or store these records.

GRS 20 does not cover all electronic records. Disposition may not be carried out for electronic records not covered by GRS 20 unless authorized by a Standard Form (SF) 115, Request for Records Disposition Authority, that has been approved by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). The records covered by several items in this schedule are authorized for erasure or deletion when the agency determines that they are no longer needed for administrative, legal, audit, or other operational purposes. NARA cannot establish a more specific retention that would be appropriate in all applications. Each agency should, when appropriate, determine a more specific disposition instruction, such as "Delete after X update cycles" or "Delete when X years old," for inclusion in its records disposition directives or manual. NARA approval is not needed to set retention periods for records in the GRS that are authorized for destruction when no longer needed.

Items 1a (in part), 2a, and 16 of this schedule apply to hard copy records used in conjunction with electronic files. Item 1 also covers printouts produced to test, use, and maintain master files. Items 10 and 11 of this schedule should be applied to special purpose programs and documentation for the referenced electronic records whatever the medium in which such programs and documentation exist.

This schedule has been revised to expand the authority agencies have to apply previously approved schedules to electronic records; grant broader authority to agencies to dispose of hard copy records that have been converted to an electronic format; and provide disposition instructions for ad hoc printouts and for documentation associated with permanent electronic records. Additionally, because copies of system security records are now covered by GRS 24, item 5, a cross-reference has been provided for item 11b to that effect. The items affected by the revisions to this GRS 20 schedule are 2, 3, 3.1, 11, and 16.

Electronic versions of most records authorized for disposal elsewhere in the GRS may be deleted under the provisions of item 3 of GRS 20. See also 36 CFR Part 1234 for NARA regulations on electronic records management.

1. Files/Records Relating to the Creation, Use, and Maintenance of Computer Systems, Applications, or Electronic Records.

- a. Electronic files or records created solely to test system performance, as well as hard copy printouts and related documentation for the electronic files/records. **Superseded by GRS 3.1, items 010 (DAA-GRS-2013-0005-0006), 011 (DAA-GRS-2013-0005-0007), and 020 (DAA-GRS-2013-0005-0004)**
 - b. Electronic files or records used to create or update a master file, including, but not limited to, work files, valid transaction files, and intermediate input/output records. **Superseded by GRS 4.3, item 020 (DAA-GRS-2013-0001-0004)**
 - c. Electronic files and hard copy printouts created to monitor system usage, including, but not limited to, log-in files, password files, audit trail files, system usage files, and cost-back files used to assess charges for system use. **Superseded by GRS 3.2, item 030 (DAA-GRS-2013-0006-0003)**
2. Input/Source Records.
- a. Hard copy (non-electronic) documents used to create, update, or modify electronic records when the electronic records are retained to meet recordkeeping requirements and are covered by a NARA-approved schedule. Included are such records as hard copy forms used for data input as well as hard copy documents that are scanned into an electronic recordkeeping system (e.g., correspondence, reports, still pictures, maps, etc.).
 - (1) Hard copy documents that NARA has specifically designated as permanent records that must be transferred to NARA in hard copy format, even if records have been copied/converted to an electronic format. **Rescinded per GRS Transmittal 23**
 - (2) Hard copy records previously approved as permanent that are converted to electronic records where the electronic records do not meet NARA's transfer standards for permanent electronic records in effect at the time of conversion. **Rescinded per GRS Transmittal 23**
 - (3) Hard copy documents that contain information that is not or cannot be captured in the electronic version of the records (e.g., certain handwritten annotations). **Rescinded per GRS Transmittal 23**
 - (4) Hard copy documents other than those covered by Items 2(a) (1) – (3). **Superseded by GRS 4.3, items 010 (DAA-GRS-2013-0001-0001), 011 (DAA-GRS-2013-0001-0002), and 012 (DAA-GRS-2013-0001-0003)**
 - b. Electronic records, except as noted in item 2c, entered into the system during an update process, and not required for audit and legal purposes. **Superseded by GRS 4.3, item 020 (DAA-GRS-2013-0001-0004)**
 - c. Electronic records received from another agency and used as input/ source records by the receiving agency, EXCLUDING records produced by another agency under the terms of an interagency agreement, or records created by another agency in response to the specific information needs of the receiving agency. **Superseded by GRS 4.3, item 020 (DAA-GRS-2013-0001-0004)**

- d. Computer files or records containing uncalibrated and unvalidated digital or analog data collected during observation or measurement activities or research and development programs and used as input for a digital master file or database. **Superseded by GRS 4.3, item 020 (DAA-GRS-2013-0001-0004)**

3. Electronic Records That Replace Temporary Hard Copy Records.

Electronic records that replace temporary hard copy records covered by previously approved schedules that do not explicitly exclude electronic records. (If a previously approved schedule explicitly excludes electronic records, an SF 115 must be submitted to NARA. None of the authorities provided below may be applied.)

- a. Scanned images. **Rescinded per GRS Transmittal 23**

- b. Electronic formats other than scanned images.

- (1) Records covered by temporary items in the GRS other than GRS 1, Item 21 (Employee Medical Folders); GRS 1, Item 22 (Statistical Summaries); GRS 1, Item 25f (Equal Employment Opportunity Statistics Files); GRS 12, Item 3 (Telecommunications Operational Files); and GRS 18, Item 5 (Top Secret Accounting and Control Files) --or-- Records covered by temporary items in an agency-specific schedule that pertain to administrative housekeeping activities. **Rescinded per GRS Transmittal 23**
- (2) Records covered by GRS 1, Item 21 (Employee Medical Folders); GRS 1, Item 22 (Statistical Summaries); GRS 1, Item 25f (Equal Employment Opportunity Statistics Files); GRS 12, Item 3 (Telecommunications Operational Files); and GRS 18, Item 5 (Top Secret Accounting and Control Files). **Rescinded per GRS Transmittal 23**
- (3) Digital versions of temporary still pictures, sound recordings, motion picture film, and video recordings. **Rescinded per GRS Transmittal 23**
- (4) Program records approved for destruction in a previously approved schedule that is media neutral and does not explicitly exclude electronic records. **Rescinded per GRS Transmittal 23**
- (5) Program records maintained in an electronic format that are not covered by Items 3(a), 3(b)(1), 3(b)(3), or 3(b)(4). **Rescinded per GRS Transmittal 23**

3.1 Electronic Records That Replace Permanent Hard Copy Records.

Electronic records that replace hard copy records approved as permanent in a previously approved schedule. **Rescinded per GRS Transmittal 23**

4. Data Files Consisting of Summarized Information.

Records that contain summarized or aggregated information created by combining data elements or individual observations from a single master file or data base that is disposable under a GRS item or is authorized for deletion by a disposition job approved by NARA after January 1, 1988, EXCLUDING data files that are created as disclosure-free files to allow public access to the data which may not be destroyed before securing NARA approval. **Superseded by GRS 4.3, item 031 (DAA-GRS-2013-0001-0006)**

5. Records Consisting of Extracted Information.

Electronic files consisting solely of records extracted from a single master file or data base that is disposable under GRS 20 or approved for deletion by a NARA-approved disposition schedule, EXCLUDING extracts that are produced as disclosure-free files to allow public access to the data; or produced by an extraction process which changes the informational content of the source master file or data base; which may not be destroyed before securing NARA approval. For print and technical reformat files see items 6 and 7 of this schedule respectively. **Superseded by GRS 4.3, item 031 (DAA-GRS-2013-0001-0006)**

6. Print File.

Electronic file extracted from a master file or data base without changing it and used solely to produce hard-copy publications and/or printouts of tabulations, ledgers, registers, and statistical reports. **Superseded by GRS 4.3, item 031 (DAA-GRS-2013-0001-0006)**

7. Technical Reformat File.

Electronic file consisting of data copied from a complete or partial master file or data base made for the specific purpose of information interchange and written with varying technical specifications, EXCLUDING files created for transfer to the National Archives. **Superseded by GRS 4.3, item 031 (DAA-GRS-2013-0001-0006)**

8. Backups of Files.

Electronic copy, considered by the agency to be a Federal record, of the master copy of an electronic record or file and retained in case the master file or database is damaged or inadvertently erased.

- a. File identical to records scheduled for transfer to the National Archives. **Superseded by GRS 3.2, item 050 (DAA-GRS-2013-0006-0007)**
- b. File identical to records authorized for disposal in a NARA-approved records schedule. **Superseded by GRS 3.2, item 051 (DAA-GRS-2013-0006-0008)**

9. Finding Aids (or Indexes).

Electronic indexes, lists, registers, and other finding aids used only to provide access to records authorized for destruction by the GRS or a NARA-approved SF 115, EXCLUDING records containing abstracts or other information that can be used as an information source apart from the related records. **Superseded by GRS 4.1, item 010 (DAA-GRS-2013-0002-0016)**

10. Special Purpose Programs.

Application software necessary solely to use or maintain a master file or database authorized for disposal in a GRS item or a NARA-approved records schedule, EXCLUDING special purpose software necessary to use or maintain any unscheduled master file or database or any master file or database scheduled for transfer to the National Archives. **Superseded by GRS 3.1, item 012 (DAA-GRS-2013-0005-0008)**

11. Documentation.

a. Data systems specifications, file specifications, codebooks, record layouts, user guides, output specifications, and final reports (regardless of medium) relating to a master file, database or other electronic records.

(1) Documentation relating to electronic records that are scheduled for destruction in the GRS or in a NARA-approved agency schedule. **Superseded by GRS 3.1, item 051 (DAA-GRS-2013-0005-0003)**

(2) Documentation relating to electronic records that are scheduled for permanent retention in the GRS or in a NARA-approved agency schedule. **Superseded by GRS 3.1, item 050 (DAA-GRS-2013-0005-0002)**

b. Copies of records relating to system security. **Superseded by GRS 3.2, item 010 (DAA-GRS-2013-0006-0001)**

12. Downloaded and Copied Data.

Derived data and data files that are copied, extracted, merged, and/or calculated from other data generated within the agency, when the original data is retained.

a. Derived data used for ad hoc or one-time inspection, analysis or review, if the derived data is not needed to support the results of the inspection, analysis or review. **Superseded by GRS 4.3, item 030 (DAA-GRS-2013-0001-0005)**

b. Derived data that provide user access in lieu of hard copy reports that are authorized for disposal. **Superseded by GRS 4.3, item 030 (DAA-GRS-2013-0001-0005)**

c. Metadata or reference data, such as format, range, or domain specifications which is transferred from a host computer or server to another computer for input, updating, or transaction processing operations. **Superseded by GRS 4.3, item 020 (DAA-GRS-2013-0001-0004)**

13. Word Processing Files.

Documents such as letters, memoranda, reports, handbooks, directives, and manuals recorded on electronic media such as hard disks or floppy diskettes after they have been copied to an electronic

recordkeeping system, paper, or microform for recordkeeping purposes. **Superseded by GRS 4.3, item 040 (DAA-GRS-2013-0001-0007)**

14. Electronic Mail Records.

Senders' and recipients' versions of electronic mail messages that meet the definition of Federal records, and any attachments to the record messages after they have been copied to an electronic recordkeeping system, paper, or microform for recordkeeping purposes. **Superseded by GRS 4.3, item 040 (DAA-GRS-2013-0001-0007)**

15. Electronic Spreadsheets.

Electronic spreadsheets generated to support administrative functions or generated by an individual as background materials or feeder reports.

- a. When used to produce hard copy that is maintained in organized files. **Superseded by GRS 4.3, item 040 (DAA-GRS-2013-0001-0007)**
- b. When maintained only in electronic form. **Superseded by GRS 4.3, item 040 (DAA-GRS-2013-0001-0007)**

16. Hard copy printouts created to meet ad hoc business needs.

Printouts derived from electronic records created on an ad hoc basis for reference purposes or to meet day-to-day business needs. Excluded are printouts created to satisfy established reporting requirements (*e.g.*, a statistical report produced quarterly in accordance with an agency directive). **Superseded by GRS 4.3, item 030 (DAA-GRS-2013-0001-0005)**