

REQUEST FOR RECORDS DISPOSITION AUTHORITY
(See Instructions on reverse)

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

Ronald L. Heise

5 TEL EXT

724-1698
376-8827

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 12 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	D SIGNATURE OF AGENCY REPRESENTATIVE	E TITLE
1/11/77	<i>Thomas W. Hall</i>	Director, Records Disposition Division

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, Data Automation Program Records, authorized for disposition under NN-172-20.</p>		

50 items

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JOB NO NC 1 - 64-77-2	
DATE RECEIVED JAN 11 1977	
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disposal request, including amendments, is approved except for items that may be stamped "disposal not approved" or "withdrawn" in column 10	
<i>2-16-77</i> Date	<i>James E. O'Neil</i> Acting Archivist of the United States

MACHINE-READABLE RECORDS AND RELATED DOCUMENTATION

GENERAL RECORDS SCHEDULE NO. 20

Introduction

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 ephemeral or non-record material, especially as opposed to their hard copy informational equivalents. 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 decision 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 media other than computer magnetic tape (such as punch cards, paper tape, disc packs, or drums) may be scheduled by this schedule, but in most cases must be converted to magnetic tape before transfer to NARS.

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, thus creating a cost effectiveness factor in their management which is not present with more permanent media;
- 2) The magnetic media on which most machine-readable records are recorded are not designed to be permanent storage media for records. Thus the fragility of most information in machine-readable form makes it mandatory that such records be brought under control as early as possible in their life cycle. Ideally this control should be exercised at the time a system is created, even before it has generated records. If this is done, disposition standards can be written on the medium as an integral part of the internal file label. Such timely scheduling leads to identification of files of archival value and can ensure that they are stored under optimum conditions as soon as the agency no longer needs them;
- 3) Due to the ease with which machine-readable records may be updated or revised and the media reused, their life cycle is briefer and more complex than that of other records. While the master file stage is most often the form in which machine-

readable records should be subject to archival appraisal, sometimes other versions should be retained because their informational content is more complete than related master files or especially relevant to agency policy, decisions, or special reports;

- 4) Because machine-readable records must be subjected to both mechanical and electronic processing and decoding to be converted to human-readable information, the records revealing such processes (documentation) must be scheduled with the machine-readable records.

The qualities which separate machine-readable records from those on other media also make it difficult to produce a subject-oriented general schedule for machine-readable records which is analogous to the previous nineteen 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. They are divided into three classes:

Documentation (Part I) 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.

Processing files (Part II) are those machine-readable files, aside from master files, which comprise the life cycle of most computerized records. Processing files -- from work files and raw data input files to publication files and security backup 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 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, decisions, 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.

Master files (Part III) 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 scope of the informational value of a file and the frequency with which its machine-readable output should be subject to archival appraisal.

"Data automation planning and operational records," which were included in a previous version of this general records schedule, are not included here. They are textual records and relate to an agency's planning, procurement, and operational processes. Thus they may be scheduled by reference to other appropriate general records schedules.

It should be emphasized that machine-readable records which do not fit categories listed in this schedule are not thus automatically authorized for disposal. Disposition of such records should be authorized by submission to the National Archives of a completed SF 115, Request for ~~Authority to Dispose of~~ Records ^{See Records Service} *Disposition Authority.* *My*

The decision table format, rather than the columnar format, is used herein for two reasons: 1) it reduces requirements for explanatory footnotes, and 2) assists the user in conceptualizing the many categories and subcategories of records involved.

Part I - DOCUMENTATION

	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); specification of all codes used; cross reference code manual; security and privacy restrictions; and validity characteristics; update and access conditions; recording medium and volume	for a system for which all related magnetic data files are authorized for disposal	retain 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 **II** - DOCUMENTATION

	File function/ designation	Consisting of	Which are	Then
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, for serves for the preparation of input data and the interpretation of results	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.
11	Information retrieval routine	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	retain with related data file.
13			special purpose programs for data files for which disposal is not authorized	retain with related data file

Part II PROCESSING FILES

	File function/ designation	Consisting of	Which are	Then
1	Work	temporary machine-readable media used by console operators or tape handlers to facilitate general computer runs such as sorts and merges	new media, or media not included in a library control system, or files whose retention dates have expired	available for immediate use or reuse.
2	Test data	machine-readable media 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	Initial data	machine-readable media containing data abstracted from source documents or other media and entered into the system for the first time per update cycle	used for updating and required to support reconstruction of master file	dispose of at third update cycle. 1
4			not required to support reconstruction of master file and/or used as input for a one-time study, survey or experiment	dispose of if raw data is satisfactorily processed into final or reduced data.
5			officially designated to replace or serve as the basic source data in lieu of the hard copy or other input source document	dispose of in accordance with instructions applicable to the hard copy or other file documenting same process transaction, case.
6			not used as input to a master file or processed into analyzed or reduced data and not required to reconstruct a master file	Submit SF 11 to National Archives for appraisal. Request for Records Disposition Authority.

Part II PROCESSING FILES

	File function/ designation	Consisting of	Which are	Then
7		machine-readable media files created by another agency	not a record of the receiving agency 2	dispose of as reference material.
8		punched cards or paper tape created after January 1, 1970, containing data abstracted from source documents and used for conversion to magnetic media or processing on electric accounting machine equipment	electric accounting machine output	dispose of in accordance with instructions applicable to 1 hard copy or other files documenting the same process, transaction, or case.
9			retained by ADP operational elements as back-up to magnetic media	dispose of when no longer needed
10			converted to magnetic media	dispose of after verification of data on related magnetic media
11		punched cards that contain original entry data with film or written inserts	source documents	dispose of in accordance with instructions applicable to the hard copy or other files documenting the same process, transaction, or case.
12	Intermediate data input/output	machine-readable media containing output within or from one run to a subsequent run that manipulates, sorts, and/or moves data through the system; includes check-point, edit, correction, reject list, unmatched data eliminating error, rerun files, etc.	used in an updated system	dispose of after subsequent data files that contain the accepted detail data have been created and proved satisfactory.

Part II PROCESSING FILES

	File function/ designation	Consisting of	Which are	Then
13			used in a one-time study or survey	dispose of after master data file has been proven satisfactory.
14	Valid trans- action	machine-readable media containing items used with an input master file for creation of an output master file	updates of items liquidated from current status files	dispose of after third update cycle. ¹
15			valid transaction after cumulative final master file is prepared and determined to be successful, and there is no necessity for statistical analysis.	dispose of after third update cycle. ¹
16			used in additional analysis	Submit SF 115, <i>Repts</i> to National <i>Gov</i> Archives for appraisal <i>Records</i> Disposition <i>Authority</i>
17	Information retrieval system master reference	machine-readable media containing data created by the merging of prior master file with valid transaction data to create a new master file	a cumulative index to scientific and technical publications, and bibliographic and other non-record material	dispose of after third update cycle. ¹
18			an index to record material such as correspondence legal hearings, patents and trademarks, and record copy of publications	Submit SF 115, <i>Repts</i> to National <i>Gov</i> Archives for appraisal <i>Records</i> Disposition <i>Authority</i>
19			an "audit trail" of a file not disposable under this schedule	dispose of as provided for related master data file. <i>24</i>

Part II PROCESSING FILES

	File function/ designation	Consisting of	Which are	Then
20	Publication	machine-readable media containing source output data extracted from the system (without destroying the source file)	reproduced and disseminated as a publication or used for producing a printed publication	(a) Offer to National Archives for possible retention when active agency use ceases. (b) If the offer is not accepted, the records may be destroyed immediately.
21	Print		used for producing required printouts of tabulations, ledgers, tables registers, and reports	(a) Offer to National Archives for possible retention when active agency use ceases. (b) If the offer is not accepted, the records may be destroyed immediately.
22	Security backup	machine-readable media that is identical in format to master file and retained as security in case master file is damaged or inadvertently erased	updated	dispose of after third update cycle. 1
23			a one-time study or survey	dispose of as provided for related master data file.

Part III MASTER FILES

	File function/ designation	Consisting of	Which are	Then
1	Housekeeping system master file	machine-readable media containing data for such "housekeeping systems" as fiscal accountability, supply management, and payroll administration	not required for GAO site audit	dispose of in accordance with instructions applicable to the hard copy or other files documenting the same process, transaction, or case
2			required for GAO site audit	dispose of in accordance with functional guidelines pro- vided by GAO.
3	Federal loan and grant program master file	machine-readable media containing data created by the merging of prior master file with valid transaction data to create a new master file. (initial data includes excerpts from forms placed in case files)	cumulative data of funds made available through federally supported loan and grant programs	dispose of after third update cycle. 1
4			noncumulative periodic files of status of federal loan and grant activity.	Submit SF 115 to National Archive for appraisal. <i>Request for</i> <i>Records Disposition</i> <i>Authority.</i> 1
5	Statistical master file	machine-readable media containing data created by the merging of prior master file with valid transaction data to create a new master file	observations such as data used to generate economic indicators, social indicators, and data on characteristics use, and ownership of natural resources	Submit SF 115 to National Archive for appraisal. <i>Request for</i> <i>Records</i> <i>Disposition</i> <i>Authority.</i> 1
6			used to prepare reports covering a limited period of time; recur- ring periodic surveys and censuses	Submit SF 115 to National Archive for appraisal. <i>Request for</i> <i>Records Disposition</i> <i>Authority.</i> 1
7	Scientific master file	machine-readable media containing data created either from analog mag- netic digital media for scientific measurements	held in national data centers	Submit SF 115 to National Archive for appraisal. <i>Request for</i> <i>Records Disposition</i> <i>Authority.</i> 1

Part III MASTER FILES

	File function/ designation	Consisting of	Which are	Then
8			not duplicated in national data centers	Submit SF 115 to National Archive for appraisal. <i>Request for Records Disposition Authority</i>
9			duplicated in national data centers	dispose of after determination is made that data is not required outside the data centers.
10			not calibrated or validated	dispose of after subsequent magnetic media containing the accepted data have been created and proved satisfactory.
11	Summary file	machine-readable media containing aggregates of individual observations from valid transaction or master data files	substantially unpublished, or contain data in greater detail than published versions.	Submit SF 115 to National Archive for appraisal. <i>Request for Records Disposition Authority</i>
12	Re-formatted file	machine-readable media containing essentially duplicate data from the master data file but which is created for use with other computer hardware	created for the specific purpose of information interchange	dispose of as provided for related master data file.
13			of specific application for agency computer hardware systems	dispose of when determination is made that such format is unnecessary.
14	Samples, subsamples, and special studies	machine-readable media containing data selected from a larger census or survey file	disclosure free or useful in statistical analysis or policy formulation models and simulation studies	Submit SF 115 to National Archive for appraisal. <i>Request for Records Disposition Authority</i>

NOTES:

1. "Dispose of after third update cycle" indicates that first generation data may be disposed of after the fourth successful update.
2. Records received from another agency become the records of the receiving agency under either of two conditions:
 - a) when the data is merged or reduced by the receiving agency, and no comparable copy exists in the originating agency; and
 - b) when the data is provided by the originating agency in a form designed to meet the needs of the receiving agency, and no comparable copy exists in the originating agency.

In such cases the resulting data file should be scheduled according to the appropriate category listed in this schedule, where applicable.