



Using Records Retention Schedules: Why Are Destruction/Transfer Records Kept for 50 Years?

Purpose: Help state and local government agencies with the rationale and strategies for managing the retention of records documenting the destruction/transfer of public records.

DISPOSITION AUTHORITY NUMBER (DAN)	DESCRIPTION OF RECORDS	RETENTION AND DISPOSITION ACTION	DESIGNATION
GS 11001 Rev. 2 / GS50-09-06 Rev. 2	<i>Destruction/Transfer of Records</i> Records documenting the destruction and/or transfer of legal custody of the agency's public records. Includes, but is not limited to: • Affidavits; • Agency authorizations; • Certificates/notices of destruction; • Destruction logs; • Transfer agreements/transmittals.	Retain for 50 years after end of calendar year <i>then</i> Destroy.	NON-ARCHIVAL NON-ESSENTIAL OFM

(State Government General Records Retention Schedule / Local Government Common Records Retention Schedule (CORE))

Why 50 Years?

Agencies are sometimes asked to search for records going back decades for litigation, public records requests, or internal needs. Destruction/transfer records show that the agency no longer has these records, and account for why.

While the records retention schedules preserved by the Archives are evidence of what the agency was authorized to do with the records, the destruction/transfer records are evidence of both what the agency actually did with the records and that the records were lawfully destroyed/transferred with the requirements at that time.

Strategies for Managing Destruction/Transfer Records

1. Not all records relating to the destruction/transfer of records need to be retained in accordance with Destruction/Transfer of Records (DAN GS 11001/GS50-09-06).
2. Focus on retaining the most concise summary records documenting the destruction/transfer.
3. Other records can be destroyed in accordance with Records Documented as Part of More Formalized Records (DAN GS 50012/GS2016-009).
4. Digitize paper records where appropriate.

Additional advice regarding the management of public records is available from
Washington State Archives: