



**DIRECTIVE D11**

**GENERAL DISPOSAL AUTHORITY NUMBER AE1  
FOR THE DESTRUCTION OF  
EPHEMERAL ELECTRONIC AND RELATED RECORDS  
OF ALL GOVERNMENTAL BODIES**

**National Archives and Records Service of South Africa  
October 2007**



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BODIES**

**1. AUTHORITY**

This document grants authority to governmental bodies in terms of section 13(2)(a) of the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act (Act No. 43 of 1996, as amended) to erase or destroy ephemeral electronic and related records of all governmental bodies when no longer needed.

**2. RETENTION PERIODS**

Each governmental body should determine appropriate retention periods for records that do not have enduring value in terms of disposal authorities issued by the National Archivist.

In determining retention periods, the governmental body's own requirements for access to information for efficient functioning should be taken into account, as well as its obligations to the public for accountability, e.g. in terms of the Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000.

**3. INTRODUCTION: EPHEMERAL ELECTRONIC AND RELATED RECORDS**

Ephemeral electronic and related records are defined as those that are not regarded as having enduring value.

Authority to dispose of electronic records is in most cases linked to the approval of classification systems and the issuing of disposal authority on the basis of such systems. In the electronic environment there is therefore a need for a sound records management system to be in place. This is in fact a requirement in terms of section 13(2) of the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act (No. 43 of 1996).

Erasure or destruction in terms of disposal authorities issued by the National Archivist should take place in a controlled and systematic manner under central supervision within each governmental body.

The following electronic and related records can be erased/destroyed:

**4. DESCRIPTIONS**

**4.1 Word Processing Files**

Documents such as letters, messages, memoranda, reports, handbooks, directives, and manuals recorded on electronic media such as hard disks or diskettes:

4.1.1 When used to produce hard copy that is maintained in files of a classification system.

4.1.2 When maintained only in electronic form, and duplicate the information in and take the place of records that would otherwise be maintained in hard copy providing that the hard copy has been authorized for destruction in terms of this

disposal authority or another disposal authority issued by the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa.

#### **4.2 Administrative Data Bases**

Data bases that support administrative functions such as financing, provisioning of supplies and services, and staff (EXCEPT where these are the line functions of the body), and which contain information derived from hard copy records authorized for destruction by this disposal authority or another disposal authority issued by the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa, if the hard copy records are maintained in a classification system. The National Archives and Records Service approves classification systems for use by governmental bodies. Hard copy printouts from these databases that are made for short-term administrative purposes.

#### **4.3 Schedules of Daily Activities**

Calendars, appointment books, schedules, logs, diaries, and other records documenting meetings, appointments, telephone calls, trips, visits, and other activities by public servants while serving in an official capacity, created and maintained in hard copy or electronic form, EXCLUDING:

- 4.3.1 Records determined to be personal.
- 4.3.2 Records containing substantive information relating to official activities, the substance of which has not been incorporated into official files.
- 4.3.3 All records kept at ministerial level.

#### **4.4 Tracking and control records**

Logs, registers, and other records in hard copy or electronic form used to control or document the status of correspondence, reports, or other records that are authorized for destruction by this disposal authority or another disposal authority issued by the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa.

#### **4.5 Finding Aids (or indexes)**

Indexes, lists, registers, and other finding aids in hard copy or electronic form used only to provide access to records authorized for destruction in a disposal authority issued by the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa, EXCLUDING records containing abstracts or other information that can be used as an information source apart from the related records.

#### **4.6 Files/Records created in central data processing facilities to create, use, and maintain master files**

- 4.6.1 Electronic files or records created solely to test system performance, as well as hardcopy printouts and related documentation for the electronic files/records.
- 4.6.2 Electronic files or records used to create or update a master file, including, but not limited to, work files and intermediate input/output records.
- 4.6.3 Electronic files and hard-copy printouts created to monitor system usage, including, but not limited to, log-in files, password files, audit trail files [EXCLUDING system usage files, and cost-back files used to access charges for

system use as well as the following audit trail files that are generated for the file plan, groups of electronic folders, individual electronic folders, electronic volumes, electronic records, and metadata associated with any of them:

- the type of action which is being carried out, namely
  - re-location of an electronic record to another electronic folder, identifying both source and destination folders
  - re-location of an electronic folder to a different series, identifying both source and destination series
  - allocation of a disposal schedule to an object
  - re-allocation of a disposal schedule to an object, identifying both previous and reallocated schedules
  - placing of a disposal hold on a folder
  - transfer or destruction of records
  - the date and time of a change made to any metadata associated with electronic folders or electronic records
  - changes made to the allocation of access control markings to an electronic folder, electronic record or user
  - export actions carried out on an electronic folder or record
  - the creation of a record
  - any editing to a record
- the user carrying out the action
- the authority in terms of which an action was carried out
- the date and time of the action.

4.6.4 Electronic records generated during the creation or use of a master file or database that contain information on the operation of the system, except where they are required to support the integrity of the master file or database. Such records may be deleted in accordance with system design specifications

#### **4.7 Input/Source Records**

4.7.1 Non-electronic documents or forms designed solely to create, update, or modify the records in an electronic medium and not required for audit or legal purposes (such as need for signatures) and not previously scheduled for permanent retention in a disposal authority issued by the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa.

4.7.2 Electronic records, except as indicated in 4.7.3 below, entered into the system during an update process and not required for audit or legal purposes.

4.7.3 Electronic records received from another department and used as input/source records by the receiving department, EXCLUDING records produced by another department under terms of an interdepartmental agreement, or records created by another department in response to the specific information needs of the receiving department.

4.7.4 Paper-based records that have been issued with a disposal authority by the National Archives and Records Services which have been digitized and captured into an electronic system, on condition that

- ◆ the digital images are accurate, authentic and reliable reproductions of the source records;
- ◆ the legal admissibility and evidential weight of the digital images have been clarified;
- ◆ there is no requirement in law that the source record should be retained;

- ♦ there is no requirement in a National Archives and Records Services disposal authority that the records should be retained in a specific form or medium;
- ♦ the source records are not subject to a disposal hold due to pending judicial proceedings;
- ♦ the source records are not required in judicial proceedings, government inquiries or investigations;
- ♦ there are no business specific requirements that necessitate retention in the original medium;
- ♦ the source records are not required for promotion of access to information requests or administrative justice actions;
- ♦ the retention of the source records are not required due to the forensic evidence they contain;
- ♦ the reproductions were not solely made for convenience purposes;
- ♦ the reproduction as well as the quality and verification procedures are properly documented and executed and secure and regularly audited;
- ♦ the electronic system is stable and reliable;
- ♦ the images are managed as official records inside an Integrated Document and Records Management System;
- ♦ the NARS prescribed minimum mandatory metadata<sup>1</sup> is captured for each image; and
- ♦ the accessibility of the images are guaranteed for as long as the records are required for functional, legal and historical purposes;
- ♦ a certificate duly signed by the risk manager and/or legal advisor and the head of the governmental body stating that all the above has been investigated and found to be in order are produced and retained as a permanent record.

[EXCLUDING paper-based source records that have not been issued with a disposal authority by the National Archives and Records Service may not be destroyed even though they have been reproduced electronically]

- 4.7.5 Computer files or records containing uncalibrated and unvalidated digital or analogue data collected during observation or measurement activities or research and development programmes and used as input for a digital master file or data base once it has been calibrated and validated.
- 4.7.6 Electronic input/source records copied from a master file for transmission to another location. If the master file is retained, the version at the transmitted location may be deleted when the action is completed.

**4.8 Master Files relating to administrative functions except where an administrative function is a line function of the body concerned.**

- 4.8.1 Master files that replace, in whole or in part, administrative records scheduled for destruction in a disposal authority approved by the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa.
- 4.8.2 Master files that duplicate, in whole or in part, administrative records scheduled for destruction in a disposal authority approved by the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa.

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<sup>1</sup> See NARS, *Managing electronic records in governmental bodies: Metadata requirements*, April 2006

- 4.8.3 Electronic records containing data that are manipulated, sorted and/or moved from one execution of a programme to another in the process of creating or updating a master file or database. Such records may be deleted in accordance with system design specifications.

#### **4.9 Data Files consisting of summarized information**

Records that contain summarized or aggregated information created by combining data elements or individual observations from a single master file or data base that may be destroyed in terms of a disposal authority issued by the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa, EXCLUDING data files that are created as disclosure-free files to allow public access to the data; and those created from a master file or data base that is unscheduled, that was scheduled as permanent but no longer exists, or can no longer be accessed. The latter data files may not be destroyed before securing the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa's approval.

#### **4.10 Records consisting of extracted information**

Electronic files consisting solely of records extracted from a single master file or data base that is disposable in terms of a disposal authority issued by the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa, EXCLUDING extracts that are: produced as disclosure-free files to allow public access to the data; or produced from a master file or data base that is unscheduled, or that was scheduled as permanent but no longer exists, or can no longer be accessed; or produced by an extraction process which changes the informational content of the source master file or data base. The latter files may not be destroyed before securing the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa's approval.

#### **4.11 Print Files**

Electronic files extracted from master files or databases without changing them and used solely to produce hard-copy publications and/or printouts of tabulations, ledgers, registers, and reports.

#### **4.12 Technical Reformat Files**

Electronic files consisting of data copied from master files or data bases for the specific purpose of information interchange and written with varying technical specifications, EXCLUDING files created for transfer to the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa.

#### **4.13 Security Backup Files**

Electronic files consisting of data identical in physical format to master files or databases and retained in case the master files or databases are damaged or inadvertently erased.

- 4.13.1 Files identical to records scheduled for transfer to the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa.

- 4.13.2 Files identical to records authorized for destruction in a disposal authority approved by the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa.

**4.14 Test records**

Electric records consisting of routine data used only for the purpose of testing system performance. Such records may be deleted in accordance with system design specifications.

**4.15 Special Purpose Programmes**

Application software necessary solely to use or maintain a master file or data base authorized for destruction in a disposal authority issued by the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa, EXCLUDING special purpose software necessary to use or maintain any master files or data bases for which disposal authority has not yet been obtained from the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa or are scheduled for transfer to the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa in terms of a disposal authority.

**4.16 Documentation regarding electronic systems**

Data systems specifications, file specifications, code-books, record layouts, user guides, output specifications, and final reports (regardless of medium) relating to a master file or data base that has been authorized for destruction in a disposal authority issued by the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa, EXCLUDING documentation relating to any master file or data base for which disposal authority has not yet been obtained from the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa or are scheduled for transfer to the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa in terms of a disposal authority.