

Records and Information Management Lexicon

(courtesy Lower Colorado River Authority)

Accession is the transfer of records from a department to the Records Center or to Corporate Archives for storage and retrieval.

An **active record** is one that is required for current use. Generally, records that are accessed more than once per month are active records.

Appraisal is the process of determining the value and disposition of records and designating them either temporary or permanent. The evaluation of a document's value for retention or archival purposes is based upon its current or predicted future uses for administrative, legal, fiscal, research, or historical purposes.

Archives are records that are preserved because of their continuing historical or research value.

A **back-up system** is a standardized method for creating and maintaining copies of information stored electronically. A back-up system includes the operator, procedures, and equipment for creating and maintaining copies. Back-up systems are part of business continuity planning for disaster recovery, not part of records retention programs.

Classification is the process of putting like documents and information together for filing purposes. A records **classification** is a group of records related by common characteristics.

COLD is an acronym for Computer Output to Laser Disk, the process of transferring computer output to an optical disk.

Color coding is a filing system in which color is used to represent a number, word, or letter.

COM is an acronym for Computer Output Microfilm, the process that converts and records data from a computer onto microfilm in human-readable format.

A **convenience copy** is a duplicate version of a record kept for reference use only. The copy is a non-record regardless of media or location. When an electronic document is printed on paper or **COM (Computer Output Microfilm)**, the electronic copy of the document is considered a convenience copy.

A **cubic foot** is the basic volume measurement of paper records. It measures a space one foot high by one foot wide by one foot long. The standard records storage box is one cubic foot.

The **Department of Record** is responsible for specific official records during their active life span, including file maintenance and disposition.

A **disaster** is a sudden, unplanned, calamitous event that causes a disruption in normal business operations. Examples are fire, flood, tornado, hard disk failure, and misfiled "lost" files.

A **Disaster Plan or Disaster Recovery Plan** is a records management tool that is used as a guideline to manage activities needed to recover vital records so that business functions can return to a pre-disaster condition.

Disaster Preparedness is a records management tool that includes a set of policies and procedures to ensure the protection of all vital records in the case of a disaster.

Disposition is the last step in the life cycle of a record. Disposition means the record's physical destruction or its transfer to Archives for permanent preservation.

Document recorded information regardless of physical form or characteristics. A document may meet the definition of a record, or it may not and therefore be a non-record.

An **electronic information system** is a software package on a computer platform and is a non-record. Examples are Access, Excel, Word, PeopleSoft, Maximo, and Windows.

An **electronic record** is a record stored in a form that only a computer can process, including magnetic and optical media. Electronic records are the same as non-electronic records for retention and other records management purposes. Electronic records can be either official records or convenience copies (non-records). Examples of electronic records are word processing documents, electronic spreadsheets, and individual rows of related data in electronic databases.

A **file** is a group of related documents. In paper-based records systems, **file** often refers to one or more documents in a single file folder. **Files** generally refers to a collection of records or file folders that have been arranged to facilitate their retrieval and use. In electronic records systems, **file** refers to a collection of data resident on some type of electronic storage device.

File integrity refers to the accuracy and completeness of a group of records.

Historical or archival value is the value that records possess for documenting the history of an organization. Records with historical value are worthy of permanent preservation as archival materials.

A **hold order** halts the records destruction process. Reasons for hold orders are pending litigation or discovery, open records requests, and pending audits.

Inactive Records are records that are not needed for current use, but must be kept for their retention periods. They have reference rates of less than once per month.

In manual filing, **indexing** refers to determining the name or number under which a document is to be filed. In electronic filing, it refers to identifying the keyword under which a document may be retrieved.

The **life cycle** of a record is its passage through four stages: creation or receipt, active use and distribution, inactive storage, and disposition.

Micrographics is a photographic process for creating miniaturized images of records on film for space saving and durability. The process includes the creation, quality control, storage, and use of various microforms, such as aperture cards, roll film, and microfiche.

A **non-record** is a document that is (a) not created or received in the course of business; (b) not considered to contain information of value, such as blank forms or duplicate copies of publications; (c) a convenience copy, or (d) any item that is not a record (awards, plaques, old equipment, etc.). Non-records do not appear in the Retention Schedule. However, non-records may be subject to retrieval and release pursuant to litigation or requests if the entity has possession of such records.

An **official record** (often called simply a **record**) is any document, paper, letter, book, map, photograph, sound or video recording, microfilm, magnetic tape, electronic medium, or other information recording medium, regardless of physical form or characteristic and regardless of whether public access to it is open or restricted under the laws of the state, created or received by the entity or any of its officers or employees pursuant to law, including an ordinance, or in the transaction of public business.

Purging is an action taken to remove records from their current file position in order to eliminate outdated, superseded, or duplicate material. Examples are to purge active records for transfer to inactive storage and to purge records whose retention period has expired.

A **record series** is an organized collection of documents, files, or records on the same topic or of the same type that are generally filed and used together. A record series may include just one record or many individual records. Examples are contracts, payroll checks, and "as built" engineering drawings.

Record-keeping system is an organized and inventoried repository for records. For paper records it may be a departmental file room or an individual's work files. For electronic records, it is a document management software application allowing access and version control, indexing, and profiling to allow for easy retrieval and purging.

Records Coordinator is a designated individual in each department or area who works with the Records and Information Management Services department as needed to assist in implementing and coordinating records management.

Records destruction is the deletion of records from an organization's files. Under state law, the process can be done in any manner, including burning, shredding, pulping, burial in a landfill, or sale or donation for recycling.

A **records management program** is a planned, coordinated set of policies, procedures, and activities to manage information. A records management program encompasses the creation, maintenance, use, and disposition of records, regardless of media.

The **Records Retention Schedule** lists the types of records maintained by an organization and specifies the periods of time after which their disposition is authorized. The schedule also identifies archival records and mandates their permanent retention.

The **retention period** is the length of time that must pass before a record is eligible for disposition. The length of time is based on the value of the information for business purposes, fiscal and legal requirements. Retention periods begin in the fiscal year of creation or receipt and end upon the occurrence of a specified event.

Risk is the probability that a threat will become a reality and cause a loss.

Threat is any event that can cause loss, damage, or destruction of vital records.

An **unauthorized record** is a record or convenience copy that has been kept past the **retention period** of its **record series**. The only valid reasons for maintaining records after their retention periods are for pending requests under the Texas Open Records Act or for pending litigation.

Uniform Filing Structure (UFS) or Taxonomy is a method of classifying related records in functional categories.

Vital records are records that are necessary for the resumption of business after a disaster or for continuation of operation in an emergency or disaster.

"RESOURCES FOR RESEARCHING A RECORDS RETENTION PROGRAM"

Compiled by Angie Fares, MBA, RHIA from various sources;

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Note: Many of these resources can be purchased from the ARMA Book Store at (www.arma.org):

Buried Alive. Commonwealth Films. Video blockbuster that raises awareness for strong records management and retention procedures. Dramatic presentation on how documents should be systematically retained or destroyed without risking destruction of vital information or evidence. Promotes a better understanding of records and information management practices. Can also be rented instead of purchased. ARMA International, 4200 Somerset Drive, Suite 215, Prairie Village, KS 66208. Telephone: (913)341-3808.

Code of Federal Regulations. Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Records Administration, Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402.

Darwin. BrainCore. A web-enabled record retention software product with federal and state record retention guidelines available from the Internet for a monthly subscription fee. Website: www.braincore.com or contact Jim Romer at 3003 LBJ Freeway, Suite 122E, Dallas TX 75234 or (972)247-8779.

Designing an Effective Records Retention Compliance Program. Dietel, J. Edwin, J.D., ARMA International, 4200 Somerset Drive, Suite 215, Prairie Village, KS 66208. Telephone: (913)341-3808 (Clark Boardman Callaghan). This book is Volume III of a 10-volume Corporate Compliance Series and is updated with replacement pages annually. There is no charge for updates within three months of purchase.

Developing and Operating a Records Retention Program – A Guideline. ARMA International, 4200 Somerset Drive, Suite 215, Prairie Village, KS 66208. Telephone: (913)341-3808. ISBN 0-933887-18-3.

Electronic Evidence: Strategies for Managing Records in Contemporary Organizations. Bearman, David. Archives and Museum Informatics. ISBN: 1-885626-08-8.

Electronic Records Retention: An Introduction. Stephens, David O. CRM, CMC, Wallace, Roderick C., CRM. ARMA International, 4200 Somerset Drive, Suite 215, Prairie Village, KS 66208. Telephone: (913)341-3808. ISBN 0-933887-69-8.

Essential Elements of Local Government Records Management Legislation. U.S. Legislative and Regulatory Affairs Subcommittee. ISBN: 0-933887-49-3.

File Law National. Carswell Thomson Professional Publishing. This CD-ROM contains Canadian statutory and regulatory provisions that affect record retention requirements. File Law Regional is available for specific Canadian states. ARMA International, 4200 Somerset Drive, Suite 215, Prairie Village, KS 66208. Telephone: (913)341-3808 (Carswell Thomson Professional Publishing).

Financial Institutions Record Retention Manual (Second Edition), Morrisette, Nan Heldenbrand, Financial Managers Society, 8 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60603-3307. Telephone: (312)578-1300.

Finding the Law: A Workbook on Legal Research for Laypersons. Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402. Telephone: (202)783-3238. S/N 024-011-00148-4. 1982.

Guide to Records Retention. Hancock, W.A., Editor, Business Law Inc., 8228 Mayfield Road, Chesterland, OH 44026. Telephone: (216)729-7996.

Guide to Records Retention Requirements in the Code of Federal Regulations. Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Records Administration, Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402. Telephone: (202)783-3238.

Information and Image Management. Ricks, Betty R., Swafford, Ann J., Gow, Kay F. ARMA International, 4200 Somerset Drive, Suite 215, Prairie Village, KS 66208. Telephone: (913)341-3808. ISBN 0-538-70068-8 (Southwestern Publishing).

Information and Records Management. Robek, Mary F., CRM, Brown, Gerald F., CRM, Stephens, David O., CRM, CMC. ARMA International, 4200 Somerset Drive, Suite 215, Prairie Village, KS 66208. Telephone: (913)341-3808. ISBN 0-02-801793-5 (Glencoe).

Law of Electronic Commerce: EDI, E-Mail, and Internet: Technology, Proof and Liability, 3rd Edition. Wright, Benjamin, JD and Winn, Jane K. Aspen Law & Business Publishers. ISBN: 1-56706-940-1.

Law, Records and Information Management: The Court Cases. Skupsky, Donald, JD, CRM, Montana, John C., JD, Information Requirements Clearinghouse, 5600 Quebec Street, Suite 250-C, Englewood, CO 80111. Telephone: (303)721-7500. ISBN 0-0929316-32-0.

Legal Requirements for Business Records: Guide to Records Retention and Recordkeeping Requirements. Skupsky, Donald S. JD, CRM, Information Requirements Clearinghouse, 5600 Quebec Street, Suite 250-C, Englewood, CO 80111. Telephone: (303)721-7500.

Legal Requirements for Information Technology Systems. Skupsky, Donald, JD, CRM, Information Requirements Clearinghouse, 5600 Quebec Street, Suite 250-C, Englewood, CO 80111. Telephone: (303)721-7500. ISBN 0-0929316-04-5.

Legal Research. Barber, Steve, McCormick, Mark A., ARMA International, 4200 Somerset Drive, Suite 215, Prairie Village, KS 66208. Telephone: (913)341-3808. ISBN 0-8273-7474-7.

Legality of Microfilm. Williams, Robert F. Cohasset Associates. ARMA International, 4200 Somerset Drive, Suite 215, Prairie Village, KS 66208. Telephone: (913)341-3808.

Legality of Optical Storage. Williams, Robert. F. Cohasset Associates. ARMA International, 4200 Somerset Drive, Suite 215, Prairie Village, KS 66208. Telephone: (913)341-3808.

Performance Guideline for Admissibility of Records Produced by Information Technology Systems: Parts I – IV. Association for Information and Image Management. ANSI/AIIM. ISBN: 0-89258-289-8. ARMA International, 4200 Somerset Drive, Suite 215, Prairie Village, KS 66208. Telephone: (913)341-3808.

Recordkeeping Requirements. Skupsky, Donald S. JC, CRM, Information Requirements Clearinghouse, 5600 Quebec Street, Suite 250-C, Englewood, CO 80111. Telephone: (303)721-7500. ISBN 0-929316-03-7.

Records Retention: Law and Practice: Federal. Anson-Cartwright, Robert F., C.A., C.B.V., Hollingshead, Robert, C.A., Kennish, Timothy, LL.B.ert. ARMA International, 4200 Somerset Drive, Suite 215, Prairie Village, KS 66208. Telephone: (913)341-3808 (Carswell Thomson Professional Publishing).

Records Retention: Statues and Regulations. ARMA International, 4200 Somerset Drive, Suite 215, Prairie Village, KS 66208. Telephone: (913)341-3808 (Tab, Datafile, Carswell Thomson Professional Publishing).

Records Retention Procedures. Skupsky, Donald S. JC, CRM, Information Requirements Clearinghouse, 5600 Quebec Street, Suite 250-C, Englewood, CO 80111. Telephone: (303)721-7500. ISBN 0-020316-03-7.

Records Retention Resource Guidelines for U.S. Based Gas Utilities. ARMA International, Utilities Industry Specific Group, 4200 Somerset Drive, Suite 215, Prairie Village, KS 66208. Telephone: (913)341-3808. ISBN 0-933887-66-3.

Records Retention Resource Guidelines for U.S. Based Electric Utilities. ARMA International, Utilities Industry Specific Group, 4200 Somerset Drive, Suite 215, Prairie Village, KS 66208. Telephone: (913)341-3808. ISBN 0-933887-52-3.

Report on Issues Surrounding Retention of Client Files in Law Firms. Andrews, Helen, Holloway, Phillip L., Ledwith, Clare M., Mutchler, K. Anne, Shea, Roseanne M., Zimmerman, Gloria. ARMA International, 4200 Somerset Drive, Suite 215, Prairie Village, KS 66208. Telephone: (913)341-3808. ISBN 0-933887-46-9.

Retention 5.0. Zasio Enterprises Inc., 12426 West Explorer Drive, Suite 250, Boise, ID 83713. Telephone: (208)375-8000. This is a 32-bit Windows application and requires Windows NT or Windows 95. This software also requires a Structured Query Language (SQL) database (e.g., Oracle, Sybase, Interbase, Microsoft SQL Server) to run.

Retention Manager. Skupsky, Donald S., JD, CRM, Information Requirements Clearinghouse, 5600 Quebec Street, Suite 250-C, Englewood, CO 80111. Telephone: (303)721-7500. Requires a 486 PC-compatible computer, Windows 3.1, 95 or NT, 16 MB RAM, 150 MB disk storage, VGA monitor, CD-ROM drive.

Retention Manager. Information Requirements Clearinghouse. This is a full-featured software and data program to facilitate legal research and development of records retention schedules. The software implements the "Skupsky Retention Methodology" and the purchase price includes subscription service, technical support, quarter updates and software upgrades. ARMA International, 4200 Somerset Drive, Suite 215, Prairie Village, KS 66208. Telephone: (913)341-3808 (Carswell Thomson Professional Publishing).

Vital Records – A Guideline (Second Edition). ARMA International Standards Committee: Vital Records Task Force, 4200 Somerset Drive, Suite 215, Prairie Village, KS 66208. Telephone: (913)341-3808. ISBN 0-933887-14-0.