



Disposal

Authorisation

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Contact for enquiries

Government Recordkeeping Directorate

Archives New Zealand

Phone: +64 4 499 5595

Email: rkadvice@dia.govt.nz

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1 Introduction

A key element in effective information and records management is implementing disposal. This ensures an organisation retains information and records for as long as they are required and then, when they are no longer required, disposes of them in an appropriate manner. To implement disposal under the *Public Records Act 2005* (the Act), an organisation is required to have authorisation from the Chief Archivist.

2 Authorisation to Dispose

Disposal authorities are the legal instruments, issued by the Chief Archivist, which provide the formal authorisation for the disposal of records in accordance with the provisions in section 18 of the Act. They set mandatory minimum retention periods and give authority for consequent disposal actions for the information and records they describe.

Authorisation required for disposal of information and records includes:

- formal disposal authorisation by the Chief Archivist, in the form of a general or organisation specific authority
- internal authorisation through an organisation's internal approval process by the administrative head or an Executive Sponsor.

The Chief Archivist's authorisation does not override any other legal obligation to retain the information and records past the minimum period outlined in the disposal authority.

3 Types of disposal authorities

3.1 Organisation specific disposal authorities

Organisation specific disposal authorities identify the information and records classes that are specific to an organisation, how long they need to be retained and whether they are to be transferred as public archives or destroyed. These authorisations are currently valid for 10 years. Authorised disposal authorities can be viewed by searching online via [Archway](#). If your organisation does not have a current disposal authority to cover its specific functions, please contact Archives New Zealand.

3.2 General disposal authorities

General disposal authorities provide ongoing authorisation for the disposal of non-core business information and records that are common across organisations. Such information and records are common, transitory and predominately of low value. Public offices **must** use the general disposal authorities.

Local authorities **can** use the general disposal authorities as best practice. They are incorporated into the Association of Local Government Management Information Management (ALGIM) Toolkit.

Current general disposal authorities are:

- DA558 General Disposal Authority 6 – Common corporate service public records
- DA576 General Disposal Authority 7 – Facilitative, transitory, and/or short-term value records.

3.3 Sector general disposal authorities

There are four sectors of public organisations which are covered by sector-based disposal authorities. These are district health boards, institutes of technology and polytechnics, universities, and schools. These authorities identify common classes (or groups) of information and records, their retention periods and disposal actions. Authorised sector general disposal authorities can be viewed by searching online via [Archway](#).

3.4 Local authorities

The Act allows the Chief Archivist to declare certain local authority information and records to be “protected records”.

A retention and disposal schedule that includes protected and additional local authority records, endorsed by the Chief Archivist, is available for use through ALGIM. To check if your local authority is currently signed up to use the ALGIM Retention & Disposal toolkit please contact ALGIM directly. Contact details are available via their website: www.algim.org.nz.

4 Disposal actions under the Act

Organisations can dispose of information and records by transfer, destruction, alteration, sale, or discharge.

4.1 Transfer

Every public office must transfer from its possession and control information and records that have been in existence for 25 years either to the possession of Archives New Zealand or to an approved repository. In both cases the control of the information and records pass to the Chief Archivist.

The Chief Archivist can also direct the transfer of control of local authority information and records.

Transfer also refers to the moving of information and records from one organisation to another as part of a broader restructuring. This may occur when organisations merge or when functions or activities move between organisations.

4.2 Destruction

Destruction means destroying the information and records beyond any means of reconstruction.

4.3 Alteration

Alteration includes any annotating or partially deleting information or records or metadata.

4.4 Sale

Sale is only likely to be permitted in exceptional circumstances.

4.5 Discharge

This means cancelling the status of public information or records, for example where personal information and records are given back to the people they are about.