

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about GRS 4.1, Records Management Records

Revised January 3, 2017

INTRODUCTION

1. What is the purpose of GRS 4.1?

This schedule provides disposition authority for records Federal agencies create and maintain in the course of managing records and information. It includes records on tracking and controlling agency records and documents, records management programs, forms management, and managing vital or essential records.

2. Whom do I contact for further information about this schedule?

You may contact NARA's General Records Schedules Team at GRS_Team@nara.gov with questions about this schedule.

CHANGES FROM THE OLD GRS

3. How does GRS 4.1 differ from the old GRS?

Items in this schedule come mostly from existing GRS 16, Administrative Management Records. We also added a new item to this schedule (item 031) to address copies of vital records.

Item 010, tracking and control records, aggregates several existing GRS items, including GRS 20, item 9; GRS 21, item 29; GRS 23, item 8; GRS 23, item 9; and GRS 24, item 4b.

4. Why are you rescinding some old GRS items?

We rescinded records holdings files (GRS 16, items 4a and 4b) because they covered agency reports to NARA using Standard Form-136, Annual Summary of Records Holdings. NARA canceled this form in 1985, and we no longer require agencies to submit these reports.

QUESTION RELATED TO ITEM 010

5. Does this item cover tracking and control records (*also known as finding aids*) for permanent records or unscheduled records?

This authority does not apply to tracking and control records for records scheduled as permanent or for unscheduled records. The value of these records varies, so agencies must schedule tracking and control records for permanent records separately. Unscheduled records could be determined to be permanent, so tracking and control records for them also cannot be scheduled by a GRS item.

QUESTION RELATED TO ITEM 020

6. May we keep certain records under this category, such as those about destroyed records, longer than six years, but destroy others once the six years is up?

Yes, the disposition instruction authorizes both destroying records once they've met the six-year retention period and retaining certain records beyond six years, if needed for business use. Agencies must keep the Transfer Request (TR); Legal Transfer Instrument (LTI); and SF 258, Agreement to Transfer Records to the National Archives of the United States for a minimum of six years so that agencies can properly redirect Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests to NARA after the agency has transferred the records to the National Archives.

QUESTION RELATED TO ITEM 031

7. Why is there an item for copies of vital records? Aren't such copies non-records?

Copies of vital records agencies use to respond to an emergency are records because agencies rely on them to conduct agency business.