

General Disposal Schedule No 21

**For disposal of hardcopy source records after
digitisation**

Approved: 11 December 2018

Effective: From 11 December 2018 to 31 December 2028

Version 5

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Approval for the commencement of this schedule

State Records Act 1997

Government of South Australia

General Disposal Schedule No. 21, Version 5

for

Disposal of hardcopy source records after digitisation

Effective 11 December 2018 until 31 December 2028

Approved by



Chair, State Records Council



Director, State Records

Scope

GDS 21 applies to hardcopy source records that are converted to digital format (digitised) as part of business processes. Examples of digitisation as part of business processes include:

- » Digitisation of mail received by post for forwarding to officers for action
- » Photographing receipts and loading the image file (record) into an business system
- » Scanning signed documents to add them to an electronic file to ensure the file is complete (where the rest of the file comprises emails and born digital records).

GDS 21 only provides approval for destruction of hardcopy source records that are covered by an approved and current General Disposal Schedule (GDS) or Records Disposal Schedule (RDS).

GDS 21 does not apply to the conversion or migration of official 'born digital' records.

Objectives

The purpose of GDS 21 is to provide State government agencies and local councils with approval to destroy certain hardcopy source records that have been digitised as part of business processes.

State government agencies and local councils have been digitising records as part of business processes since before 2000. The first version of GDS 21 was approved in April 2005.

Since that time, digitisation of hardcopy source records has become routine business practice across many agencies and local councils. There is greater awareness of the need to manage and ensure the accessibility of digital records to satisfy business, legal, audit and community needs.

Agencies and local councils are best placed to manage the risk of destroying hardcopy source records, and to ensure the ongoing accessibility of digital records, relating to their business.

Section 11(2) of the *Electronic Communications Act 2000* (the EC Act) enables agencies and councils to retain an electronic form of a document, rather than in the form of paper, an article or other material required to be retained under South Australian law. This is allowed where at the time of generating the electronic form of the document:

- » the method of generating the electronic form of the document provided a reliable means of assuring the maintenance of the integrity of the information contained in the document, and
- » it was reasonable to expect that the information in the electronic form of the document would be readily accessible so as to be useable for subsequent reference.

The EC Act states that integrity of information contained in a document is maintained only if the information has remained complete and unaltered, apart from the addition of any endorsement, or any immaterial change arising in the course of communication, storage or display. There is also a requirement that the electronic form of the document be retained on a particular kind of data storage device, where this is required by regulations.

Once digitised and stored in a manner that meets the conditions set out in GDS21, the digital record becomes the official record for the purposes of the *State Records Act 1997*.

State Records suggests that agencies should obtain legal advice if there is any possibility that destruction of an official record could be prejudicial to the interests of the agency, its clients or the Crown.

Standards for recordkeeping systems storing digital images

Agencies are required to ensure recordkeeping or business systems used to store the digital record meet the minimum requirements in the standards issued by State Records.

Relevant standards and supporting guidelines can be found on the State Records website.

Authorisation

GDS 21 authorises the following:

- » Any hardcopy source document created on or before 31 December 2004 with a temporary retention period approved by the State Records Council may be destroyed once digitised and stored in a system that manages digital records in a manner consistent with the minimum requirements in the standards issued by State Records, where the agency meets the conditions set out below.
- » Any hardcopy source document created on or from 1 January 2005 with a temporary or permanent retention period approved by the State Records Council may be destroyed once digitised and stored in a system that manages digital records in a manner consistent with the minimum requirements in the standards issued by State Records, where the agency meets the conditions set out below.

Conditions

In order to implement GDS 21 agencies must ensure the following conditions are met:

- » A disposal schedule approved by the State Records Council is applied to the records
- » The digitised record is an accurate and complete rendition of the hardcopy source record, and the processes for making and keeping accurate reproductions of hardcopy source records are documented
- » The digitised record is fit for purpose for the business needs of the agency, and any other likely purposes e.g. disclosure under FOI, legal challenges
- » That the digitised record is managed in a recordkeeping or business system that complies with the standards issued by State Records, ensuring:
 - metadata is created and maintained about the record
 - the digital images cannot be altered
 - security and access controls restrict and log unauthorised attempts at access
- » The digital records can be maintained readily accessible for subsequent reference for the minimum retention periods applicable to the record
- » The hardcopy source records are managed in accordance with agency policy and procedure until they are disposed of.

Agencies must retain a record indicating that these conditions have been met. This must be approved by the Chief Executive or Executive delegate.

Exclusions

The following exclusions apply to destroying hardcopy source records:

- » Records without coverage under a current records disposal schedule (RDS), general disposal schedule (GDS) or other disposal determination
- » Records where the physical form of the original record possesses some evidence that cannot be reproduced in the digital form
- » Records where the physical form may be of importance or records with intrinsic value in hardcopy format
- » Records restricted or excluded through the Electronic Communications Act and Regulations.

Agencies should obtain legal advice if there is any possibility that destruction of an official hardcopy record could be prejudicial to the interests of the agency, its clients or the Crown.

Disposal Determination

Item No.	Description (Disposal Class)	Disposal Action
1	Hardcopy source records with a temporary retention period approved by the State Records Council and where the conditions outlined in GDS 21 are met.	Retain until no longer required for agency purposes.
2	Hardcopy source records created on or from 1 January 2005 with a permanent retention period approved by the State Records Council and where the conditions outlined in GDS 21 are met.	Retain until no longer required for agency purposes.

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