

**GENERAL SCHEDULE #31 – Local Government Financial Records**

This Retention and Disposal Schedule covers financial records that are commonly maintained by counties, cities, townships, villages, public schools, local authorities, public colleges and public universities. The records that are described on the attached pages are deemed necessary (1) for the continued effective operation of Michigan government, (2) to constitute an adequate and proper recording of its activities, and (3) to protect the legal rights of the government of the State of Michigan and of the people. We, the undersigned, believe that this schedule meets the administrative, legal, fiscal and archival requirements of the State of Michigan.

*Larry Gordier*  
Larry Gordier, President  
Michigan Government Finance Officers Association

*3/5/09*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

*Debra Gearhart*  
Debra Gearhart, Director  
Department of History, Arts and Libraries, Records Management Services

*3/9/09*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

*Mark Harvey*  
Mark Harvey, State Archivist  
Department of History, Arts and Libraries, Archives of Michigan

*3/19/09*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

**APPROVED**  
State Administrative Board

*4/7/09*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

**GENERAL RETENTION SCHEDULE #31  
LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE DEPARTMENTS  
INTRODUCTION**

**Public Records**

The Michigan Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) (MCL 15.231-15.246) defines public records as recorded information “prepared, owned, used, in the possession of, or retained by a public body in the performance of an official function, from the time it is created.”

**Retention and Disposal Schedules**

Michigan law (MCL 399.5 and 750.491) requires that all public records be listed on an approved Retention and Disposal Schedule that identifies the minimum amount of time that records must be kept to satisfy administrative, legal, fiscal and historical needs. Local situations may require retention beyond the periods listed, and nothing prevents an office from retaining records longer than the specified period of time. Schedules also identify when records may be destroyed, and when certain records can be sent to the Archives of Michigan for permanent preservation. *Records cannot be destroyed unless their disposition is authorized by an approved Retention and Disposal Schedule.* All schedules are approved by the Records Management Services, the Archives of Michigan and the State Administrative Board. There are two types of schedules that government agencies may use:

- A “general schedule” will cover records that are common to a particular type of government agency, such as a finance department. General schedules may not address every single record that a particular office may have in its possession. *General schedules do not mandate that any of the records listed on the schedule be created.* However, if they are created in the normal course of business, the schedule establishes a minimum retention period for them.
- Any record that is not covered by a general schedule must be listed on an “agency-specific schedule” that will address records that are unique to a particular government agency. Agency-specific schedules always supersede general schedules. Agency-specific schedules only address the records of the agency named on the schedule, and may not be used by another agency.

This schedule supersedes General Schedule #8--section 6 and General Schedule #10--Accounting Department. Please note that personnel and payroll records are covered separately by General Schedule #26 Local Government Human Resources (approved 10-7-2008) which is available online at <http://www.michigan.gov/recordsmanagement/>.

**Unofficial Documents**

General Schedule #1 addresses the retention of “nonrecord” materials. These documents are broadly defined as drafts, duplicates, convenience copies, publications and other materials that do not document agency activities. These materials can be disposed of when they have served their intended purpose. Government agencies need to identify the “office of record” when

multiple offices possess copies of the same record. The "office of record" is responsible for following the retention period that is specified, duplicates do not need to be retained. *For example, Treasurer's are generally the official recordkeeper for investment records, but the Finance Office may have a copy.* A more comprehensive definition of "nonrecords" can be found in the approved schedule (available online at [http://www.michigan.gov/documents/hal\\_mhc\\_rms\\_GS1\\_local\\_110758\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/hal_mhc_rms_GS1_local_110758_7.pdf)).

## **Record Maintenance**

Records can exist in a wide variety of formats, including paper, maps, photographs, microfilm, digital images, e-mail messages, databases, etc. The retention periods listed on this general schedule do not specify the format that the record may exist in, because each government agency that adopts this schedule may choose to retain its records using different recording media. Government agencies are responsible for ensuring that all of their records (regardless of format) are properly retained and remain accessible during this entire retention period. All records need to be stored in a secure and stable environment that will protect them from tampering, damage and degradation. Electronic records are dependent upon specific hardware and software to be accessed and used. It is important to understand that the original technology that is used to create electronic records will eventually become obsolete. As a result, government agencies should work with their information technology staff to develop preservation plans for retaining electronic records with long-term (more than 10 years) retention requirements. Various laws (including the Records Reproduction Act, MCL 24.401-24.406) identify acceptable formats for retaining public records; agencies are responsible for understanding and complying with these laws.

## **Suspending Destruction**

Government agencies must immediately cease the destruction of all relevant records (even if destruction is authorized by an approved Retention and Disposal Schedule) if they receive a FOIA request, if they believe that an investigation or litigation is imminent, or if they are notified that an audit, investigation or litigation has commenced. If relevant records exist in electronic formats (such as e-mail, digital images, word processed documents, databases, backup tapes, etc.), the agency may need to notify its information technology staff. Failure to cease the destruction of relevant records could result in penalties.

## **HAL Can Help!**

The State of Michigan Records Management Services is available to assist government agencies with their questions about record retention and acceptable recording media. Agencies may contact the Records Management Services at (517) 335-9132. Additional information is also available from the Records Management Services' website <http://www.michigan.gov/recordsmanagement/>, including records management manuals, general schedules, e-mail retention guidelines, microfilming standards and digital imaging standards, etc.

**General Retention Schedule #31  
Local Government Financial Records**

Item Number	Series Title and Description	Total Retention
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**Finance Department**

**Note:** personnel and payroll records are covered separately by General Schedule #26 Local Government Human Resources (approved 10-7-2008) which is available online at <http://www.michigan.gov/recordsmanagement/>.

100	<u>Insurance Policies</u>	ACT
	<p>These files include insurance policies that provide coverage for property and casualty, workers compensation, errors and omission, fleet, general liability, umbrella, etc. <b>ACT = until the insurance provider is no longer obligated to pay out on the particular policy after it expires. Contact the insurance provider of each policy to determine this length of time, if the information is not specified within the policy itself. Note: if a policy covers a "lifetime," then 80 years should be sufficient.</b></p>	
101	<u>Insurance Claims</u>	FY+7
	<p>These files are used to document claims that are submitted to an insurance provider. They may contain claim forms, correspondence and supporting documents for each claim that is submitted.</p>	
102A	<u>Accident Reports/Claims--Adults</u>	CR+7
	<p>Accident reports for personal injuries, property damage claims, and other incidents provide details about any unexpected incidents on government property. The reports may list the location of the accident, description of the accident, first aid administration, witnesses, person injured, type of injury or property damage, actions taken, recommendations to prevent reoccurrence, etc. The reports may be reviewed and signed by relevant administrators. These files may include related information, such as witness statements, medical information, legal counsel, subsequent claims, etc.</p>	
102B	<u>Accident Reports/Claims--Minors</u>	ACT+3
	<p>Accident reports for personal injuries, property damage claims, and other incidents provide details about any unexpected incidents on government property. The reports may list the location of the accident, description of the accident, first aid administration, witnesses, person injured, type of injury or property damage, actions taken, recommendations to prevent reoccurrence, etc. The reports may be reviewed and signed by relevant administrators. These files may include related information, such as witness statements, medical information, legal counsel, subsequent claims,</p>	

**General Retention Schedule #31  
Local Government Financial Records**

Item Number	Series Title and Description	Total Retention
	<p>etc. <b>ACT = until minor turns 18 years old. Note: pre-injury waivers effectuated by parents on behalf of their minor children are not presumptively enforceable. Specifically, within the context of Michigan's overriding policy, and in the absence of any specific legislative exceptions permitting the waiver of liability by parents in these situations, the release signed on behalf of a minor cannot be construed as valid. See MCL 600.5851-5852 and Michigan Court of Appeals Docket #275079.</b></p>	
103A	<u>Bids and Quotes--Awarded</u>	ACT+6
	<p>Bids are received from vendors for products, services and contracts that are needed for construction, furnishings, grounds maintenance, trash and snow removal, cleaning services, transportation, etc. These files may include the invitation to bid, request for proposal, the bid documents that are submitted, the reviewer documentation, etc. <b>ACT = until the contract with the awarded vendor expires.</b></p>	
103B	<u>Bids and Quotes—Not Awarded</u>	ACT+2
	<p>Bids are received from vendors for products, services and contracts that are needed for construction, furnishings, grounds maintenance, trash and snow removal, cleaning services, transportation, etc. These files may include the invitation to bid, request for proposal, the bid documents that are submitted, the reviewer documentation, etc. <b>ACT = until a bid is awarded.</b></p>	
104	<u>Contracts, Leases and Agreements</u>	EXP+6
	<p>These contracts may cover a variety of services including construction, custodial work, copiers, facility rental, information technology service providers, maintenance, wiring, telephone services, employment, land, etc. These files may include contracts, correspondence with the vendor, warranties, copies of purchase orders, etc. Note: the Clerk or some other office may be the official recordkeeper for contracts.</p>	
105	<u>Annual Budget</u>	FY+5
	<p>These records document the requested and adopted amount of money for all departments, along with any amendments, that is appropriated for each account/line item for each fiscal year. These records may include work papers. A copy of all approved budgets will be retained permanently in the governing body's meeting records.</p>	

**General Retention Schedule #31  
Local Government Financial Records**

Item Number	Series Title and Description	Total Retention
106	<u>Financial Data System</u>  This record is used as a general ledger to track and document financial transactions. It is usually maintained as a database or spreadsheet. It may contain digital images, electronic documents and electronic correspondence that serve as supporting documents to each transaction. This system may also contain data that documents other government functions, such as payroll, pensions, etc. Select data and supporting documents may need to be retained longer if the transaction relates to a contract, loan or other activity that is not completed within the specified timeframe.	FY+7
107	<u>Accounting Transaction Detail</u>  This record details all revenue, expenditures and balance sheets that are recorded in various accounts. It may be retained as paper, electronic data, computer output microfiche, etc. It also includes the chart of accounts that defines the accounting codes that are used.	FY+7
108	<u>Receivables</u>  These records document items that are purchased by others or services that are provided to others. They may include invoices, cash receipts, support documents, agreements, ledgers, etc.	FY+7
109	<u>Receipts</u>  These records document deposits into various accounts. They may include a cash receipt list, receipt register, etc. Information in these records may include the check number, date, receipt number, description, amount deposited, batch number, account number, etc.	FY+7
110	<u>Journal Entries</u>  These records document transfers between accounts, they record expenses not included in accounts payable, and revenues not in cash receipts. The transaction balance report may identify the account number, account description, transaction amount, date, journal entry number, transaction description, etc. <b>Note: individual records that document the purchase of a fixed asset may need to be retained until the asset is disposed of.</b>	FY+7

**General Retention Schedule #31**  
**Local Government Financial Records**

Item Number	Series Title and Description	Total Retention
111	<u>Budget Summaries and Balance Sheets</u>  These records document the status of budgetary activity on each account. They may identify the account balances per month and year to date, activity within the month on each account, etc.	FY+7
112	<u>Payment Records</u>  These files document the payment for goods and services. They may include purchase orders, packing slips, requisitions, invoices, etc. <b>Note: individual records that document the purchase of a fixed asset may need to be retained until the asset is disposed of.</b>	FY+7
113	<u>Telephone/Communications Bills</u>  These bills are received from the telephone service provider and may be used to generate bills that are distributed to each department. These bills may cover services for telephones, cellular phones, pagers, etc. These records may contain the call detail and the financial statement.	FY+7
114	<u>Procurement Card Applications</u>  These records document which employees are issued a procurement card for making purchases. These files may include the procurement cardholder application, cardholder agreement form, the cardholder maintenance form, etc. ACT = while the procurement card is held by the cardholder.	ACT+5
115	<u>Bank Activity</u>  These records document activity on the government entity's bank account. They may include deposit slips, reconciliations, cancelled checks, check registers, bank statements, electronic funds transfer transactions, etc.	FY+7
116	<u>Annual Local Unit Fiscal Report</u>  The State of Michigan and the Federal Government require all local units of government to file an annual fiscal report with the Michigan Department of Treasury (Form F-65) that documents financial activity.	FY+7

**General Retention Schedule #31**  
**Local Government Financial Records**

Item Number	Series Title and Description	Total Retention
117	<u>Sales Tax Reports</u>	FY+7
	These annual reports are prepared at the end of each calendar year to document the amount of sales tax that is collected. They are sent to the Michigan Department of Treasury.	
118	<u>Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR)</u>	FY+7
	These reports are submitted annually to the Michigan Department of Treasury at the end of the calendar year. They are often prepared with the assistance of auditors, and they document all incoming and outgoing funds. These records include the work papers and the reports. Some local governments choose to keep the final reports permanently.	
119	<u>Municipal Finance and Borrowings</u>	EXP+7
	These files document bonds for capital and construction projects. They may include transcripts of bond proceedings and other supporting documentation.	
120	<u>Qualifying Statements</u>	CR+1
	These forms are submitted annually to the Michigan Department of Treasury. They permit the local government to buy bonds. If a bond is purchased, these records will be maintained in accordance with item #118 as supporting documentation. If no bonds are sold, these records can be destroyed after 1 year.	
121	<u>Final Affidavit of Payment</u>	PERM
	The final affidavit of payment is evidence that all funds that were borrowed by the local government were paid back in full.	
122	<u>Bond Cremation Certificates</u>	PERM
	The Bond Cremation Act (PA 56 of 1962) requires public corporations to cremate or disintegrate obligations or interest coupons upon maturity, and to receive a certificate documenting the destruction of the records.	
123	<u>Fixed Asset Inventory Data</u>	ACT
	This record is a list of all major property and its book value. Local government policy determines the value at which property must be included on an inventory. The value of these items is then distributed	

**General Retention Schedule #31  
Local Government Financial Records**

Item Number	Series Title and Description	Total Retention
	<p>across the useful life of the property. Information on the inventory may include a description of the item, value, date purchased, depreciation amount, insurable value, building location, etc. <b>ACT = until the annual report for the fiscal year in which the item was disposed is audited.</b></p>	
124	<u>Fixed Asset Annual Report</u>	FY+7
	<p>The Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB) Statement 34 establishes the annual reporting requirements for financial statements prepared by local governments. This annual report is produced from the fixed asset inventory.</p>	
125	<u>Disposition of Scrap and Surplus Materials</u>	FY+3
	<p>These records document the disposition (destruction or sale) of scrap and surplus materials. They may include authorizations, correspondence, receipts, inventories, etc.</p>	
126	<u>Audits--Support Documents</u>	ACT+7
	<p>Audits of finances are conducted annually by an independent certified public accounting firm. These files may include work papers, schedules, reconciliations, etc. <b>ACT = until the final report is issued [see OMB Circular A-133.320 (g)].</b></p>	
127	<u>Audits--Final Report</u>	CR+10
	<p>This final report is submitted by the auditors. A copy of final audit reports will be retained permanently in the governing body's meeting records. However, this office may select to keep a permanent copy too.</p>	
128	<u>Financial Projections/Plans/Forecasts</u>	SUP
	<p>These reports contain multi-year projections/plans/forecasts about anticipated income and/or expenditures. They may cover capital improvement projects, construction cost schedules, general fund revenue, fund balances, taxable value, road projects, etc. <b>SUP = retain until superseded by a new report. Superseded reports may continue to be valuable for reference purposes beyond this minimum retention period.</b></p>	

**General Retention Schedule #31  
Local Government Financial Records**

Item Number	Series Title and Description	Total Retention
129	<u>Indirect Costs</u>  These records are created annually to determine the allowable indirect cost rate that the local government may charge to various state and federal grants.	FY+7
130	<u>Grants</u>  These files document grants from state, federal and private agencies that are administered by the finance department. These files may contain applications, budgets, worksheets, adjustments, plans, rules and regulations, award letters, committee records, staffing sheets with account numbers, grant evaluation/monitoring reports, audits, periodic progress reports, etc. <b>ACT = until the grant is closed out, plus any additional time that is required by the granting agency for auditing purposes. Final reports and products of the grant may be kept longer for use and reference purposes.</b>	ACT
131	<u>Denied Grant Applications</u>  These records document grants that were applied for, but were not received. They may have reference value for preparing future grant applications. They may contain application forms, budget proposals, letters of support, narrative plans, supporting documentation, etc.	CR+1
132	<u>State Reports</u>  Local governments are required to submit various financial reports to the Michigan Department of Treasury annually.	FY+7
133	<u>Pension Plan Documentation</u>  These records document the terms of employee pension plans. They include plans that are administered by the local government, and plans that are administered by outside parties. <b>ACT = as long as any employee is enrolled in this specific plan.</b>	ACT
134	<u>Pension Investment and Finance Statements</u>  Some local governments administer their own pension plans internally or with the assistance of a vendor. These monthly reports document pension plan investments and the financial status of accounts.	FY+7

**General Retention Schedule #31  
Local Government Financial Records**

Item Number	Series Title and Description	Total Retention
135	<u>Pension Plan Audits, Annual Reports and Actuarial Valuations</u>  Some local governments administer their own pension plans. These reports document annual audits, financial reporting and third party actuarial valuations of the pension plan accounts and investments.	CR+100
136	<u>Employee Pension Files</u>  Some local governments administer their own pension plans. These records document pension benefits for employees and retirees and their beneficiaries. They may include the original hiring notice, promotion notices, correspondence, exclusion letters, beneficiary forms, insurance elections, disability retirement approvals, etc. Note: these records may be maintained by Payroll. <b>ACT = until the retiree or beneficiary dies or a former employee becomes ineligible for a pension.</b>	ACT+5
137	<u>Public Body Meeting Records</u>  These files document the meetings of public bodies such as retirement boards, investment committees, etc. They include agendas, minutes, and supporting documentation (such as transcripts, correspondence, investment reports, etc.) that were reviewed by the public body during its meetings.	PERM

**General Retention Schedule #31  
Local Government Financial Records**

Item Number	Series Title and Description	Total Retention
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**General Administrative Records**

200    Subject Files    ACT+5

These records are used to support administrative analysis, program and project planning, procedure development, and programmatic activities. **Subject files are generally organized alphabetically by topic.** Document types may include periodic activity reports (narrative and statistical), special reports, topical correspondence (including electronic mail), research materials, project planning notes, organizational charts, etc. Subject files do NOT include files related to individual projects. For topics of continuing interest, files may be segmented into annual files. **ACT = while topical file is of interest for ongoing administration.**

201    General Correspondence    CR+2

General correspondence does not pertain to a specific issue and it **is often organized chronologically or by correspondent's name.** General correspondence may include referral correspondence. If the correspondence does pertain to a specific issue it should be filed with other relevant records. General correspondence may exist in a variety of formats, including memos, letters, notes and electronic mail messages. This series also includes automated or manual tools that index and/or track when correspondence was received, the topic of the correspondence, who is responsible for responding to the correspondence, and when the correspondence is considered closed for further action.

202    Transitory Correspondence    EVT

Transitory correspondence is any form of written communication with a short-term interest that has no documentary value. This type of correspondence has limited administrative and evidential value that is lost soon after the communication is received. **Transitory messages do not set policy, establish guidelines or procedures, certify a transaction or become a receipt.** Examples of transitory correspondence include letters of transmittal that do not add information to the transmitted materials, routine requests for information that require no administrative action, policy decision, special compilation or research. This type of record also includes invitations to work-related events, notifications of an upcoming meeting, and similar records. **EVT = need not be retained more than 30 days after receipt.**

**General Retention Schedule #31  
Local Government Financial Records**

Item Number	Series Title and Description	Total Retention
203	<u>Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Requests</u>	CR+1
	This file will document any requests for information or public records. They may include requests for information, correspondence, a copy of the information released, and billing information.	
204	<u>Contact Lists/Directories</u>	SUP
	These records contain contact information for individuals and groups that the agency may need to contact for ongoing and special projects, programs, activities, events, surveys, etc. They may contain names, affiliations, address, phone numbers, e-mail addresses, etc. They may exist in paper or electronic form. SUP = retain current information for current contacts or until the list is obsolete.	
205	<u>Planners/Calendars</u>	CR+2
	These may be electronic or manual planners and calendars that are used to track an individual staff member's work-related meetings, assignments, and tasks. Individual employees are responsible for retaining their planners/calendars for the duration of this retention period.	
206	<u>Staff and Project Meeting Records</u>	CR+2
	These records document staff meetings, meetings with other government agencies, etc. They may include meeting minutes, agendas, and distribution materials, etc. Meeting records may also be retained in subject files (see item #200), if they relate to a specific topic.	
207	<u>Annual Reports</u>	CR+10
	These reports document the department's activities, and they may contain both narrative and statistical information.	
208	<u>Departmental Budget Planning</u>	CR+5
	These records document budget planning and tracking activities for the finance department. They may include budget requests, statistics, budget amendments, budget summaries and balance sheets, etc.	

**General Retention Schedule #31  
Local Government Financial Records**

Item Number	Series Title and Description	Total Retention
209	<u>Publications</u>  These records may include press releases, brochures, newsletters and other items that are published by the department. <b>ACT = while of reference value.</b>	ACT
210	<u>Memorabilia</u>  This series includes photographs, news clippings, certificates, awards, etc. that document events and activities of the department. <b>ACT = while of reference value.</b>	ACT
211	<u>Audio-Visual Materials</u>  These records include photographs, video recordings, audio recordings, slides, etc. in analog and digital formats. They document general program activities, facilities, people, etc. If the audio-visual materials are supporting documents to a specific business process, then they should be retained as long as any other records that document the business process. <b>ACT = while of reference value.</b>	ACT
212	<u>Visitor Logs/Registers</u>  These records document who visited the office. They record the visitor's name, date and time of the visit, etc. They may be used for security purposes or to track visitor statistics.	CR+2
213	<u>Employee In/Out Logs</u>  These logs document the time/date when staff arrive and depart throughout each day. Note: This does not apply to timekeeping records. Timekeeping records are covered on General Schedule #26, item #205.	CR+1

State of Michigan  
Records Management Services

Frequently Asked Questions About General Schedules

**Q: What is a public record?**

**A:** The Michigan Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) ([MCL 15.231-15.246](#)) defines public records as recorded information “prepared, owned, used, in the possession of, or retained by a public body in the performance of an official function, from the time it is created.”

**Q: Are all records considered to be “official” records?**

**A:** No. General Schedule #1 addresses the retention of “nonrecord” materials. These documents are broadly defined as drafts, duplicates, convenience copies, publications and other materials that do not document agency activities. These materials can be disposed of when they have served their intended purpose. Government agencies need to identify the “office of record” when multiple offices possess copies of the same record. The “office of record” is responsible for following the retention period that is specified, duplicates do not need to be retained. A more comprehensive definition can be found in the approved schedule (available online at [http://www.michigan.gov/documents/hal\\_mhc\\_rms\\_GS1\\_local\\_110758\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/hal_mhc_rms_GS1_local_110758_7.pdf)).

**Q: Are the retention periods that are listed on general schedules minimum amounts of time that a record should be kept?**

**A:** Yes. General schedules authorize, but do not require, public officials to dispose of records after the expiration of the assigned retention period. Local situations may require retention beyond the periods listed, and nothing prevents a government agency from retaining records longer than the specified period of time. If records are kept for less than the amount of time listed, the agency can be penalized for unlawful destruction of records. In addition, if records are kept too long, they can waste valuable storage space, and they can become a liability to the agency if it receives a FOIA request, or if it becomes involved in litigation.

**Q: Does my government agency have to follow a general schedule?**

**A:** Records cannot be lawfully destroyed without the authorization of an approved Retention and Disposal Schedule. The purpose of a general schedule is to ensure that all government agencies are following consistent retention practices, and to

prevent individual agencies from having to develop an agency-specific schedule. However, if your government agency does not want to follow an approved general schedule, it would need to get an agency-specific schedule approved. [Note: agency-specific schedules always supersede a general schedule.] Internal policies do not have the force of law that an approved Retention and Disposal Schedule has.

**Q: What is an agency-specific schedule?**

**A:** Agency-specific schedules are Retention and Disposal Schedules that only apply to the agency listed on the document. They are intended to cover records that are unique to that specific agency. Records that are listed on an approved general schedule should not be listed on an agency-specific schedule, unless the agency has a unique situation that justifies a different retention period than the one everyone else is following. The instructions and forms for agency-specific schedules are available online at <http://www.michigan.gov/recordsmanagement/>.

**Q: What should my government agency do if we create a record that is not listed on the general schedule?**

**A:** The general schedule covers records that are common to most government agencies. However, general schedules do not claim to be inclusive of every record that all agencies create. Records that are not listed on general schedules cannot be destroyed without the authorization of an approved agency-specific schedule.

**Q: What should my government agency do if we do not create a record that is listed on the general schedule?**

**A:** Nothing. General schedules do not mandate that any of the records listed on the schedule be created. However, if they are created in the normal course of business, the schedule establishes a retention period for them.

**Q: What do the codes in the Total Retention column mean?**

**A:** The **retention codes** that appear on the schedule are used to establish how long records are retained by the creating agency before they are destroyed. Retention codes determine how destruction dates will be automatically calculated by Versatile (Versatile is the records management software that is used by Records Management Services to manage the retention of records), and the date upon which the calculation will be based. Definitions of these codes can be found in the Records Management Manual that is available online at <http://www.michigan.gov/recordsmanagement/>.

**Q: What do the numbers in the Total Retention column represent?**

**A:** In addition to the retention code, a period of time, years and/or months, can be used in the calculation of the retention period. Years are expressed as whole numbers, and months are expressed as fractions. For example, the fraction "0/6" would represent 6 months. The retention code plus the period of time results in a mathematical formula that is used to determine a disposal date.

**Q: Do the general schedules only cover paper records, or do they cover databases and other electronic records too?**

**A:** Records can exist in a wide variety of formats, including paper, maps, photographs, digital images, e-mail messages, databases, etc. The retention periods listed on the general schedules do not specify the format that the record may exist in, because each government agency that adopts the schedule may choose to retain its records using different recording media. Government agencies are responsible for ensuring that their records, regardless of format, are properly retained and remain accessible during this entire retention period. Various laws (including the Records Reproduction Act) identify acceptable formats for retaining public records; agencies are responsible for understanding and complying with these laws.

**Q: Do the general schedules cover e-mail?**

**A:** Yes. Many of the record series that are listed on the general schedules may originate as e-mail. Those e-mail messages need to be retained for the period of time specified by the schedule. For more information about e-mail retention, please check out the online guide at <http://www.michigan.gov/recordsmanagement/>.

**Q: Can records be microfilmed or digitally imaged?**

**A:** Yes. The Records Reproduction Act (MCL 24.401-24.406) regulates the reproduction of public records by Michigan government agencies at all levels. This law requires the Michigan Department of History, Arts and Libraries to promulgate technical standards to ensure the continued accessibility and usability of records that are microfilmed or digitized throughout their retention period. The standards are also intended to help state and local governments ensure the integrity and authenticity of their records. The Records Management Services administers competitively bid master contracts for microfilming and imaging services. State agencies and local governments are eligible to use these contracts to receive these services. More information is available online at <http://www.michigan.gov/recordsmanagement/>.

**Q: How can I determine which records that are listed on the general schedules contain confidential information that should not be released to the public?**

**A:** Select records series that are listed on the general schedules may be exempt from public disclosure, in accordance with the provisions of state and federal laws. Please consult with your attorney if you need additional information.

**Q: Is there an appropriate way to destroy records that contain confidential information?**

**A:** Yes. Some public records contain sensitive or confidential information. These records should not be placed in a regular trash or recycle bin when they are destroyed. It is important that government agencies ensure that these records are destroyed in a manner that prevents the inappropriate release of the information. The State of Michigan administers a master contract with a vendor that complies with the state's requirements for confidential destruction of records. Government agencies that are interested in using this contract should contact the vendor: Certified Document Destruction, attention: Brian Dorosz, (800) 433-7876. Confidential electronic records should be destroyed in accordance with the U.S. Department of Defense "Standard Industrial Security Program Operating Manual" (DoD 5220.22-M).

**Q: Who is responsible for ensuring that Retention and Disposal Schedules are followed?**

**A:** The Michigan Penal Code (MCL 750.491) establishes misdemeanor penalties for disposing of records without the authorization of an approved Retention and Disposal Schedule. Government agency directors are responsible for ensuring that relevant staff are aware of the provisions in the schedule and follow them. The Records Management Services does not audit agencies and assess penalties. However, courts may penalize agencies for failing to follow an approved Retention and Disposal Schedule.

**Q: What should I do if I have suggestions for revising a general schedule?**

**A:** Contact the Records Management Services at (517) 335-9132.