



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 public offices and local authorities (public sector organisations) retain information and records for as long as they are required and then, when they are no longer required, dispose of them in an appropriate manner. To implement disposal under the *Public Records Act 2005* (the Act), a public sector organisation is required to have authorisation from the Chief Archivist.

2 Authorisation to Dispose

If your organisation is a public sector organisation, disposal authorities (DAs) are legal instruments which provide formal authorisation for you to legally dispose of your organisation's information and records. They are issued by the Chief Archivist in accordance with the provisions in section 20 of the Act.

DAs set the mandatory minimum retention period for which information and records must be retained by your organisation. They also give you authority to undertake disposal actions (typically destroy or transfer to us) for these information and records once the minimum retention period has been met.

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 your organisation's internal approval process by your administrative head or Executive Sponsor.

The Chief Archivist's authorisation does not override any other legal obligations to retain the information and records past the minimum period outlined in the DA. The onus is on your organisation to check whether any information and records need to be kept beyond this period, for example, if they are:

- part of a request under the Official Information Act 1982 or the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987
- part of an appeal to an Ombudsman under the Ombudsmen Act 1975, and/or
- required by a Commission of Inquiry under the Inquiries Act 2013.

3 Types of disposal authorities

3.1 Organisation specific disposal authorities

Organisation specific DAs identify the information and records classes (or groups) that are unique or core to a public sector organisation, how long they need to be retained and whether they are to be transferred as public archives or destroyed. These DAs are generally current for 10 years after which time, we recommend they are reviewed to ensure they are still meeting legal or organisational requirements. Authorised DAs can be viewed by searching online via [Collections search](#).

If your organisation does not have a current DA to cover its specific functions, please contact us.

3.2 General disposal authorities

General disposal authorities (GDAs) provide ongoing authorisation for the disposal of non-core business information and records that are common across most public sector organisations. Such information and records are common, transitory and predominately of low value.

Public offices **must** use the GDAs. Local authorities can use the GDAs as best practice. They are incorporated into the Association of Local Government Management Information Management (ALGIM) IM Toolkit Disposal Schedule (available via their website www.algim.org.nz).

Current GDAs are:

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

3.3 Sector disposal authorities

Some groups of public offices are covered by sector-based DAs. Currently these are institutes of technology and polytechnics, universities, schools, and intelligence organisations. These authorities identify common classes of information and records, their retention periods and disposal actions.

Authorised sector DAs can be viewed using [Collections search](#).

3.4 Functional disposal authorities

Functional disposal authorities (FDAs) are broader than sector DAs as they can cover functions in many sector areas if adopted. This is different from a sector DA and a GDA. Currently there are three FDAs covering health functions; FDA1 Clinical Health Care; FDA2 Health Administration; and FDA3 Population Health and Wellbeing.

3.5 Local authorities

The Act allows the Chief Archivist to declare certain local authority information and records to be "protected records". The current List

of Protected Records is available on our website, along with some Explanatory Notes.

A 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 Disposal Schedule, please contact ALGIM directly. Contact details are available via their website www.algim.org.nz.

4 Disposal actions under the Act

Public sector organisations can only dispose of their 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 our possession or to an approved repository. In both cases the control of the information and records passes to the Chief Archivist. The Chief Archivist can also direct the transfer of control of protected local authority information and records.

Transfer also refers to the moving of information and records from one public sector organisation to another as part of changes in Government or a 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 and records, for example where personal information and records are given back to the people they are about.