

RECORDS MANAGEMENT GLOSSARY

INTRODUCTION: The Records Management Glossary is a list of key records management terms used in the creation, maintenance and preservation of records. While the list is not exhaustive, many of the terms are used throughout the NYC Department of Records and Information Services (DORIS) records management forms and documents.

Records management officers may find the glossary useful when creating retention schedules, generating disposal applications, or developing training materials for agency staff.

For more extensive lists, see the [Additional Resources](#) at the end of this document.

Accession The act and procedures involved in a transfer of legal title and the taking of records into the physical custody of the Municipal Archives (adapted from the [Society of American Archivists Glossary](#)).

Active Records Records that continue to be used with sufficient frequency to justify keeping them in the office of creation; current records.

Administrative Records Documents that are preserved because they facilitate the operations and management of an agency but do not relate directly to programs that help the agency achieve its mission. These include such documents as the agency budget, personnel, supplies, travel, and training.

Alienated Records Records in the possession of an individual or organization not legally entitled to them.

Archives Those official records which have been determined by the department to have sufficient historical or other value to warrant their continued preservation by the city.

Asset Anything of value or perceived value.

Asset Management The process of documenting and controlling all assets, either in use or under development by an agency. Asset management involves identifying an agency's assets and the steps taken to protect and take care of them.

Big Bucket/Large Aggregation Schedule A type of schedule in which disposition instructions are applied against a body of temporary records that are grouped at a level of aggregation greater than the traditional file series/electronic system and that can be organized along a specific program area, functional line, or business process. The goal of this type of scheduling is to provide for the disposition of records at a level of aggregation that best supports the business needs of agencies, while ensuring the documentation necessary to protect legal rights and guarantee government accountability. NOTE: Retention applied to the bucket should be the longest retention that would otherwise be applied if the group were broken down into its smaller, more targeted record series.

Business Information Refers to all information created or received by employees that is related in any way to the operation or administration of the agency, regardless of whether in electronic or paper form.

Capstone Approach to Email A management approach at the account level based on work or position of account holder. Allows for systematic transfer of email accounts scheduled as permanent (see Role A Users), systematic disposal of email accounts scheduled as temporary (See Role B Users), and removal of transitory, non-record, and/or personal messages.

Cloud Storage (a.k.a. Cloud Computing) A model for enabling convenient, on-demand network access to a shared pool of configurable computing resources (e.g., networks, servers, storage, applications, and services) that can be rapidly provisioned and released with minimal management effort or service provider interaction.

Crosswalk A table created to show the original series-by-series disposal authorities and how each one fits into the new subject categories or buckets.

Custody Care and control of records, including both physical possession (physical custody) and legal responsibility (legal custody), unless one or the other is specified.

Cutoff (a.k.a. File Break) The breaking or ending of files at regular intervals, usually at the close of a fiscal or calendar year, to permit their disposal or transfer in complete blocks and, for correspondence, to permit the establishment of new files.

Data Migration The process of transferring data between storage types, formats, or computer systems. Degaussing Minimizing the magnetic field in magnetic media so the information is obliterated and cannot be returned.

Deletion The removal or erasure of information from electronic devices and storage media.

Destruction (destroy/delete) The disposal of documents of no further value by incineration, maceration, pulping, or shredding.

Digital Of or relating to computers or the information age.

Digitization The process of converting information from a physical format into a digital format. (E.g., Scanning a printed document to create a PDF, converting a VHS tape into digital video file, etc.).

Disposal/Disposition The action taken regarding records after their retention periods expire consisting of destruction/deletion or transfer of eligible records to Municipal Archives. On rare occasions, with permission, records may be donated.

Disposition Approval The legal approval empowering an agency to transfer permanent records to the Municipal Archives or to carry out the disposal of temporary records. Note: "Legal approval" comes at the point at which a Records Disposal Application is signed by the Municipal Archivist, Law Department Counsel, and DORIS Commissioner, not when the application is first submitted to DORIS.

Disposition Authority City, state, or federal guidance, law or statute used in determining the retention period.

Disposition Instructions Instructions that determine what is to be done with a record that is no longer needed to support agency business. There are two types of dispositions for records:

- Temporary – Records with a temporary disposition that will eventually be destroyed or deleted when all relevant business needs have expired, and the retention period has been met.
- Permanent -- Records that contain historically significant materials, provide evidence of agency accomplishments, or that document important events in NYC history. Permanent records will be accessioned by the Municipal Archives.

Please see Definition for [Records Disposition](#) in the New York City Charter.

DORIS Liaison DORIS records analysts who assist city agencies with coordination of records management activities (e.g., records schedule revision, disposition of records meeting retention, project alignment with current policies and practices, etc.)

Electronic Record Management System (ERMS) A content management system to manage records in electronic form. (E.g., Record Point Records 365 used by city agencies)

Electronic Mail (email) A document created or received on an electronic mail system including brief notes, more formal or substantive narrative documents, and any attachments, such as word-processing and other electronic documents, which may be transmitted with the message

Electronic Records/ e-Records Records stored in a form that only a computer can process. Records can be numeric, graphic, and text information. Electronic media formats can include, but are not limited to, magnetic media, such as tapes and disks, and optical disks.

Electronic Recordkeeping System (ERKS) An electronic system that is used to capture, organize, and categorize records to facilitate their preservation, retrieval, use, and disposition.

Emulation A strategy where the functionality of one system is recreated by a new system, so that the second system behaves like the first.

Essential Records Management The identification, protection, and ready availability of electronic and hardcopy documents, references, records, information systems, and data management software and equipment (including classified and other sensitive data) needed to support essential functions of the agency during a continuity activation. Access to and use of these records and systems enable the performance of essential functions and reconstitution to normal operations. To ensure performance of essential functions, organizations preposition and regularly update these essential records. (See Vital Records).

File Break (a.k.a. Cutoff) See Cutoff.



File Plan A plan designating the physical or electronic location(s) at which an agency's files are to be maintained, the specific types of files to be maintained there, and the organizational element(s) having custodial responsibility.

Filing System A set of policies and procedures for organizing and identifying files or documents to speed their retrieval, use, and disposition. Sometimes called a Recordkeeping System.

FOIL or "Freedom of Information Law" Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) the New York State law that outlines the rights of the public to access public records

Format Neutral The definition of a record under the New York City Charter applies to all records existing in variety of formats such as hard copies, born-digital files, databases, audio/video recordings, web content, email, instant messages, social media content, etc. Please see [Definition of a Record](#) under the NYC Charter.

Freeze a.k.a. Litigation Hold or Preservation Notice. Temporary records held for litigation, investigation, or audit purposes. Frozen records can be destroyed only after completion of litigation, audit, or investigation and notification from the appropriate authority even if their retention period has been met.

Functional Arrangement A method of arranging a records schedule by record series or systems that share the same purpose or function, regardless of where they are created and maintained.

Inactive Records Records that are no longer used in the regular course of business, but that may be preserved and occasionally used for legal, historical, or operational purposes.

Information System An organized set of procedures and techniques designed to store, retrieve, manipulate, analyze, and display information. If automated, information system also includes hardware and software.

Inspection Inspection refers to reviews or audits performed by external personnel or agencies.

Inventory A survey of agency records and non-record materials conducted primarily to develop records retention schedules and to identify various records management problems.

Litigation Hold/Preservation Notice See Freeze.

Maceration The process of reducing materials to fine particles.

Maturity Model The Maturity Model aims to give an accurate, reliable and honest summary of the current level of maturity of the records management measures within your institution.

Metadata Data describing stored data: that is, data describing the structure, data elements, interrelationships, and other characteristics of electronic records. (E.g., record names, document numbers, dates, file type, version information, system process information such as tags in SharePoint, etc.) Please see [Policy on Naming Conventions and Metadata](#).



Microsoft 365 (MS 365) Productivity software, collaboration, and cloud-based services owned by Microsoft. Includes online services (e.g., OneDrive, Microsoft Teams, etc.), applications formerly marketed as Microsoft Office (e.g., Word, Excel, Outlook, etc.) and enterprise products and services (e.g., Exchange Server, SharePoint, etc.).

NOTE: RecordPoint Records 365 supports Microsoft 365 data.

Microsoft Exchange A mail and calendaring server developed by Microsoft.

Note: RecordPoint Records 365 has a connector for this server to support records management of email accounts in accordance with [NYC Email Records Retention Policy](#).

Migration A set of organized tasks designed to achieve periodic transfer of digital materials from one hardware/software configuration to another, or from one generation of computer technology to a subsequent generation.

Naming Conventions A systematic method for naming digital records to facilitate the maintenance, identification, transfer and management, security, and preservation of electronic records. Please see [NYC Policy on Naming Conventions and Metadata](#).

Non-Business Information An item is considered Not an Agency Record when it relates solely to nonbusiness activities or issues and has no value to Company operations, e.g. personal materials, music, personal photos. Non-Business Information should routinely be discarded by employees unless it is subject to a Preservation Notice.

Non-Records A type of Business Information that is Duplicate, Work-in-Progress, Draft or Transitory Information. The City Records and Information Management Policy and Standards separate information into two groups: "Business Information" and "Non- Business Information". Business Information is composed of two sub-groups: "Company Records" (must be retained according to the Retention Schedules) and "Non -Records" (Business Information that does not qualify as a Company Record and is not subject to the Retention Schedules).

Personally Identifiable Information (PII) Any information about an individual maintained by an agency, including (1) any information that can be used to distinguish or trace an individual's identity, such as name, social security number, date and place of birth, mother's maiden name, or biometric records; and (2) any other information that is linked or linkable to an individual, such as medical, educational, financial, and employment information.

Preservation Notice: See Litigation Hold.

Program Records Those records created by each agency in performing the unique functions that stem from the distinctive mission of the agency. The agency's mission is defined in enabling legislation and further delineated in formal regulations.

Pulping Process of reducing paper to its constituent fibers.

Reconstitution Taking the actions necessary to bring working conditions back to normal and being able to resume business operations.

Record Any documents, books, papers, photographs, sound recordings, machine readable materials or any other materials, regardless of physical form or characteristics, made or received pursuant to law or ordinance or in connection with the transaction of official city business. [See NYC Charter Chapter 72, §3011\(2\).](#)

Record Series A group of records arranged according to a filing system or kept together because they relate to a particular subject or function, result from the same activity, document a specific type of transaction, exist in the same media format, or have some other type of relationship.

Record Values The value of a record encompasses its value for current business – i.e., its administrative, fiscal, legal/accountability value – as well as its historical value.

Recorded Information Includes all traditional forms of records, regardless of physical form or characteristics, including information created, manipulated, communicated, or stored in digital or electronic form.

Recordkeeping Requirements Statements in statutes, regulations, or agency directives providing general and specific guidance on particular records to be created and maintained by an agency.

Recordkeeping System See Filing System.

Records 365 A records management system from RecordPoint that is designed to unify and control multiple data content sources.

Records Access Officer A designated official within the agency who is responsible for ensuring compliance with laws that grant the public the right to access records, e.g. FOIL requests. See [Open Records Portal](#).

Records Analysis A process used to determine records retention and disposition requirements based on how the records are used to support the business needs of an organization, and to ensure Government accountability and protect the rights of citizens. **Records Inventory** See Inventory.

Records Maintenance Any action involving the storage, retrieval, and handling of records kept in offices by, or for, a city agency/office.

Records Management The planning, controlling, directing, organizing, training, promoting, and other managerial activities related to the creation, maintenance and use, and disposition of records, carried out in such a way as to achieve adequate and proper documentation of Federal policies and transactions and effective and economical management of agency operations.

Records Management Application (RMA) Software used by an organization to manage its records. An RMA's primary management functions are categorizing and locating records and identifying records that are due for disposition. RMA software also stores, retrieves, and disposes of the electronic records that are stored in its repository.

Records Management Officer (RMO) An agency designated and qualified representative who acts as liaison with DORIS on agencywide records management practices and projects. (E.g., records schedule revision, disposition of records meeting retention, project alignment with current policies and practices, etc.)

Records Retention See Retention Period.

Records Retention Schedule A records schedule or retention schedule is an agency manual or directive containing the records descriptions and disposition instructions approved by DORIS.

Replication A strategy of creating duplicate copies of data. .

Retention Period The total length of time a record must be kept because it is needed for ongoing business, to document an action, or for statutory reasons.

Risk Acceptability/Tolerance Matrix Represents an agency's tolerance level for acceptable and unacceptable risks.

Risk Analysis The systematic use of available information to determine how often specified events may occur and the magnitude of the consequences if they do occur. In terms of records management, risk analysis is used to evaluate the probability of the risks identified in the risk assessment and the impact those risks would have on your records and information.

Risk Assessment An examination of the potential harm that may result from exposure to certain hazards. In terms of records management, risk assessment is used to identify the risks to your records and information. It includes two main components: Risk Identification, and Risk Analysis and Prioritization.

Risk Factor An overall rating of the seriousness of a single risk. To determine the risk factor of the risk event, you multiply the probability rating by the impact rating.

Risk Management The process of identifying (risk assessment) and evaluating risk and then developing strategies to manage the risk.

Role A Users Employees with “substantial policy discretion” (also known as policymakers) listed on annual designation of policymakers with the Conflict of Interest Board. Includes but is not limited to: agency heads, deputy agency heads, assistant agency heads, and public servants in charge of any major office, division, bureau or unit of an agency. Email records in the accounts of employees designated in Role A shall be retained for the duration of the person’s employment at the agency. The email shall then be transferred to the Municipal Archives where it will be appraised and may be retained for historical, research, cultural or other enduring value. Please see [RMD-P-2021-07 - Email Retention Policy.pdf \(nyc.gov\)](#).

Role B Users All agency staff not designated as Role A are considered Role B users. The email records in the account of a Role B user will be retained for eight (8) years and then destroyed absent a litigation hold. Role B email is eligible for auto-deletion. Email exchanged by Role B users that deals with significant issues can be saved to an appropriate file and drive outside the email system. The agency General Counsel may also assign a Role B user to the Role A group as necessary and proper. Please see [RMD-P-2021-07 - Email Retention Policy.pdf \(nyc.gov\)](#).

Scheduled Records Records whose lifecycle is defined and documented (e.g., record function and description, retention time aligned to current City and/or State guidelines, disposition trigger and instructions, etc.) and has final disposition approval by DORIS.

Scheduling The process of determining and recording in a records schedule the appropriate retention period and ultimate disposition of a series. The records thus provided for are called scheduled records.

Senior Level Executive (SLE) A senior level official responsible for reviewing records management practices and consulting with agency Records Management Officer and DORIS on agencywide projects. (E.g., conversion to electronic records management, prompt disposition of eligible records, etc.). Please see [Mayoral Directive No. 2015-3.pdf \(nyc.gov\)](#).

Series See Record Series.

SharePoint A web-based collaborative platform developed by Microsoft. Record Point Records 365 has a connector for this platform to support records management in accordance with NYC records policies.

Shared Drives (also known as network drives) Typically used to store and share content. Agencies have also used shared drives to group and store content by function, project, committee, or other logical category. The use of shared drives poses recordkeeping challenges because agencies may store content that includes Federal records and non-record materials.

Social Media Social media tools use Internet and web-based technologies (often called Web 2.0 technologies) to integrate technology, social interaction, and content creation. Social media use the “wisdom of crowds” to connect information in a collaborative manner online. Through social media, individuals or collaborations of individuals create web content, organize content, edit or comment on content, combine content, and share content.



Social media platform A website or application that enables users to publish and share information.

Stakeholder Can be broadly defined as people and or organizations who may affect, be affected by, or perceive themselves to be affected by a decision or activity.

Scope Of Work (SOW) Document explaining all the components of a digitization project such as goals and extent of project, milestones, timelines, information on indexing, format, naming conventions, and record series as well as specifics of quality assurance process.

Subject Files A collection of files relating to a topic, person, place, or event. Can include but is not limited to correspondence, reference materials, studies, clippings, and photos, and may include a variety of photos.

Sustainable Format The ability to access an electronic record throughout its lifecycle, regardless of the technology used when it was originally created.

Systems Development Life Cycle (SDLC) The SDLC process provides a structured and standardized process for all phases of any system development effort.

Temporary Record Records eligible for disposal after their specified retention period has been met. Retention periods can be found on the agency's Records Retention Schedule.

Transfer The process of moving records from one location to another, especially from office space to off-site storage facilities, from one agency to another, or from an agency office to the Municipal Archives.

Transitory Information (a.k.a. transitory records) Business Information created or received during day-to-day business operations that does not have Appreciable Value to Company operations beyond a short period of time (e.g., a daily stock report). Transitory Information should be disposed of as soon as it no longer has appreciable value to the City's operations and is not subject to any applicable Preservation Notice.

Unauthorized Disposal The improper removal of records without DORIS approval or the willful or accidental destruction of records without regard to a DORIS approved records schedule.

Unscheduled Records Records whose final disposition has not been approved by DORIS. Unscheduled records may not be destroyed or deleted.

Vital Records Essential agency records that are needed to meet operational responsibilities under national security emergencies or other emergency or disaster conditions ("emergency operating records"), or to protect the legal and financial rights of the government and those affected by government activities ("legal and financial rights records"). Vital records are also known as essential information.

Working Files (also called Working Papers) Documents and data that an employee generates during the normal course of business for the purpose of convenience or self-reference, and which are not intended to communicate or document information for posterity. These records may be disposed of after an adequate retention period after which it is no longer needed or of value. Please see [RMD-P-2021-08 - Policy on Individuals Notes and Working Papers.pdf \(nyc.gov\)](#)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- [DORIS Policies Page](#)
- [NIST SP 800-122, Guide to Protecting the Confidentiality of Personally Identifiable Information \(PII\)](#)
- [KA2 Reference KT: NARA Records Management Key Terms and Acronyms](#)
- [National Archives Guide to Aggregate Item Schedules](#)
- [NYC Charter](#)
- [Mayoral Directive No. 2015-3.pdf \(nyc.gov\)](#)
- [Policy on Naming Conventions and Metadata \(nyc.gov\)](#)
- [RMD-P-2021-07 - Email Retention Policy.pdf \(nyc.gov\)](#)
- [Society of American Archivists Glossary](#)
- [NARA Records Management Key Terms and Acronyms](#)

