

State of North Dakota
Information Technology Department
Records Management Division

Records Retention Program

The Records Management Division of ITD, under authority of the North Dakota Century Code [Chapter 54-46](#) is responsible for establishing, implementing, and administering a records management program for all state agencies. A key component of any comprehensive records management program is researching and preparing records retention schedules that identify how long records are to be maintained. Administrative, fiscal, historical, and legal requirements are considered when establishing retention timeframes.

A Records Retention Schedule is developed to:

- Provide direction to state employees on how long records are to be retained.
- Specify how long records are retained in active file systems and inactive storage.
- Identify records which have important historical or archival value and insure their protection and long-term maintenance.
- Promote efficiency in records processing, distribution, and storage.
- Eliminate maintenance of duplicate records, and,
- Insure access to public records.

Record Retention Schedules are developed by identifying a series of related records. A [Records Series Description \(SFN 2042\)](#) is completed for each series of records. The form collects information about the content of the records in the series and identifies how they are used within the agency/division. A unique control number, based on the [North Dakota Subject Classification System](#), is assigned to each series of records within the agency. Records series commonly used by all agencies are identified on the [General Records Retention Schedule](#). All other records are found on agency/division specific retention schedules. Each Records Series Description is reviewed by the Records Management Task Force. Members of the Task Force are as follows:

- State Auditor - Fiscal reporting or audit requirements.
- Office of Attorney General - Federal, State, or other legal retention requirements.
- State Archivist - Historical or archival needs.
- State Records Administrator - Assignment of overall retention timeframe.

The longest retention timeframe specified is generally selected as the retention requirement. The department head and Records Management Task Force representatives sign a [Records Retention Schedule \(SFN 2043\)](#). A Records Retention Schedule w/Descriptions is then created. It is used by Records Management and agency/division staff for administering the Records Management and Retention Program.