

**REQUEST FOR RECORDS DISPOSITION AUTHORITY**  
(See Instructions on reverse)

*And No. 10. Feb 11/81 ✓*

TO **GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION,  
NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS SERVICE, WASHINGTON, DC 20408**

1 FROM (AGENCY OR ESTABLISHMENT)  
*General Services Administration*

2 MAJOR SUBDIVISION  
*National Archives and Records Service*

3 MINOR SUBDIVISION  
*Office of Federal Records Centers*

4 NAME OF PERSON WITH WHOM TO CONFER  
*Bennie DeWhitt NNR*

5 TEL EXT  
*724-1080*

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JOB NO  
**NCL-GRS-81-6**

DATE RECEIVED  
**2-11-81**

NOTIFICATION TO AGENCY

In accordance with the provisions of 44 U.S.C. 3303a the disposal request including amendments is approved except for items that may be stamped disposal not approved or withdrawn in column 10

*5-4-81*  
Date

*Robert W. [Signature]*  
Archivist of the United States

6 CERTIFICATE OF AGENCY REPRESENTATIVE

I hereby certify that I am authorized to act for this agency in matters pertaining to the disposal of the agency's records, that the records proposed for disposal in this Request of 15 page(s) are not now needed for the business of this agency or will not be needed after the retention periods specified

A Request for immediate disposal

B Request for disposal after a specified period of time or request for permanent retention

C DATE <i>2/9/81</i>	D SIGNATURE OF AGENCY REPRESENTATIVE <i>Jean K. Fraley</i>	E TITLE <i>For Acting Director, Records Disposition Division</i>
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7 ITEM NO	8 DESCRIPTION OF ITEM (With Inclusive Dates or Retention Periods)	9 SAMPLE OR JOB NO	10 ACTION TAKEN
	<p align="center">GENERAL RECORDS SCHEDULE 20</p> <p align="center"><u>Machine-Readable Records</u></p> <p>The attached request revises GRS-20, Machine-Readable Records.</p>		

## GENERAL RECORDS SCHEDULE 20

### Machine-Readable Records

This schedule covers machine-readable records and the related documentation required to service them. Machine-readable records require processing and decoding for conversion to human-readable information and are usually stored on media which make them easy to modify and update. This contributes to the mistaken notion that such records are temporary or non-record material, especially as opposed to textual records containing equivalent information. Federal statutes and regulations define Federal records as the products of government business and specifically include all media on which they may be recorded. When information exists in both machine-readable and hard copy forms, including computer output microform (COM), various factors bear on the decisions of which medium should be retained for archival purposes. Among these are the relative cost of storage and preservation, the relative convenience of reference, and the facility with which most hard copy forms may be regenerated from machine-readable files (a process which is costly to reverse).

Data on magnetic tape, disk packs, magnetic drums, and punched cards may be scheduled by General Records Schedule 20. This schedule should also be applied to new media such as optical disk.

Machine-readable records differ from records on other media in four important ways:

- 1) The machine-readable media on which they are most often recorded are erasable and reusable. This introduces a cost-effectiveness factor absent in other media.
- 2) The magnetic media on which most machine-readable records are recorded is a fragile one. This makes it mandatory that such records be brought under control as early as possible in their life cycle. Ideally, control should be exercised at the time a system is created, even before it has generated records.
- 3) The ease of updating, revising or reusing machine-readable records causes their life cycle to be brief and more complex than that of other records. While master files are generally the form in which machine-readable records are retained for archival appraisal, other versions are occasionally more suitable because they contain more complete information than related master files or because they are particularly relevant to agency policy, decisions or special reports.

- 4) Because machine-readable records must be subjected to electronic processing and decoding to be converted to human-readable information, the records revealing such processes must be scheduled with the machine-readable records. These records are called "documentation" and are usually found in textual form.

The qualities that separate machine-readable records from those on other media make it difficult to produce for them a subject-oriented general schedule analogous in form to other general schedules. Thus, this schedule categorizes records for disposition standards on the basis of the kinds of records or files that are common to most ADP systems. It is divided into three parts:

Master files (Part I) constitute the definitive state of a data file in a system at a given time. Such files are categorized herein only partly on the basis of subject content. Other important considerations regarding disposition are the format of the data file and the manner in which it is updated. Such variables influence the informational value of a file.

Processing files (Part II) are those machine-readable files, aside from master files, which comprise the life cycle of most computerized records prior to the production of a given master file. Processing files -- from work files and input/source files to some valid transaction files -- are employed to create and use a master file. They are presented here separately from master files for the sake of clarity and because they generally do not qualify for long-term retention. Those files for which disposal is not authorized are so treated because they may contain more complete information than the related master file or be especially relevant to agency policy, decision, or special reports -- adequate reasons for initiating archival appraisal. The proper scheduling of processing files can increase the availability of space on machine-readable media and reduce agency expenditures for stocks of magnetic media.

Documentation (Part III) covers those records required for servicing machine-readable records -- for converting them from human-readable information to encoded data and vice versa. These are an organized series of descriptive documents required to initiate, develop, operate, and maintain specific applications of ADP systems. As might be expected, the disposition of documentation is linked to the disposition of the related machine-readable files.

"Data automation planning and operational records" are no longer included in General Records Schedule 20. They are textual records and relate to an agency's planning, procurement, and operational processes. Thus, format they may be scheduled by reference to other appropriate general records schedules.

It should be emphasized that machine-readable records that do not fit categories listed in this schedule are not authorized automatically for disposal. Disposition of such records should be authorized by submission to the National Archives and Records Service of a completed SF 115, Request for Records Disposition Authority.

The decision-table format, rather than the columnar format, is used herein to assist the user in conceptualizing the many categories and subcategories of records involved.

PART I MASTER FILES

Item	File function/ designation	Consisting of	Which are	Then
1	Statistical file	economic data on such topics as Federal expenditures, organizational economic profiles, intranational or international trade, business conditions, productivity, and/or taxes	created or received by the agency in pursuance of Federal law or in connection with the transaction of public business	Submit SF 115, Request for Records Disposition Authority
2			created under contract and are in the possession of the contractor	Submit SF 258, Request for Transfer of Records
3		social data on topics such as the family structure, education, health, behavior, opinions, employment, criminal acts and investigations, housing, transportation, personal economics, demographics, and/or groups of individuals	created or received by the agency in pursuance of Federal law or in connection with the transaction of public business	Submit SF 115, Request for Records Disposition Authority
4			created under contract and are in the possession of the contractor	Submit SF 258, Request for Transfer of Records
5		natural resources data related to the use, condition, management, and/or ownership of land, water, minerals, and/or wild-life	created or received by the agency in pursuance of Federal law or in connection with the transaction of public business	Submit SF 115, Request for Records Disposition Authority
6			created under contract and are in the possession of the contractor	Submit SF 258, Request for Transfer of Records

Part I Master Files

Item	File function/ designation	Consisting of	Which are	Then
7		emergency operations data that document military or civil operations during war, national emergencies, natural disasters, and/or civil strife	created or received by the agency in pursuance of Federal law or in connection with the transaction of public business	Submit SF 115, Request for Records Disposition Authority
8			created under contract and are in the possession of the contractor	Submit SF 258, Request for Transfer of Records
9		political or judicial data that document such activities as elections, special investigations, and/or court proceedings	created or received by the agency in pursuance of Federal law or in connection with the transaction of public business	Submit SF 115, Request for Records Disposition Authority
10			created under contract and are in the possession of the contractor	Submit SF 258, Request for Transfer of Records
11		national security and international relations data that document such activities as strategic and foreign policy assessment, intelligence collection, public opinion in foreign countries, and international negotiations including military assistance and arms limitation	created or received by the agency in pursuance of Federal law or in connection with the transaction of public business	Submit SF 115, Request for Records Disposition Authority
12			created under contract and are in the possession of the contractor	Submit SF 258, Request for Transfer of Records

Part I Master Files

Item	File function/ designation	Consisting of	Which are	Then
13	Scientific file	data such as environmental, oceanographic, atmospheric, terrestrial, and/or extraterrestrial observations and measurements, medical research and/or animal or plant husbandry investigations	created or received by an agency or national data center in pursuance of Federal law or in connection with the transaction of public business and are held in a national data center	National Data Center: Submit SF 115, Request for Disposition Authority
14			created or received by an agency and not duplicated in a national data center	Agency: Submit SF 115, Request for Disposition Authority
15			created under contract and are in the possession of the contractor	Submit SF 258, Request for Transfer of Records
16			created or received by an agency in pursuance of Federal law or in connection with the transaction of public business and duplicated in a national data center	Agency: Dispose of after three or more update cycles
17			data used in the development, fabrication, construction, testing, and/or routine operation of such things as instruments, vehicles, machinery or spacecraft	used in research and development programs

Part I Master Files

Item	File function/ designation	Consisting of	Which are	Then
18		digital or analog data used in observation or measurement activities or in research and development programs	not calibrated or validated	Dispose of after subsequent magnetic media have been created <sup>1</sup>
19	Federal loan and/ or grant file	data on individual loans or grant applications or awards	data on characteristics of individual applicants or recipients and their awards	Submit SF 115, Request for Disposition Authority
20			summary or aggregate fiscal values used for accounting purposes	Dispose of after three or more update cycles
21	Information retrieval file	indexes or tracking systems to textual or non-textual records	used to facilitate access to these materials	Dispose of as provided for the related records
22			indexes to "library materials"	used to facilitate access to published documents or reports
23	Summary file	aggregates of individual observations	created from files not authorized for disposal under this general records schedule	Submit SF 115, Request for Disposition Authority

<sup>1</sup> Schedule subsequent magnetic media under Part I, items 13-17.



Part I Master Files

Item	File function/ designation	Consisting of	Which are	Then
24			created from files authorized for disposal under this general records schedule	Dispose of as provided for related data
25	Sample and/or sub-sample file	data selected from a larger census or survey file	created for files not authorized for disposal under this general records schedule	Submit SF 115, Request for Disposition Authority
26			created for files authorized for disposal under the general records schedule	Dispose of as provided for related data
27	Housekeeping file	data for routine administrative "housekeeping" processes such as fiscal accountability, supply management, payroll administration and/or motor pool operations	required for GAO site audit	Dispose of in accordance with instructions applicable to hard copy <sup>2</sup>
28			not required for GAO site audit but serve as record copy	Dispose of in accordance with instructions applicable to hard copy <sup>2</sup>
29			not required for GAO site audit and do not serve as record copy	Dispose of as reference material

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Instructions for hard copy equivalents are available in General Records Schedules 1 - 16.

Part I Master Files

Item	File function/ designation	Consisting of	Which are	Then
30	Publication file	source output data extracted from the system to produce a printed publication	created without destroying the source file	(a) Offer to the National Archives for possible retention when active use ceases; (b) if the offer is not accepted, the records are authorized for immediate disposal
31	Print file	source output data extracted from the system to produce printouts of tabulations, ledgers, tables, registers and/or reports	created from files authorized for disposal	Dispose of when superseded or obsolete
32			created from files not authorized for disposal	(a) Offer to the National Archives for possible retention when active use ceases; (b) if the offer is not accepted; the records are authorized for immediate disposal
33	Security backup file	data identical in format to a master file	retained in case the master file is damaged or inadvertently erased	Dispose of as provided for the related master file
34	Technical reformat file	data essentially duplicated in another master file but which is written with varying technical specifications such as density, character code, blocking and labeling	created for the specific purpose of information exchange	Dispose of as provided for the <del>re-</del> related master file

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PART II PROCESSING FILES

Item	File function/ designation	Consisting of	Which are	Then
1	Work file	new media, or media not included in a library control <del>control</del> system, or files whose retention dates have expired	used by computer operators to facilitate the processing of a specific job and/or system run	Available for immediate use or reuse
2	Test file	data used in testing a system	routine or benchmark data sets constructed or used for the purpose of testing	Dispose of when no longer needed
3	Input/Source file	data abstracted from input/source documents or other media and entered into the system for each update cycle	converted to magnetic media	Dispose of after verification of data on related magnetic media
4			used for updating and required to support reconstruction of a master file	Dispose of after three or more update cycles
5			not used as input to a master file and not required to reconstruct a master file	Submit SF 115, Request for Records Disposition Authority
6			retained by ADP operational elements as back-up to magnetic media	Dispose of when no longer needed

Part II Processing Files

Item	File function/ designation	Consisting of	Which are	Then
7			officially designed to replace or serve as the record copy in lieu of the hard copy or other input/source document	Dispose of in accordance with instructions applicable to the hard copy
8		data created by another agency <sup>1</sup>	files that the creating agency routinely made available to other agencies or to the public	Dispose of as reference material
9			the result of a request of the receiving agency for a special tabulation, extract or master files designed to meet the needs of the receiving agency	Submit SF 115, Request for Records Disposition Authority
10		punched cards that contain original entry with film or written inserts (such as aperture cards)	source documents	Dispose of in accordance with instructions applicable to the hard copy

<sup>1</sup> If the receiving agency reformats, edits, merges, analyzes, summarizes or otherwise processes the data in a file from another agency, then the files created during such processing are files of the receiving agency. The receiving agency should schedule the resulting files according to the appropriate category in Part I, Master File.

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Part II Processing Files

Item	File function/ designation	Consisting of	Which are	Then
11	Intermediate input/output file	data <del>that is</del> manipulated, sorted, and/or moved from one run to a subsequent run	used in the process of creating or updating a master file	Dispose of after master file has been proven satisfactory
12	Valid transaction file	data used with a master file for creation of an updated master file	used for independent analysis	Submit SF 115, Request for Records Disposition Authority
13			not used for independent analysis	Dispose of after three or more update cycles
14	Audit trail file	"statistical" data generated during the creation of a master file	used to validate a master file during a processing cycle	Dispose of in accordance with instructions for each appropriate cycle of the master file

PART III DOCUMENTATION

Item	File function/ designation	Consisting of	Which are	Then
1	Data systems specifications	documents containing definitions of the system including functional requirements, data requirements, system/subsystem specifications, requests for the system, and authorizing directives	for a disapproved proposed system	Dispose of one year after final action
2			for an approved system for which all related magnetic data files are authorized for disposal	Dispose of one year after discontinuance of the system
3			for an approved system for which any related magnetic data file is not authorized for disposal	Retain with related data file
4	System test documentation	descriptive material including test plans and test analysis reports	for an approved system	Dispose of one year after completion of testing
5			for a disapproved proposed system	Dispose of when no longer needed
6	File specifications	definitions of the logical and physical characteristics of each record, element or item of data in the file, including names and tags or labels; relative position, form, format and size of data elements (record layout);	for a system for which all related magnetic data files are authorized for disposal	Dispose of with related data file
7			for a system for which any related magnetic data file is not authorized for disposal	Retain with related data file

Part III Documentation

Item	File function/ designation	Consisting of	Which are	Then
		specifications of all codes used; cross-reference code manual; security and privacy restrictions; and validity characteristics; update and access conditions; recording medium and volume; <del>a</del> sample copy of each input/source document		
8	User guides	information which sufficiently describes the functions of the system in non-ADP terminology so that users can determine its applicability and when and how to use it; serves for the preparation of input data and the interpretation of results <sup>2</sup>	handbooks, guides to data availability, and procedures for querying files	Retain with data systems specifications
9	Output specifications	detailed descriptions of products of the system that are to be used outside the computer center	listings of each type of output by title and tag, format specifications, selection criteria, volume and frequency, media, graphic displays and symbols, security and privacy conditions and disposition of output	Retain with related data file
10	Reports	printed final reports containing the statistical tabulation and an analysis of the findings of a study or survey including a narrative description of methodology employed	for systems which require retention of related data	Retain one copy with related file specifications

Part III Documentation

Item	File function/ designation	Consisting of	Which are	Then
11	Information retrieval	series of machine instructions designed to retrieve information from specific data systems	general-purpose programs	Dispose of when no longer needed
12			special-purpose programs for data files for which disposal is authorized	Dispose of with related data file
13			special-purpose programs for data files for which disposal is not authorized	Retain with related data file

(GAD P 1882 3) for additional format