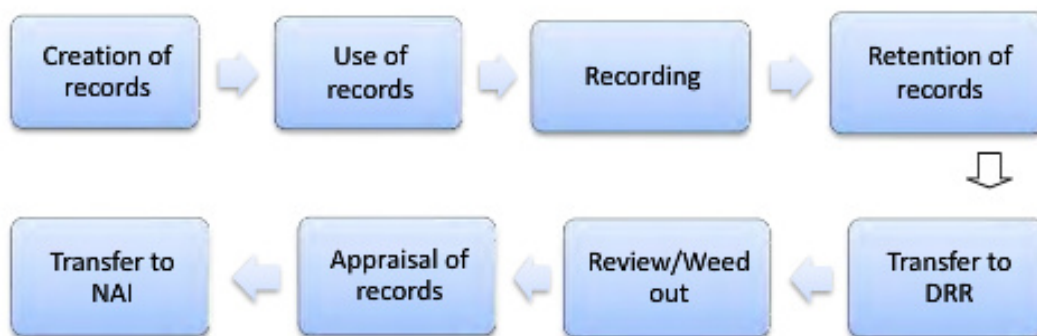


10.1. Activities involved in records management :

- (1) Records management covers the activities concerning recording, retention, retrieval and weeding out.
- (2) Each record creating agency will nominate, in pursuance of provisions of the Public Records Act, 1993 and the Public Records Rules, 1997 a Departmental Records Officer (DRO) who is not below the level of a Section Officer for overall records management of the organisation as a whole.

Box – 10.1: Stages of Records Management:



10.2. Stage of recording:

Files should be recorded after action on all the issues considered thereon has been completed as per the record retention schedules (Para 10.7). However, files of a purely ephemeral nature (such as casual leave records or circulars of temporary nature) containing papers of little reference or research value may be destroyed after one year without being formally recorded.

Box-e.10.1.

In eFile, the facility of recording a file is given for the files on which processing is done physically. An electronic file on which action is complete is closed and kept in a separate folder (closed folder). This may be closed by the creator of the file after getting approval of the competent authority, which may be of the level of Section Officer or above based on the roles assigned in the application. The closed file may be seen by the official who has closed the file and official who has authorized the closure of the file. The closed file can be re-opened/retrieved by the official who has closed the file with the approval of the competent authority.

Departmental instructions are to be reviewed and re-issued by each Department.

10.3. Departmental instructions for records management:

Each Department has to issue Departmental instructions to regulate the recording and reviewing of records.

10.4. Categorisation of records:

Files may be recorded under any one of the following categories:

- (i) Category 'A' meaning 'keep and microfilm'- This categorization will be adopted for:
 - (a) files which qualify for permanent preservation for administrative purposes (Part 'A' of Appendix 10.2) and which have to be microfilmed because they contain:
 - (i) a document so precious that its original must be preserved intact and access to it in the original form must be restricted to the barest minimum to avoid damage or loss; or
 - (ii) material likely to be required for frequent reference by different parties simultaneously/frequently.
 - (b) files of historical importance (Part 'B' of Appendix 10.2)
- (ii) Category 'B' meaning 'keep but do not microfilm'- This category will cover files required for permanent preservation for administrative purposes, such as those listed in part 'A' of Appendix 10.2. It will, however, exclude the nature of material falling under the category described in (i) or (ii) of sub-para (1) (a) above and therefore need not be microfilmed.
- (iii) Category 'C' meaning 'keep for specified period only'-This category will include files of secondary importance having reference value for a limited period not exceeding 10 years. In exceptional cases, if the record is required to be retained beyond 10 years it will be upgraded to 'B' Category.

The eFiles may be recorded under two categories:

Category - 'A'-eFiles which qualify for permanent preservation for administrative purposes or historical reasons such as those listed in Part A and Part B of Appendix-10.2.

Category 'C' –eFiles which are of secondary importance having reference value for a limited period not exceeding 10 years. In exceptional cases, if the record is required to be retained beyond 10 years it will be upgraded to A Category.

10.5. Procedure for recording:

After action on the issue(s) considered on the file has been completed, the Dealing Officer/Initiating Officer, in consultation with his supervisory officer, should close and record the file in the manner prescribed below:

- i. indicate the appropriate category of record (Para10.4) and in the case of category `C', also specify the retention period and the year of review/weeding/destruction on the file cover; for non-file documents, indicate the number of years for retention on the file cover. E.g. "C/5 – Destroy (or Review) 2/2023 on a file cover of the file to be retained for 5 years from the date of closure in 2/2018". This is done after the Dealing Officer specifically obtained approval of the Section Officer/Desk Officer;
- ii. where necessary, revise the title of the file so that it describes adequately the contents at that stage;
- iii. get the file indexed (Paras10.6 & 10.7) for Category 'A'&'B' files;
- iv. Take extract from the file, copies of important decisions, documents, etc. as are considered useful for future reference and add them to the standing guard file/standing note/precedent book;
- v. remove from the file all superfluous papers such as reminders, acknowledgements, routine slips, working-sheets, rough drafts, surplus copies, etc. and destroy them, unless they have audit or legal value;
- vi. complete all references and, in particular, mark previous and later references on the subject on the file cover;
- vii. complete columns 4 and 5 of the file register and correct the entry in column 2 where necessary;
- viii. enter the file number in column 2 of the register for watching progress of recording (Appendix 10.1);
- ix. write the word `recorded' prominently in red ink, across the entries in the file movement register;
- x. indicate page numbers and other references in ink which were earlier made in pencil;
- xi. prepare fresh file covers, where necessary, with all the entries already made thereon; and
- xii. hand over the file to the MTS who will repair the damaged papers, if any, stitch the file and, show it to the person entrusted with the responsibility by the Section Officer for making entries in the register for watching progress of recording before keeping it in the bundle of recorded files.

Box-e.10.2.

In eFile, change of file title and removal of any paper from any part of the electronic file is not permissible. In eFile, file maintenance is a continuous and automatic activity.

10.6 Stage of indexing:

Files will be indexed at the time of their recording. Only those files which are categorised as 'A' & 'B' will be indexed. If a list of recorded files is in MS-Word or pdf format, there is no need for indexing.

Box-e.10.3.

In eFile, the meta-data of the file along with the recording information and record movement helps in easy tracking and retrieval of the file along-with monitoring the status of recording.

In eFile, the files may be searched using meta-data like file number, subject/part of the subject, category and other parameters used while creating a file / on the cover page of the file.

10.7. Record Retention Schedule:

- (i) To ensure that files are neither prematurely destroyed, nor kept for periods longer than necessary, every department will:
 - a. in respect of records connected with accounts, observe the instructions contained in Appendix 9 to the General Financial Rules, 2017;
 - b. in respect of records, relating to establishment, housekeeping matters, etc. common to all departments, follow the 'schedule of periods of retention for records common to all departments' issued by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (Sl.No.15 in Table 4.2)
 - c. in respect of records prescribed in this Manual, observe the retention periods specified in Appendix 10.10; and
 - d. in respect of records connected with its substantive functions departmental instructions issued for departmental retention schedule prescribing the periods should be preserved in consultation with the National Archives of India.
- (ii) The above schedules should be reviewed at least once in 5 years.

10.8. Custody of records:

- (i) Recorded files are to be kept serially arranged in the sections/desks concerned for not more than one year, after which they are to be transferred to the departmental record room. For files due for such transfer the register at Appendix 10.1 will be consulted.
- (ii) In the event of transfer of work from one section to another, the relevant files also are transferred, after being listed in duplicate in the form at Appendix 10.3. One copy of this list will be retained by the section taking over the files for its record and the other acknowledged and returned to the section transferring them.

- (iii) Files transferred by a section to the departmental record room will be accompanied by a list of files (Appendix 10.3) in duplicate. The departmental record room will verify that all the files mentioned in the list have been received, retain one copy of the list and return the other, duly signed, to the section concerned. In the record room, these lists will be kept section-wise in separate file covers.
- (iv) The departmental record room will maintain a record review register (Appendix 10.4) in which a few pages will be allotted for each future year. Category 'C' files marked for review in a particular year will be entered in the pages earmarked for that year in the register.
- (v) Files surviving the review undertaken on their attaining the 25th year of life will be stamped prominently as 'transferred to NAI' and sent to the National Archives of India. Files transferred to the National Archives of India will be accompanied by a list (in triplicate) (Appendix – 10.3), one copy of which will be returned by the National Archives of India, duly signed, to the Departmental Record Room.
- (vi) Record rooms will be properly ventilated, with adequate lighting and fire-safety equipment and avoid exposure to moisture. The records will be arranged serially section-wise and will be regularly dusted. For proper preservation the records will be periodically fumigated.

10.9. Review and weeding of records:

- (i) A category 'C' file will be reviewed on the expiry of the specified retention period and weeded out unless there are sufficient grounds warranting its further retention. Justification for retaining a file after review will be recorded on the file with the approval of Branch Officer/Divisional Head concerned. Retention after a review will be for a period not exceeding 10 years, including the period already retained.
- (ii) Category 'A' & 'B' files will be reviewed on attaining the 25th year of their life in consultation with the National Archives of India. In these reviews the need for revising the original categorisation of category 'B' files may also be considered.
- (iii) The year of review of category 'C' files will be reckoned with reference to the year of their closing and that for category 'A' and category 'B' files with reference to the year of their opening.
- (iv) Beginning in January each year, the departmental record room will send to the sections/desks concerned the files due for review in that year, together with a list of files in the form at Appendix 10.5, in four lots – in January, April, July and September.

(v) (a) Files received for review will be examined by, or under the direction of, the Section Officer or the Desk functionary concerned and those files which are no longer required will be marked for destruction. Other files may be marked for further retention. It may, however, be ensured that in case an inquiry has been initiated departmentally or by a Commission of Inquiry or as a result of Court proceedings having a bearing on the subject matter contained in the files/documents concerned or the files/documents which are required in connection with the implementation of order/judgement of any court of law, such files/documents will not be destroyed, even if, such files/documents have completed their prescribed life as per the Record Retention Schedule.

b. Files/documents referred to above may be, destroyed only after submission of the Report by the Commission or completion of inquiry or implementation of the judgement/order of the court(s), with the approval of the concerned Joint Secretary/Head of the Department. In case the implementation of the court order has been challenged/ appealed against either by the Government or by the applicant in a higher court, the concerned files/documents will not be weeded out until the appeal/challenge is considered and finally decided. In such cases the limitation period prescribed for appeals should also be kept in mind.

(vi) After review the person entrusted with that responsibility by the Section Officer will make entries of revised categorization/retention period in the file registers and return them to the Departmental Record Room along with the list (Appendices–10.6 & 10.7) after completing column 3 thereof.

(vii) The Departmental Record Room, under the supervision of Departmental Record Officer (DRO), will:

(a) transfer category 'A' & 'B' files surviving the review undertaken at the 25th year of their life sub-para (iii) above, to the National Archives of India;

(b) in the case of other files:

(i) destroy those marked for destruction, after completing column 4 of the list of files (Appendix 10.3); and

(ii) restore the rest i.e. those marked for further retention, to the departmental record stacks after making the required entries in the record review register in the case of category 'C' files;

(viii) Records not falling within the definition of file, e.g., publications, orders, etc., will also be subject to periodic reviews at suitable intervals and those no longer needed should be weeded out. To facilitate such reviews each section will maintain a register.

(ix) Considering the urgency to reduce the volume of records now being retained without any significant need for their retention, the following measures may be taken in the Ministries/Departments:-

(a) A special drive may be launched annually to record/review all Category 'C' files, and to weed out those no longer needed.

(b) Each Joint Secretary may review every half year the state of recording/reviewing/weeding out of files in his Wing and allot time bound tasks towards this and to the members of the staff;

(c) Inspecting officers may be asked to pay special attention to the stage of Records Management in the sections as well as the Departmental Record Rooms during their inspections.

(x) The following manner of Weeding/Destruction of records will be adopted:

(a) Routine files/records will be manually torn into small pieces and disposed off.

(b) Classified files/records will be destroyed by use of shredder, and

(c) Secret files/records will also be incinerated after being shredded as per provision under 'Departmental Security Instructions' issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs.

Box-e.10.4

National Archives of India (NAI) and NIC are the Nodal Offices for developing a module for closed e-files and taking follow up action in the matter.

10.10. Quarterly progress reports of recording and reviewing of files:

i. The record officer will prepare each quarter, in duplicate, progress reports on the recording and review of files for the preceding quarter, in the forms at Appendices 10.6 and 10.7 and submit them, together with the following records, to the section officer

(a) Register for watching progress of recording (Appendix – 10.1); and

(b) Lists of files received for review (Appendix – 10.5)

ii. The section officer will check the two statements, submit one copy of the report to the branch officer and send the other to the designated section looking after Internal Work Study.

iii. The designated section entrusted with the functions of Internal Work Study (DSIWS)/O&M will:

(a) post the figures in the forms at Appendices 10.6 and 10.7 and return the reports to the section concerned;

(b) prepare the consolidated statement for the Department as a whole by vertically totalling the columns in the form at Appendices 10.8 and 10.9;

(c) watch the progress of recording and review work generally; and

(d) bring to the notice of the designated O&M officer and the Secretary, any significant trends in the matter.

10.11 Maintenance/transfer of records in the personal offices of Ministers:

- (a) The personal offices of Ministers shall maintain necessary records such as registration, dispatch and file movement registers. The above records will be in addition to files and folders for papers of secret nature connected with the Cabinet meetings, etc. and for such subjects as considered necessary;
- (b) When a file or paper is given to the Minister for seeking orders or for any other purpose, informally, the PS to Minister will be informed. PS to Minister will on receipt of these particulars, will satisfy that such a file has been received by the Minister and watch its further movement. The file will be returned to the officer concerned as soon as the matter has received the attention of the Minister and the file has been disposed of.

10.12. Records maintained by officers and their personal staff:

Each Department may issue departmental instructions to regulate the review and weeding out of records maintained by officers and their personal staff.

10.13. Requisitioning of records:

- (i) No recorded file will be issued from the sections, Departmental Record Room or Archival records except against a signed requisition in form prescribed under Public Records Act, 1993/Public Records Rules, 1997 in the case of Archival records.
- (ii) Files obtained by a section from the departmental record room will normally be returned within 6 months. If they are not received back within this period, the departmental record room will remind the section concerned. For this purpose, the record room will maintain a simple register for keeping a record of the files issued to the various sections each month. A similar register will be maintained by each section as a record of files borrowed from it by other sections.
- (iii) Requisitions for files belonging to other departments and in the custody of the National Archives, will be got endorsed by the department concerned before they are sent to the Archives. If the requisitioned file happens to be a confidential one, the Archives will not supply the file direct to the requisitioning department but route it through the department to which it belongs.
 - a. The requisition will be kept in place of the file issued by NAI.
 - b. If the requisitioned file is one that has been microfilmed or printed, normally a microfilmed or printed copy and not the original will be issued to the requisitioning department.

- c. Files obtained by a department from the National Archives will not normally be retained for more than a year except with the latter's specific knowledge and consent.
- (iv) On return, the requisitioned file will be restored to its place and the requisition returned to the section/official concerned.

Box-e.10.5.

In eFile, based on the category defined on the files, the list of files that are to be reviewed in a particular year is available in the system.

The Record Management System has provisions to take care of requisitioning of files from the department and / or NAI

In eOffice, the Record Management System is inbuilt with provisions for all aspects related to Record Management of electronics files. The system would indicate the list of files that are due for review as per the categorization of files at the time of recording by the creating section. It would also indicate the location of the files i.e. whether they are in the Departmental Records Room of the creating Department/Ministry after review by the creating sections or if they are due for appraisal at the end of stipulated time period. It would also indicate the final disposal of e-files after appraisal i.e. if they are to be transferred to the National Archives of India or they are to be weeded out.

Presently, all electronic records are retained in the e-file system.

APPENDIX 10.1.

[para 10.10(i)(a)]

Register for watching the progress of recording

Section..... Month and year

Sl. No.	F. No. marked for recording	Date of marking	Date of Recording
1	2	3	4

Box-e.10.7.

In eFile, the above data is saved automatically.

APPENDIX 10.2.

(para10.4)

Illustrative list of records fit for permanent preservation because of (a) their value for administrative purposes, and (b) their historical importance

A – Records of value for administrative purposes:

Papers of the following categories will normally be among those required to be kept indefinitely for administration's use :

1. Papers containing evidence of rights or obligations of or against the government, e.g., title to property, claims for compensation not subject to a time limit, formal instruments such as awards, schemes, orders, sanctions, etc.
 2. Papers relating to major policy decisions, including those relating to the preparation of legislation.
 3. Papers regarding constitution, functions and working of important committees, working groups, etc.
 4. Papers providing lasting precedents for important procedures, e.g., administrative memoranda, historical reports and summaries, legal opinions on important matters.
 5. Papers concerning rules, regulations, departmental guides or instructions of general application.
 6. Papers relating to salient features of organisation and staffing of government departments and offices.
 7. Papers relating to important litigation or 'causes celebres' in which the administration was involved.
-

B – Records of Historical importance:

Much of the material likely to be preserved for administrative purposes will be of interest for research purpose as well; but papers of the following categories should be specially considered as of value to historians :

1. Papers relating to the origin of a department or agency of government; how it was organised; how it functioned; and (if defunct) how and why it was dissolved.
 2. Data about what the department/agency accomplished. (Samples by way of illustration may be enough; but the need for such samples may be dispensed with where published annual reports are available).
 3. Papers relating to a change of policy. This is not always easy to recognize, but watch should be kept for (a) summary for a Minister, (b) the appointment of a departmental or inter-departmental committee or working group, and (c) note for the Cabinet or a Cabinet Committee. Generally there should be a conscious effort to preserve all such papers, including those reflecting
-

conflicting points of view. In the case of inter-Departmental committees, however, it is important that a complete set of papers be kept only by the departments mainly concerned – usually the one providing secretariat assistance.

4. Papers relating to the implementation of a change of policy, including a complete set of instructions to executing agencies etc., and relevant forms.
 5. Papers relating to a well-known public or international event or *cause celebre*, or to other events which gave rise to interest or controversy on the national plane.
 6. Papers containing direct reference to trends or developments in political, social, economic or other fields, particularly if they contain unpublished statistical or financial data covering a long period or a wide area.
 7. Papers cited in or noted as consulted in connection with, official publications.
 8. Papers relating to the more important aspects of scientific or technical research and development.
 9. Papers containing matters of local interest of which it is unreasonable to expect that evidence will be available locally, or comprising synopsis of such information covering the whole country or a wide area.
 10. Papers relating to obsolete activities or investigations, or to abortive scheme in important fields.
 11. Any other specific category of records which, according to the departmental instructions issued in consultation with the National Archives of India, have to be treated as genuine source of information on any aspect of history – political, social, economic, etc., or are considered to be of biographical or antiquarian interest.
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APPENDIX 10.4.

(para10.8 (iv))

Record Review Register

Ministry/Department of..... Year of review.....

File No.	File No.	File No.	File No.

Note: – This register will be maintained for category 'C' files only.

APPENDIX 10.5.

[(para10.10 (i)(b))]

List of files due for review

Sl. No.	File No.	Instruction of reviewing authority
1	2	3

INSTRUCTIONS

1. The departmental record room will prepare this list in triplicate by completing columns 1 and 2 only.
2. The section responsible for review will sign one copy of the list and return it to the departmental record room by way of acknowledgement, retaining the other two copies.
3. After review, the section concerned will complete column 3 of the list in both the copies by indicating.
 - (a) the word 'keep' in the case of the files proposed to be retained indefinitely;
 - (b) the letter 'W' in the case of files desired to be weeded out; and
 - (c) the precise year of weeding, in the case of class 'C' files proposed to be retained for a further period not exceeding 10 years from the date of their closing.
4. Both the copies of the list should accompany the files returned to the departmental record room, which will sign one copy and return it to the section concerned by way of acknowledgement.

APPENDIX 10.6.

[para10.10 (iii)(a)]

Quarterly progress report on recording of files

Section/Desk.....

Quarter ending	Number of files				Initials	
	B.F. from previous quarter	Marked for record during the quarter	Recorded during the quarter	Remaining to be recorded at the end of the quarter (col. 2+3-4)	Assistant Section Officer	Section Officer/ desk functionary
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Column 1 will also indicate year
2. Column 2 will repeat the figure in column 5 for the preceding quarter.
3. Column 3 and 4 will be filled on the basis of the register for watching the progress of recording (Appendix 10.1).

APPENDIX 10.7.

(para10.10 (i))

Quarterly progress report on review of files

Section/Desk

Quarter ending	Number of Files						Initials	
	B.F. from previous quarter	Received for review during the quarter	Reviewed during the month			Remaining to be reviewed at the end of the quarter (col. 2 + 3 + 6)	Assistant Section Officer	Section Officer/ Desk functionary
			Marked for further retention	Marked for destruction	Total			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Column 2 will repeat the figure in column 5 for the preceding quarter.
2. Column 3 and 4 will be filled on the basis of record review register and lists of file received for review.

APPENDIX 10.9.

(para10.10(iii))

Consolidated quarterly progress report on review of recorded files

Ministry/Department.....

Month ending.....

Section	Number of files				Variation of col.5 from col.2
	B.F. from previous quartet	Received for review during the quarter	Reviewed during the quarter	Remaining to be reviewed at the end of the quarter(col.2+ 3-4)	
1	2	3	4	5	6

Box – e 10.8.

In eFile, the various registers maintained physically, like file registers for recording, records review register, records for weeding out, records sent to NAI, etc. are available in the system.

APPENDIX 10.10.

(para 10.7c)

Retention schedule for records prescribed in the Manual of office Procedure

Sl. No.	Description of record	Reference to relevant para of the manual	Retention period (in years) from the date of closure
1	2	3	4
1	Dak register	5.3	3
2	Standing guard files	11.4	Permanent. To be weeded out when the revised version becomes available
6	Section Dispatch Register	9.6(iii)	5
7	Messenger book	5.4	3
9	File register	6.4	Permanent
10	File movement Register	6.5	3
11	Register for watching the progress of recording	10.10(i)a	3
12	Precedent book	11.6	Permanent
13	List of files transferred to Departmental record room	10.8(iii)	25
14	List of files transferred to National Archives	10.8(v)	Permanent
15	Record review register	10.8(iv)	1
16	List of files received for review	10.10.(i)(b)	1
17	Record requisition slip (NAI)	10.13.(iii)	To be destroyed after the file has been returned to NAI
19	Quarterly Progress report on recording of files	10.10.(i)(a)	1
20	Register for keeping a watch on communications received from MPs /VIPs	12.3	3
21	Register of Parliamentary Assurances	12.6	3
22	Check-lists for periodical reports	12.7	1
23	Inspection reports		1 year after the ATN on that report is accepted

NOTE:

The retention period will be reckoned with reference to the date from which the record ceases to be current/active. Where, however, it is proposed to weed out a register wherein certain entries are still current, e.g., file movement register where certain files entered therein have not been recorded or the register of assurances, where certain assurances have not been implemented, the current entries will first be transferred to the new register and the old register weeded out thereafter.