

## WHAT HAPPENS AFTER A SCHEDULE IS SUBMITTED TO NARA?

The average processing time for a schedule is currently 330 days from date of receipt to final approval, with 120 and 180-day turnaround for "fast-track" schedules.\* It is NARA's intention to shorten this time in the future.

Steps NARA takes to process schedules:

1. Receive schedule and date stamp.
2. Conduct initial review of schedule
3. Register in tracking system.
4. Acknowledge receipt of schedule via postcard or email.
5. Examine records in agency and appraise.
6. Prepare appraisal report with recommendations.
7. Review schedule and report within NARA to internal stakeholders.
8. Publish Federal Register notice for public comment (about 110 days total for publication and comment).
9. Consult with the agency on any revisions.
10. Forward SF 115 for internal approval, including signature by Archivist of the United States.
11. Transmit copies to records officers.

## FURTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION

**36 CFR, Chapter XII, Subchapter B, Records Management:**

[www.nara.gov/nara/ctr/subch-b.html](http://www.nara.gov/nara/ctr/subch-b.html)

**Information about scheduling records:**

[www.nara.gov/nara/ctr/cfr1228b.html](http://www.nara.gov/nara/ctr/cfr1228b.html)

**Information about using General Records Schedules:**

[www.nara.gov/nara/ctr/cfr1228c.html](http://www.nara.gov/nara/ctr/cfr1228c.html)

**Information about transfer of records to records storage facilities:**

[www.nara.gov/nara/ctr/cfr1228l.html](http://www.nara.gov/nara/ctr/cfr1228l.html)

**Information about transfer of permanent records to the National Archives:**

[www.nara.gov/nara/ctr/cfr1228i.html](http://www.nara.gov/nara/ctr/cfr1228i.html)

**General Records Schedules**

**(GRS):** [ardor.nara.gov/grs/index.html](http://ardor.nara.gov/grs/index.html)

**Examples of Agency Schedules:**

[ardor.nara.gov/index.html](http://ardor.nara.gov/index.html)

**NARA Records Management Publications**

*(Coming soon - Disposition of Federal Records):*

[www.nara.gov/publications/recsmgmt.html](http://www.nara.gov/publications/recsmgmt.html)

**NARA Records Management Training:**

[www.nara.gov/records/rmtrain.html](http://www.nara.gov/records/rmtrain.html)

# TIPS FOR SCHEDULING RECORDS



National Archives and Records Administration  
Office of Records Services - Washington, DC  
Life Cycle Management Division

## TIPS FOR SUBMITTING A SCHEDULE TO NARA:

### DO

- Update skills. Enroll in NARA records management training courses.
- Know your agency's organizational structure, business activities, and recordkeeping requirements.
- Inventory your records before preparing a schedule.
- Ensure that retention periods meet all legal, fiscal, and administrative needs.
- Apply the General Records Schedules where appropriate.
- Include all records in all media, including word processing and email.
- Obtain General Accounting Office concurrence, if necessary.\*
- Contact your NARA liaison before submitting the schedule if you have any questions.
- Prioritize schedule submissions, so NARA can begin working first on what is most important to you.
- Include disposition instructions for HQ as well as field locations, if appropriate.

### Make sure series descriptions answer all of the following questions:

**WHO?** What office is responsible for the records? (For organizational schedules)

**WHAT?** What types of records are included in the series or system? What items are being superseded?

**WHY?** Why were these records created? What business activities do they support?

**WHEN?** If the records are proposed for permanent retention, what is their date span, current volume, annual accumulation, arrangement, and access restrictions?

### Avoid these common pitfalls:

- Don't write a schedule based solely on a review of previously approved schedules, without an inventory or review of the actual records
- Don't write a schedule based on what records you "think" the staff is or should be creating.
- Don't submit a schedule that has not been approved by appropriate agency staff.
- Don't include vague disposition statements or series descriptions filled with jargon.
- Don't forget to review your schedules annually and submit revisions to NARA

## FINAL CHECKLIST

To expedite the processing of your schedule, double check that you have done all of the following before you submit it to NARA:

- Is the GAO concurrence box checked?
- Is the schedule signed by an authorized official?
- Are items described clearly?
- Are there clear and complete cutoff and disposition instructions?
- Did you include citations for superseded items?
- Did you provide a contact name and phone number?

## SAMPLE SCHEDULE

Office of Program Manager

- 1 Subject files. Letters, memorandums, fact sheets, weekly reports to the Director, and minutes of administrative meetings.
  - a Recordkeeping copy.

TEMPORARY. Cut off annually. Retire to records storage facility one year after cutoff. Destroy 3 years after cutoff.
  - b. Electronic copies created by word processing or email systems.

TEMPORARY. Delete after recordkeeping conv has been produced

\*See Title 8 of the GAO Policy and Procedures Manual for Guidance for Federal Agencies