

# **General Records Retention Schedules for Data Processing and Electronic Records of State Agencies and Institutions**



**South Carolina Department of Archives and History  
Archives and Records Management Service Area  
1919 Blanding Street, Columbia  
South Carolina 29201**

# General records retention schedules for data processing and electronic records of state agencies and institutions 1996

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## Introduction

The State Archives has prepared these general retention and disposition schedules to give state government agencies and state-supported colleges and universities the legal authorization to retain and dispose of common non-permanent data processing and electronic records (hereinafter common non-permanent electronic records). The schedules will allow these government agencies and institutions to dispose of electronic records of non permanent value regularly and legally. In preparing the schedules, the Archives consulted with representatives of the Comptroller General's Office; the State Treasurer's Office; the State Auditor's Office; the Attorney General's Office; the Division of Finance and Administration of the Office of Executive Policy and Programs of the Governor's Office; the Office of Information Resources of the State Budget and Control Board; selected state-supported colleges and universities; and other information resource management, information technology, and data processing professionals from selected state agencies.

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## Purpose

The schedules are designed to:

- give your agency or institution uniform guidelines for the retention and disposition of non-permanent electronic records;
- make sure your agency or institution retains for as long as necessary non-permanent electronic records needed for administrative, audit, legal, litigation, fiscal, research, and other requirements;
- promote the cost-effective management of these records;
- give your agency or institution the legal authorization it needs to dispose regularly of its obsolete electronic records.

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## Statutory authority

Section 30-1-90(B) of the *Code of Laws of South Carolina, 1976*, as amended, authorizes the State Archives to promulgate as state regulations, general schedules for records common to state government agencies and educational institutions. The South Carolina Public Records Act and the Freedom of Information Act define as records "all books, papers, maps, photographs, cards, tapes, recordings, or other documentary materials regardless of physical form or characteristics, prepared, owned, used, in the possession of or retained by a public body." The term "electronic records" merely distinguishes documents on computers from paper records. On 24 May 1996, the General Assembly approved the schedules in this publication as Regulations 12-1100 through 12-1206.

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## Definitions of schedules

A records retention schedule describes one or several records series, shows the length of time the records should be retained, and indicates their final disposition. Schedules are of two types—specific and general.

**Specific Records Retention Schedules**—these schedules are prepared and approved specifically for your agency or institution; your agency or institutional name will appear on these.

**General Records Retention Schedules**—these schedules are state regulations issued by the State Archives and published in the *Code of Laws of South Carolina 1976*, as amended. When a general schedule applies to records already covered under a specific schedule, the general schedule will supersede the specific schedule unless you wish to opt out of using the general schedule.



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### Special Provisions

**Opting out**—You may already have approved specific schedules that cover some of the same records as the general schedules. If you prefer to continue using these specific schedules, the regulations allow you to “opt out” of using the general schedules. The regulations will also let you “opt out” of using general schedules if you wish to establish new specific schedules instead.

**Unique records**—These general schedules do not list records that are unique to your agency or institution. To control the retention and disposition of these, you should refer to your specific schedules. If you have no specific schedules, contact your records officer. If you do not know who your records officer is, contact our State Records Services Unit at 734-7914.

**Use of the State Records Center** —We do not accept any data processing or electronic records governed by these general schedules for storage in the State Records Center.

**Confidential and restricted records**—Agency and institutional records officers and records custodians should ensure that confidential records are accessed and disposed of according to federal, state, and basic records management requirements.

**Exceptions to minimum retention periods** —These general schedules establish minimum retention periods for the official copy of your agency or institutional records. Although most records can be destroyed when their minimum retentions have been met, you may need to keep some records longer to satisfy specific requirements (for example, audit and legal requirements). Be sure those requirements have been met before you dispose of those records.

**Copies**—These general schedules do not cover copies of records, which you may have made for convenience, information, or duplication. You may destroy copies when you no longer need them.

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These schedules apply to:

Any department of the state; any state board, commission, agency, and authority; any public or governmental body of the state; state-supported colleges and universities; any organization, or agency supported in whole or in part by public funds or expending public funds, including committees, subcommittees, advisory committees, and any quasi-governmental body of the state. Whenever the term “agency” is used in this publication it refers to all the above.

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These schedules do not apply to:

Any political subdivision of the state, including counties, municipalities, townships, school districts, special purpose districts, and any quasi-governmental subdivisions. These schedules do not apply to electronic versions of permanent records covered by other general schedules. In addition, the electronic versions of non-permanent records covered by the general schedule for financial records of state agencies can not be applied to state agencies/educational institutions that do not use the Statewide Accounting and Reporting System (STARS).

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### General schedule format

Each record series listed in the general schedules is presented in the following format:

**Regulation number and series title**—The first line includes the regulation number, which is used for control, and the title most commonly used by agencies or educational institution .

**Part A.—Description:** A short statement describing the use and informational content of the record

series. In many cases, the description also specifies the agency or institution that creates the series.

**Part B—Retention:** The time period indicating the minimum length of time that records should be retained by the office before their disposition can take place.

Example: Data Processing Hardware Documentation

**12-1110 Data Processing Hardware Documentation**

**A. Description:** Documents the use, operation, and maintenance of an agency’s data processing equipment. Information includes operating manuals, hardware/operating system requirements, hardware configurations, and equipment control systems.

**B. Retention:** Until no longer needed for reference or until hardware is disposed of; delete or destroy.

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Explanation of terms used in retention statements

“Until no longer needed for reference”—Records are to be kept until you decide they have no further reference value.

“X’ years, destroy”—Records may be destroyed after x number of years provided you have met the terms mentioned in Sections 12-1100 and 12-1200 of the regulation.

“X’ years, delete.”-Records may be deleted after x number of years provided you have met the terms mentioned in Sections 12-1100 and 12-1200 of the regulation.

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Using these schedules effectively

- Before using these general schedules, you should contact your agency/educational institution records officer who should coordinate all activities relating to the retention and disposition of your electronic records and function as a liaison with the State Archives in administering the records management program of your agency/educational institution. If you do not know who the records officer is, contact the State Records Services Unit at 734-7914.

- Agency/educational institution records officers should work with other staff such as users, information resource management, data processing, and information technology professionals to coordinate the regular disposition of obsolete electronic records. Disposition should be carried out periodically—at least once a year. To streamline disposition, staff should review filing arrangements, cut off files periodically, and develop procedures to segregate inactive and obsolete files.

- Generally, records should be destroyed or deleted when the minimum retention periods have been met, unless they are needed to meet specific requirements (see Sections 12-1100 and 12-1200). Although you are not required to destroy or delete records at the end of their minimum retention periods, obsolete electronic records should not occupy office and disk storage space.

- The titles and descriptions of record series listed in these general schedules may not reflect exactly the titles and descriptions you use. If you are not certain whether the schedules apply to a specific record in your office, please contact the State Records Services Unit at 734-7914.

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How to use the general schedules

1. Study the general schedules and compare them with your specific schedules, if you have any, to determine which schedules you will use. If you wish to use your specific schedules instead of the general schedules, follow the established procedure for those specific schedules.



2. Locate and examine all your records.

3. Match each records series with the title and description on the general schedule. Then follow the retention instructions for that series. (Note: you are not required to request authorization from the State Archives to dispose of common non-permanent electronic records covered by these general schedules).

**“Optical Disk: Policy Statement and Recommended Practices”**

If you are maintaining non-permanent records in an optical disk system, please comply with the Archives and History “Optical Disk: Policy Statement and Recommended Practices.”

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Contacting the State Archives—When and whom?

**When?**

1. You have questions about using general schedules.
2. You need to prepare or revise specific schedules.
3. You need help with your records management duties.

**Whom?**

State Records Services Unit  
State Records Center  
1919 Blanding Street  
Columbia, SC 29201  
Phone (803) 734-7914; Fax (803) 734-3387  
We are on the Inter-Agency mailing list.

## General Retention Schedule for Data Processing Records of State Agencies and Institutions

### **12-1100. Introduction and general matters; application of schedule.**

This regulation provides disposal authorization to state agencies and state-supported colleges and universities for the official copies of certain non-permanent electronic records and specified hardcopy (paper) or microform records that are integrally related to the data processing. Convenience, informational, and other extra copies are not governed by this regulation and may be disposed of when no longer needed for reference.

### **Electronic records covered by this general schedule**

This general schedule applies to disposable official copies of non-permanent data processing electronic records created or received by state agencies and institutions. It covers records created by computer operators, programmers, analysts, systems administrators, and all personnel with access to a computer. In addition, this general schedule covers certain disposable electronic records produced by end users in office automation applications. These disposition authorities apply to the categories of electronic records described in this general schedule, regardless of the type of computer used to create or store these records.

### **Electronic records not covered by this general schedule**

This general schedule does not cover all electronic records. Especially, it does not cover electronic records which should be retained permanently. Official copies of electronic records which are not covered by this general schedule may not be disposed of unless authorized by the State Archives.

### **How to use this general schedule**

The records covered by many sections in this general schedule are authorized for erasure or deletion when the agency or institution determines that they are no longer needed for administrative, financial, reference, legal, audit, or other operational purposes. The State Archives cannot establish a more specific retention that would be appropriate in all applications. Each agency or institution should, when appropriate, determine a more specific disposition instruction, such as “After X update cycles; delete” or “X years, delete or destroy” for inclusion in its records disposition procedures or manual. State agencies and institutions are not required to request authorization from the State Archives to dispose of data processing records covered by this general schedule.

State agencies or institutions may “opt out” of this general schedule and request the continuing use of existing schedules or the establishment of specific retention schedules for their electronic records when appropriate, necessary, or in order to avoid conflict with other laws or regulations.

**12-1101. through 12-1104.** (Reserved for Future Use)

### **12-1105. Automated Program Listing/Source Code**

**A. Description:** Program code which generates the machine language instructions used to operate an automated system, either paper or electronic.

**B. Retention:** Until no longer needed for reference; delete or destroy.





**12-1106. Computer Run and Scheduling Requests**

**A. Description:** Used to schedule computer runs. Information includes daily schedules, run reports, run requests, and other records documenting the successful completion of a run.

**B. Retention:** Until no longer needed for reference; delete or destroy.

**12-1107. Computer System Test Files**

**A. Description:** Created solely to test system or program performance, as well as related print-outs and documentation.

**B. Retention:** After user approves test results and until no longer needed for reference; delete or destroy.

**12-1108. Computer Usage Files**

**A. Description:** Used to monitor computer system usage. Information includes electronic files or automated logs, log-in files, system usage files, data entry logs, summary computer usage reports, audit trail files, valid transaction files, and records of individual and network computer program usage.

**B. Retention:** Until no longer needed for reference; delete or destroy.

**12-1109. Data/Database Dictionary Reports**

**A. Description:** Periodic printouts from a data/database directory system. Information includes data element attribute reports, database scheme, and related records used for reference purposes.

**B. Retention:** Until superseded or no longer used by agency; destroy.

**12-1110. Data Processing Hardware Documentation**

**A. Description:** Documents the use, operation, and maintenance of an agency's data processing equipment. Information includes operating manuals, hardware/operating system requirements, hardware configurations, and equipment control systems.

**B. Retention:** Until no longer needed for reference or until hardware is disposed of; delete or destroy.

**12-1111. Data Processing Subject Files**

**A. Description:** Used to support the administration of agency data processing services. Information includes correspondence, memoranda, reports, and reference publications.

**B. Retention:** Until superseded or no longer needed for reference; delete or destroy.

**12-1112. Disaster Preparedness and Recovery Plans**

**A. Description:** Documents the protection and reestablishment of data processing services and equipment in case of a disaster. Information includes procedures, checklists, and emergency phone numbers and addresses.

**B. Retention:** Until superseded by revised plan; delete or destroy.

**12-1113. Downloaded and Copied Data**

**A. Description:** Used to distribute data to individuals or program units for reference and use. Information includes downloaded, copied, merged and/or derived data not altered or augmented to support program-specific needs.

**B. Retention:** Until no longer needed for reference; delete or destroy.

**12-1114. Finding Aids (or Indexes)**

**A. Description:** Used to facilitate the search and/or retrieval of electronic information/records. Information includes indexes, lists, registers, and other finding aids.

**B. Retention:** Until no longer needed for reference or when related records are destroyed whichever is later; delete or destroy.

**12-1115. Input/Source Documents**

**A. Description:** Used solely as input for a digital master file or database. Also used to create, update, or modify the records in an electronic medium and not required for audit and legal purposes. Information includes non-electronic documents and/or forms, uncalibrated and unvalidated digital or analog data collected during observation or measurement activities or research and development programs.

**B. Retention:** Until the information has been converted to an electronic medium, or when no longer needed to support the reconstruction of the master file, whichever is later; delete or destroy.

**12-1116. Inventories of Circuits**

**A. Description:** Documents network circuits used by the agency. Information includes automated or paper records, circuit number, vendor, cost per month, type of connection, terminal series, software, contact person, and other relevant information about the circuit.

**B. Retention:** Until updated, superseded, or no longer needed for reference; delete or destroy.

**12-1117. Network Site/Equipment Support Files**

**A. Description:** Used to document support services provided to specific sites and computer to computer interfaces on a network. Information includes site visit reports, trouble reports, service histories, and related correspondence.

**B. Retention:** Until no longer needed for reference; delete or destroy.

**12-1118. Print File**

**A. Description:** Used to produce hard copy publications and/or printouts of tabulations, ledgers, registers, and reports. Information includes unaltered files extracted from a master file or database.

**B. Retention:** Until no longer needed for reference; delete or destroy.

**12-1119. Records of Chargebacks to Data Processing Services Users**

**A. Description:** Used to document and calculate costs, and bill program units for computer usage and data processing services. Information includes electronic and manual records. These records are also used for cost recovery, budgeting, or administrative purposes.

**B. Retention:** 3 years after creation; delete or destroy.

**12-1120. Security Backup File**

**A. Description:** Electronic file maintained to backup the master file or database in case the master file or database is damaged or inadvertently erased. Information consists of data identical in physical format to a master file or database.

**B. Retention:** 3 database/master file backup cycles; delete or destroy.



**12-1121. Summary of Extracted Data Files**

**A. Description:** Used to distribute data to individuals or program units for reference and use. Information consists of summary or aggregate data from a master file or database.

**B. Retention:** Until no longer needed for reference; delete or destroy.

**12-1122. System Documentation (Non-Permanent Systems)**

**A. Description:** Used to plan, develop, operate, and maintain electronic records and software. Information includes data systems specifications, file specifications, code books, records layouts, user guides, output specifications, system instructions, tutorials, reference guides, final reports, and other related documentation.

**B. Retention:** Until superseded, updated, or no longer needed for reference; delete or destroy.

**12-1123. System Users Access Records**

**A. Description:** Used by system administrators to control or monitor users' access. Information includes user account records, security logs, and password files.

**B. Retention:** Until updated, superseded, or no longer needed for reference; delete or destroy.

**12-1124. Technical Reformat File**

**A. Description:** Used to document information interchange of master files or databases. Information includes electronic files written with varying technical specification consisting of data copied from a master file or database.

**B. Retention:** Until no longer needed for reference; delete or destroy.



## General Retention Schedule for Electronic Records Common to Most State Agencies and Institutions

### **12-1200. Introduction and general matters; application of schedule.**

This regulation provides disposal authorization for the official electronic versions of non-permanent records scheduled for destruction under one or more sections in General Records Retention Schedules for Administrative and Personnel Records (sections 12-300 through 12-423), General Records Retention Schedule for Financial Records of State Agencies (sections 12-700 through 12-757), and General Records Retention Schedule for State Colleges and Universities (sections 12-800 through 12-813.10). It also provides disposal authorization for the official electronic versions of non-permanent records scheduled for destruction under specific retention schedules approved by each state agency or state-supported college or university, the State Archives, and the Budget and Control Board.

#### **Electronic records covered by this general schedule**

This general schedule applies to disposable official copies of non-permanent electronic records created or received by state agencies and institutions. It covers records created by computer operators, programmers, analysts, systems administrators, and all personnel with access to a computer. In addition, this general schedule covers certain disposable electronic records produced by end users in office automation applications. These disposition authorities apply to the categories of electronic records described in this general schedule, regardless of the type of computer used to create or store these records.

#### **Electronic records not covered by this general schedule**

This general schedule does not cover all electronic records. Especially, it does not cover electronic records which should be retained permanently. Official copies of electronic records not covered by this schedule may not be disposed of unless authorized by the State Archives. Convenience, informational and other extra copies are not covered by this general schedule and may be disposed of when no longer needed for reference.

#### **How to use this general schedule**

The records covered by several sections in this general schedule are authorized for erasure or deletion when the agency or institution determines that they are no longer needed for administrative, financial, reference, legal, audit, or other operational purposes. The State Archives cannot establish a more specific retention that would be appropriate in all applications. Each agency or institution should, when appropriate, determine a more specific disposition instruction, such as “After X update cycles; delete” or “X years, delete or destroy” for inclusion in its records disposition directives or manual. State agencies and institutions are not required to request authorization to dispose of electronic records covered by this general schedule.

State agencies or institutions may opt out of this general schedule and request the continuing use of existing schedules or the establishment of specific retention schedules for their electronic records when appropriate, necessary, or in order to avoid conflict with other laws or regulations.

**12-1201 through 12-1204** (Reserved for Future Use)

### **12-1205. Electronic Versions of Records Scheduled for Destruction Under General Schedules**

**A. Description:** Electronic versions of records that are scheduled for destruction under one or more sections in the General Records Retention Schedules for Administrative and Personnel Records



(sections 12-300 through 12-423), General Records Retention Schedules for Financial Records of State Agencies (sections 12-700 through 12-757), and General Records Retention Schedule for State Colleges and Universities (sections 12-800 through 12-813.10).

**Exclusions:** 1. This section does not apply to General Schedule sections that pertain to permanent records.

2. The General Records Retention Schedule for Financial Records applies only to state agencies which use the Statewide Accounting and Reporting System (STARS).

**B. Retention:** After the expiration of the retention period authorized by the general schedules; delete.

**12-1206. Electronic Versions of Records Scheduled for Destruction Under Approved Specific Retention Schedules**

**A. Description:** Electronic versions of records that are scheduled for destruction under one or more specific retention schedules approved by each state agency or institution, the State Archives, and the State Budget and Control Board.

**B. Retention:** After the expiration of the retention period authorized by the specific retention schedules; delete.

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