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Chapter 7

Applying Disposition Instructions

7-1. Disposition standards

- a. All records are divided into two categories: transfer (T) records and keep (K) records. The transfer records are saved beyond their usefulness as business records and the keep records are saved only to serve the business needs. Any scheduled information that is not a T record is a K record.
- b. The disposition and retention of K records are applied in the office of record according to business needs *or according to the prescribing directive if the business needs are specified therein*. These records are kept in the office until they are no longer needed to support the business process for which they were created or received, but not longer than 6 years or 6 years after an event occurs. This does not mean, however, that all K records should be kept for a period of 6 years. Although 6 years is the *maximum* retention that applies to K records, most if not all K records in an office will be kept less than 6 years. Records should be managed daily or at regular intervals (that is, monthly, quarterly, annually) as business needs dictate and held until no longer needed for further business use so long as the oldest record does not become more than 6 years old. Records with dispositions based on an event may need to be kept in the office for a *total* period of time longer than 6 years. These records remain in an “open” or “active” status until a specific event occurs; after that, they are kept for a period of up to 6 years to serve the business use. For these types of records, the retention period does not begin until the records become “closed” or “inactive” and then, either immediately on that date or at regular intervals are destroyed or held for a time (not exceeding 6 years) to meet business needs. For example, a research project may be in an active status for 4 years, then in inactive status for 3 years for business use, for a *total* period of 7 years.
- c. The disposition and retention of T records are applied at the RHA, AEA, or in the case of Army organizations, such as HQDA staff elements and any Army organization not residing on an Army installation, by the organization’s records administrator, records manager, or records coordinator. Hardcopy records with a T code disposition may be sent to an RHA or FRC at any time after they are no longer needed for business, usually after 2 or 3 years. Electronic T records bound for the AEA may be sent as soon as they are complete. The RHA and AEA personnel will apply and or determine the proper disposition and retention for the records according to the bar coded information on the labels, ORLs on file in ARIMS, or according to mission and function statements or lists of prescribing directives. After arrival at the RHA or AEA, all records are processed in ARIMS, which automatically calculates the retention period for each individual record and provides the eligible dates for destruction, transfer to an FRC, or offer to the National Archives.
- d. The ARIMS disposition codes are keys to the retention. The disposition instructions and standards that apply to these codes are summarized in table 7-1 and include the labeling instructions from chapter 6 for easy reference.

7–2. Deviations from disposition instructions

Deviations from disposition instructions in ARIMS RRS–A must be approved by the Archivist of the United States. Requests for deviations will be sent through records management channels for evaluation at the HQDA or MACOM level to determine whether an exception is warranted or if the disposition instructions should be changed. Valid requests will be forwarded through the proponent of the prescribing directive to the USARMDA at the address in paragraph 2–1c and include –

- a. The record title, number, and brief description of the records involved.
- b. Justification for the deviation, consisting of evidence of specific need for the records and information on their continuing administrative, legal, or fiscal value to the U.S. Government.
- c. The physical location of the records, including information on whether the records were or will be transferred to an RHA or the AEA.

7–3. Changes to retention periods

- a. Retention periods may change occasionally because of statutory, legal, financial, or administrative requirements. When a change increases the retention period, the new retention period will be used for all records, both active and inactive under that RN, no matter when the records were created or where they are maintained. When a change decreases the retention period or changes from a permanent to a temporary period, the new retention period will be used for all current records except that existing permanent records will remain as permanent. Efficiency and cost effectiveness should be considered when applying a decreased retention period to inactive records. For example, if the volume of records involved would require a considerable amount of time and effort to sort through and dispose of and storage space is not an issue, then the records should be kept for the longer (former) retention period.
- b. Records freezes or moratoriums are exceptions to disposition instructions. Records freezes or moratoriums refer to a court or agency imposed requirement to keep the record until disputes or litigation and all appeals are resolved. The USARMDA receives notification of the requirement to suspend disposition from HQDA information proponents, DOD and Army General Counsel, or the Department of Justice. The USARMDA notifies the NARA, DA staff principals, MACOMs, and combatant commanders to suspend regular disposition of the affected records and when the freeze or moratorium is lifted. Each organization or installation notifies its subordinate or supported activities that a freeze exists or has been lifted. The RHA and AEA managers are accountable for the frozen records in the physical custody of their respective facilities.

7–4. Records disposal

- a. Unclassified records authorized for destruction will be—
 - (1) Processed through property disposal channels for sale or recycling.
 - (2) Destroyed in accordance with local policy if they cannot be economically sold.
 - (3) Disposed of under the DOD Precious Metals Recovery Program when in the form of exposed x–ray film, motion picture film, and certain microfilm that contains precious metals.
- b. Destroy unclassified sensitive and PA records by shredding or burning.
- c. Destroy classified records in accordance with AR 380–5.
- d. Unclassified records authorized for destruction may be donated to an eligible person, organization, institution, corporation, or government if donation is approved by the DCS, G–1. Process requests through local records management channels to the USARMDA for HQDA

(DAPE–ZXI–RM). Specify the name and address of the records custodian, the name and address of the proposed recipient, and a complete description, ARIMS RN and title, and inclusive dates of the records.

- e. For early disposal of records that are a menace to human life, health, or property—
 - (1) Contact local fire officials if they have nitrocellulose base film that emits a noxious odor, contains gas bubbles, or has retrograded into an acid powder and then notify the USARMDA at the address in paragraph 2–1c.
 - (2) Notify the USARMDA to obtain authority for disposing records of other menace. Provide the RN and title, description of records, volume, location, and nature of the menace.

Table 7–1 Disposition standards

If the disposition code is–	The abbreviated disposition instructions are –	Then the full disposition standard would be –	And the minimum labeling instructions would be –
K (Time periods .25 through 6) (Example: K3)	Keep in CFA.	Keep in the current files area until time period specified has passed, then destroy.	The letter K, a title, the year created, and if applicable, a PA system notice number.
KE (Time periods .25 through 6 plus event) (Example: KE4)	Keep in CFA until a specific event occurs.	Keep in the current files area until the event occurs and then the specified period of time after event occurs, then destroy.	The letters KE, a title, the year created, and if applicable, a PA system notice number.
KN (Time period not known)	Keep in CFA.	Keep in the current files area until no longer needed for conducting business, but not more than 6 years, then destroy.	The letters KN, a title, the year created, and if applicable, a PA system notice number.
KEN (Event, but time period not known)	Keep in CFA until a specific event occurs.	Keep in the current files area until the event occurs and then until no longer needed for conducting business, but not more than 6 years after the event, then destroy.	The letters KEN, a title, the year created, and if applicable, a PA system notice number.
R	Rescinded record number.	Not applicable. (Maintain and dispose of existing records in accordance with original disposition instructions.)	Label for existing records should show original disposition instructions.

T (Time periods over 6 years) (Examples: T6.25, T15)	Transfer to AEA and or RHA.	Keep in the current files area until no longer needed for conducting business, then retire to the AEA and or RHA.	The letter T, a title, the year created, and if applicable, a PA system notice number.
TE (Time periods over 6 years, plus event) (Example: TE20)	Transfer to AEA and or RHA after a specific event occurs.	Keep in the current files area until the event occurs; then retire to the AEA and or RHA when no longer needed for conducting business.	The letters TE, a title, the year created, and if applicable, a PA system notice number.
TEP	Transfer to AEA and or RHA after a specific event occurs. Permanent record.	Keep in the current files area until the event occurs; then retire to the AEA and or RHA when no longer needed for conducting business.	The letters TEP, a title, the year created, and if applicable, a PA system notice number.
TP	Transfer Permanent.	Keep in the current files area until no longer needed for conducting business, then retire to the AEA and or RHA.	The letters TP, a title, the year created, and if applicable, a PA system notice number.
U	Unscheduled record.	Retain in CFA until disposition instructions are published; then apply approved disposition.	The letter U, a title, the year created, and if applicable, a PA system notice number.