



# Maine State General Schedules

A BASIC GUIDE ON HOW TO USE THE STATE GS  
FOR RECORDS MANAGEMENT

# What are the State General Schedules

Maine State General Schedules work as minimum standard guidelines for those records commonly created and maintained by state agencies to support day-to-day business activities. This includes all record formats.

The purpose of the General Schedules is to:

- ▶ Provide agencies with uniform retention and disposition guidelines for common records being kept in the office.
- ▶ Ensure that agencies retain these records for the recommended time periods.
- ▶ Promote cost-effective management of records.

# Authorization of State General Schedules

These schedules have been prepared, approved, and issued by the Maine State Archives in consultation with the Archives Advisory Board pursuant to Maine Title 5, Chapter 6. This approval provides the legal basis for agencies to incorporate these schedules as part of an active records management program.



# “Minimum Standard Guidelines” What this Means

General Schedules indicate the minimum length of time records must be retained before destruction or archival preservation. Agencies may choose to retain records **longer** than what is written in the State GS, but they cannot be retained for a shorter time period. If agencies choose to keep records longer, they need to create an agency schedule.

## General vs. Agency Schedule

General Schedules apply to those commonly created agency records (based on general functions across agencies).

Agency-specific retention schedules are for those unique records created by a particular agency. Agency schedules might also be needed if there is a requirement to retain records longer than those retention periods listed in the State GS.

The General Schedules along with approved agency-specific retention schedules should cover all records for a given state agency (in all media formats).

# Record Copy vs. Agency Copy

The former version of the State GS was very confusing, listing retention times for “Record Copy” and “Agency Copy.”

What this means is that sometimes a specific agency will be responsible for retaining the “Record Copy” of documents per their agency schedules, but individual agencies also produce these records (“Agency Copies”). An example would be the State Controllers Office which retains all employee payroll records as the official record. However, an agency’s HR department would also be responsible for payroll records according to the State GS retention periods.

Make sure you understand the difference between what records the agency is responsible for (especially when it comes to financial, personnel and payroll records) and what is retained elsewhere as the official record. (More detail will follow.)



# General Schedule Overview

Consider the records being created and retained in the office on a day-to-day basis. These could be financial records, training materials, grant information, or routine office policies.

There are nine State General Schedules. Under each schedule are a list of related record series. Each series has a unique GS number with an attached title, description and retention explanation.

The retention column indicates either 1) a limited period after which the records will be destroyed, or 2) a retention time and archival designation.

# General Schedule Example

Series	Title	Description	Retention
GS1.3	<b>Attorney General Opinions</b>	Opinions relating to interpretation of the law. Record copy is retained by Attorney General for current business; other copies may be destroyed when opinion is no longer applicable.	Retain agency copies until opinion is no longer applicable then destroy Note: Attorney General's Office sends these records to the Maine State Archives

# When Does Retention Begin?

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**Retention starts at some trigger event** - something which occurs to initiate the beginning of retention. This is typically when a record is considered closed (when the normal business process has concluded). It can also be based on a specific event such as the close of a Legislative session; termination of employee; specific age of client; or settlement of litigation.

# What Schedules are Included in the State GS

## **There are 9 State General Schedules.**

- ▶ Schedule 1 – Administrative Records
- ▶ Schedule 2 – Financial Records
- ▶ Schedule 3 – Payroll Records
- ▶ Schedule 4 – Personnel Records
- ▶ Schedule 5 – State Agency Correspondence
- ▶ Schedule 6 – Electronic/Information Technology Records
- ▶ Schedule 7 – Records Management
- ▶ Schedule 8 – Meeting and Board Records
- ▶ Schedule 9 – Miscellaneous/Short-term Records



# State General Schedules

THE FOLLOWING PAGES DISCUSS  
EACH SECTION OF THE STATE  
GENERAL SCHEDULES

# State GS Introduction



Provides overview information on records management practices and how to use the schedules. This section is often overlooked but provides supportive information related to the schedules and general recordkeeping.

## Includes:

- Purpose of the General Schedules
- Explanation of Individual Schedules
- Management of Records
  - Electronic Records
  - Correspondence
  - Social Media
  - Text Messages
  - Publications
  - Minutes of Meetings
  - Financial, Payroll and Personnel Records
  - Informational and Reference Materials
  - Copies of Records (Convenience Copies)
  - Agency Schedules
- How to Use the Schedules

# Schedule 1 Administrative Records

This is a new schedule and one we feel is an important addition to the State General Schedules. Most of these series are also new but are records commonly created within agencies including annual reports, grant records, policy documents, and reports and study files. There are 36 separate series under Schedule 1, so it is quite extensive.

Some items of note under this Schedule...



## Schedule 1 - GS1.17 Publications

Copies of any published reports under Schedule 1 must be sent to the Maine State Library per Title 1, Chapter 13, Section 501-A (either in paper format or electronically).

Publications are materials created by state agencies (in any format) with the intention of general public distribution, documenting agency history, agency-related functions, or agency activities. Publications contain important facts and statistics about the operation of the agency and its policies; providing information which aids in the understanding of agency history and its administrative functions. These would be considered archival.

# Schedule 1 – Routine vs. Major

There are times an agency might have records of major importance which impact policy or are historically significant. Then there are those which only document routine processes only needing to be retained for a short period of time. The Administrative Schedule includes guidance for items such as:

- ▶ Operational Plans/Major
- ▶ Operational Plans/Routine
  
- ▶ Policies and Procedures/Major
- ▶ Policies and Procedures/Routine (Internal Operations)
  
- ▶ Press Releases (Official)/Significant
- ▶ Public Relations Records (Routine Information)
  
- ▶ Reports and Studies File/Major
- ▶ Reports and Studies File/General Office
  
- ▶ State Events and Programs/Historic
- ▶ State Events and Programs/Routine

## Routine vs. Major Example

<b>GS1.1 2a</b>	<b>Operational Plans - Major</b>	<b>Comprehensive plans for the administration, reorganization or operation of an entire agency or major subdivision. Administrative and operational plans do not include mission-related or program-specific plans.</b>	<b>Archival (evaluated). Retain 6 years after superseded or obsolete. Typically, these records will be Archival and will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.</b>
<b>GS1.1 2b</b>	<b>Operational Plans - Routine</b>	<b>Plans developed to guide administrative and routine operations in program areas. These records typically include program unit weekly, monthly, and yearly work plans and plans for specific projects.</b>	<b>Retain 3 years then destroy</b>

# Schedule 1 How to Retain

Any series under Schedule 1 which can be retained and managed in the office – those records being destroyed when retention has been met – are not required to be put on an agency schedule or transferred to the State Records Center.

Any series under Schedule 1 requiring archival transfer must first be written on an agency schedule (submitted and approved) before records can be sent to the Maine State Archives. These might include things such as: Operational Plans – Major (GS1.12a), Policies and Procedures – Major (GS1.13a), Press Releases (Official) – Significant (GS1.14), Reports and Studies File - Major (GS1.19b), State Events and Programs – Historic (GS1.21a)

# Schedule 2 Financial Records

This schedule is newly formed from five previous schedules: Vendor Series, Accounting Series, Income Series, Budget Series, and Financial Order Series.

Previous series were very specific and did not capture the general nature the State GS was intended for.

Schedule 2 now uses a broader approach and captures records at more of a functional level where retentions would be similar. They include things such as; Accounts Payable, Accounts Receivable, and Purchasing Records.



## Schedule 2 – Official Record vs. Agency Copies

Most records under this schedule are retained by the Department of Administrative and Financial Services (DAFS) to cover required audit periods (the “Record Copy”). If DAFS does not keep the records, the agency is required to retain records to meet any audit requirements (see for example Cash Receipts). If records are scanned into an electronic document management system (EDMS), the agency must be certain it has access to its records for the required minimum retention periods.

# Financial Schedule Examples

<b>GS2.1a</b>	<b>Accounts Payable</b>	Including but not limited to: claims, bills, invoices, delivery slips, statements, copies of checks and purchase orders, expenditure authorizations, and similar records that serve to document disbursements, including those documenting claims for and reimbursement to employees for travel and other employment-related expenses. (Does not include records related to contracts.)	Retain 3 years then destroy Note: Records related to contracts follow Series GS2.12.c
<b>GS2.5</b>	<b>Cash Receipts/Journals</b>	Cash receipts or other cash journal records (such as daily listing of cash received showing date, name of individual or corporation sending money and amount). These are records which the agency is solely responsible for (not retained at DAFS).	Retain 7 years then destroy

## Schedule 2 Responsibility of Records

Schedule 2 is intended for those records kept for individual agency **financial officers or service centers**. Agency financial records should not be retained by every bureau, office, etc. Know who is responsible for keeping the “official agency copy” of financial records!

# Schedule 3 Payroll Records

This schedule would typically be utilized by human resource managers or service centers. There were very few changes made to this schedule. The State Controller's Office keeps many of these records as the "official record."



# Schedule 3

## What is Included

- ❖ **GS3.1 Employee Timesheets** - Weekly time and attendance record completed and signed by employee and verified by supervisor showing hours worked, vacation, sick leave, and overtime (paper or electronic). Retain 6 years then destroy
- ❖ **GS3.2 Health and Dental Insurance Exceptions** - Lists all payroll deductions to the monthly health and dental insurance billings. Retain 3 years then destroy
- ❖ **GS3.3 Human Resource Profile** - Personnel authorizations effecting changes in employee's pay. Retain 3 years after file becomes inactive then destroy
- ❖ **GS3.4 Payroll Deduction Authorizations** - Listing of all voluntary payroll deductions from employee checks (i.e., health insurance, union dues, credit union, etc.) Retain 3 years after termination of employee then destroy
- ❖ **GS3.5a Payroll Register - Exception Copy** (Last page only) - Contains gross wage and deductions for given pay date and authorized signatures of agency. Retain 3 years then destroy
- ❖ **GS3.5b Payroll Register - Paid Copy** - Actual paid copy of payroll registers, contains all paycheck information for each State employee. Retain 3 years then destroy

# Schedule 4 Personnel Records



There have been some changes made to this schedule including some retention changes. Agencies need to be aware of those changes. This schedule is also intended for human resource managers or service centers. Bureau of Human Resources keeps many of these records as the “official record.”

## Schedules 3 and 4 Responsibility of Records

As mentioned in the previous slides, Schedules 3 and 4 are intended for those records kept for individual agency **human resource officers or service centers**. Agency payroll/personnel records should not be retained by every bureau, office, etc.

Know who is responsible for keeping the official HR records in your agency.

## Schedule 4 – Supervisor's Files

Below is the schedule for Supervisor's files. These should be the only records being retained by individuals or individual offices. (Those not established as official agency HR.)

<p><b>GS4.15</b></p>	<p><b>Supervisors Files on Individual Employees</b></p>	<p>Items which should be kept in a supervisory folder include the following: current job description; current performance review; any commendations/counseling's done within the last year (initialed by employee); copy of any disciplinary actions taken within the last year (unless the problem is ongoing) - original goes to agency HR; any documentation of meetings held, memos to staff, etc. (initialed by employee). Items which a supervisor should not keep include the following (these are retained by agency HR): doctor's notes or medical records, FMLA forms, and reasonable accommodation requests.</p>	<p>See Description for Retention Requirements</p> <p>Note: These are copies retained by individual supervisors. Agency HR keep required employee personnel files for the agency per this schedule.</p>
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# Schedule 5 State Agency Correspondence

Some of these have been slightly modified and an additional series has been added. This is incoming or outgoing correspondence in any media format. When talking about correspondence, we most often think of email.



## Schedule 5 – Important Notes

The retention periods listed on Schedule 5 apply equally to all correspondence, whether electronic or paper. Remember that being the custodian of the record (retaining the official record copy) may vary depending on whether a staff member is the sender or the recipient; whether messages are provided for convenience (where no action is required); and whether other copies exist.

Example: A message from the Governor to all state employees might be maintained as Official Correspondence by the Governor's Office. That same piece of correspondence received by state employees likely will be considered informational or transitory and should be destroyed once no longer needed.

# Schedule 5 – What is Included

**GS5.1 Correspondence Containing Inadvertently Disclosed Privileged or Confidential Information** – Would apply for attorneys/legal counsel.

**GS5.2 Executive/Official Correspondence** – Most often for Commissioners or other high-level program/policy correspondence. These records are considered archival.

**GS5.3 General Correspondence** – This has a 2-year retention and encompasses most “reference-type” requests an agency receives (typically requiring some level of research).

**GS5.4 Non-Business-Related Correspondence** – Could be spam, personal messages, etc. Delete immediately.

**GS5.5 Program Correspondence** – Probably the hardest series to follow. Determine if correspondence provides significant supportive information to a specific program. (An example might be information retained to support case files.)

**GS5.6 Transitory Correspondence** – These are state records where no action is required, or the value is very short-term. They should be destroyed within 30 days.

## Schedule 5 – How to Retain

Any series under Schedule 5 which can be retained and managed in the office – those records being destroyed when retention has been met – are not required to be put on an agency schedule or transferred to the State Records Center.

Those requiring archival transfer must first be written on an agency schedule (submitted and approved) before records can be sent to the Maine State Archives. These might include Executive/Official Correspondence or some types of program correspondence. It would be assumed many of these records will be in electronic format. Maine State Archives is in the process of acquiring a digital preservation system to enable us to take in digital (archival) records.

# Schedule 6 Electronic/ Information Technology Records



This is a new schedule. Even though some of these are speaking more about record *formats*, we thought it was important to include this schedule and each of these series to give some guidance for the different ways electronic records are being created and retained by state agencies.

## Schedule 6 – Important Notes

There is no single retention period that applies to all electronic messages or communications, whether they are transmitted by email, social networking, etc.

Retention periods are determined by the content, nature, and purpose of records, and are based on legal, fiscal, administrative, and historical values, regardless of format or method by which they are transmitted.

Consider how long messages and information were (are) retained in paper; electronic messages would have the same value and, consequently, the same retention times.

Electronic communications would typically fall under the State Correspondence Schedule.

# Schedule 6 – What is Included

## **Format Series Examples:**

GS6.3 Email Messages

GS6.7 Social Media Records

GS6.10 Websites

## **Electronic Management Series Examples:**

GS6.1 Data Documentation

GS6.2 Digitization and Scanning Files

GS6.9 Summary or Extracted Data Files

# Schedule 7 Records Management

This is a revised schedule. The previous series were based on forms and information retained by the Archives and Records Management. The revised series intends to use more generalized terms to capture any RM processes being used by individual agencies. State Records Management keeps many of these records as the “official record.”



# Schedule 7

## What is Included

Any records related to the RM process including: records inventory, schedules, transmittals, record retrieval requests, and cardholder authorizations.

These records should be retained by the agency Records Officer or other designee.

# Schedule 7 – Documenting Destruction

<p><b>GS7.2</b></p>	<p><b>Records Disposition Documentation</b></p>	<p>Records documenting authorized destruction of agency records. These include Records Center Disposition Notification forms or other records which the agency uses to document the disposal of its records. Internal documents are intended for program records under agency retention schedules documenting the major functions of the agency and not for transitory/general records. The purpose is to protect the agency if there is ever a question regarding proper record destruction. Includes both paper and electronic records.</p> <p>Each record series being disposed of should include the following information:          Schedule/Series number; series title; inclusive dates of the records; media type; file list; record volume/file size; manner and date of disposition.</p>	<p>Records destroyed in agency: retain 10 years after disposal/purging of associated records          Records sent to Records Center/Archives: retain 2 years after destruction of associated record transmittals</p>
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# Schedule 8 Meeting and Board Records

This is also a revised schedule with a few added series. It is intended to capture meeting minutes and other board related records.



# Schedule 8 What is Included

**GS8.1** Associations and Organizations  
File

**GS8.2a** Committee/Board Appointment  
Records

**GS8.2b** Committee/Board Appointment  
Records: Non-Selected Applicants

**GS8.3** Meeting Notes - Boards and  
Commissions

**GS8.4** Minutes and Files of General  
Office Meetings and Internal  
Committees

**GS8.5** Minutes and Files of Policy Setting  
Meetings (other than Boards)

**GS8.6** Minutes of Meetings - Boards and  
Commissions

# Meeting Records Example

<p><b>GS8.6</b></p>	<p><b>Minutes of Meetings - Boards and Commissions (see notation under schedule title)</b></p>	<p>All official meetings held or conducted by boards and commissions, where official minutes are kept with an accurate record of votes and actions. Records may include, but not limited to: agendas, meeting/agenda packets (briefs, reference materials, etc.); speaker sign-up, written testimony; minutes. Minutes typically contain the date, time, place, attendance, approval of prior meeting's minutes, motions made, votes, and actions taken. Records may include audiovisual/digital recordings documenting the actual proceedings.</p>	<p>Archival Records: Retain minutes, agendas and meeting and background files 5 years then transfer to Archives. Note: Published minutes should be sent to the Maine State Library (see GS 1.17 Publications)</p> <p>Recordings: Retain audio, video, electronic (including webcast) and other recordings of meetings 5 years after approval of meeting minutes then destroy. If recordings are the only documentation of the meeting as noted in Title 1, §403, subsection 2, they would be considered a permanent record and be retained 5 years after date of meeting then transferred to Archives.</p>
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# Schedule 8 – How to Retain

Any series under Schedule 8 which can be retained and managed in the office – those records being destroyed when retention has been met – are not required to be put on an agency schedule or transferred to the State Records Center.

Records requiring archival transfer - minutes and files of boards or those from policy setting meetings - must first be written on an agency schedule (submitted and approved) before records can be sent to the Maine State Archives. It would be assumed many of these records will be in electronic format. The agency is asked to retain these records until the State Archives has a preservation system in place.

# Schedule 9 Miscellaneous/ Short-Term Records

This is a new schedule which includes those items often found in offices which don't fit into typical record categories. We thought it might be beneficial to list these into specific series and provide guidance (even though some are not true record materials).



# Schedule 9

## What is Included

**GS9.1** Agency Information – Routine (short-term)

**GS9.2** Agency-Generated Forms and Publications – Copies (typically non-record)

**GS9.3** Duplicate Copies of Agency Records (typically non-record)

**GS9.4** General Information – External (non-record)

**GS9.5** Reference Material (typically non-record)

**GS9.6** Transitory Records (short-term)

# Appendix Items

These include:

- A list of removed/obsolete series.
- Sample disposition form for the destruction of agency records.
- Contact information.
- A series index.





## Questions and Further Information

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Maine State Archives:

<http://www.maine.gov/sos/arc/records/state/>

State General Schedules

<https://www.maine.gov/sos/arc/records/state/generalschedules.html>