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Release Date: January 01, 2001
Last Update: August 22, 2005

Definitions of Retention Codes

The **retention codes** that appear on Records Retention and Disposal Schedules are used to establish how long records are retained by the creating agency before they are destroyed (or transferred to the State Archives for permanent retention). Retention codes determine how destruction dates will be automatically calculated by Versatile (Versatile is the records management software that is used by Records Management Services to manage the retention of records), and the date upon which the calculation will be based. When we assign one of these codes to a record series, Versatile knows how to calculate retention for any items sent to the State Record Center for storage.

In addition to the retention code, a period of time, years and/or months, can be used in the calculation. Years are expressed as whole numbers, and months are expressed as fractions. For example, the fraction "0/6" would represent 6 months. The retention code plus the period of time results in a mathematical formula to determine a disposal date.

Agencies can also use this formula to calculate a destruction date for records that are maintained in their offices.

ACT = Active

An active code is usually assigned to records that are case or project related. The records are retained "until the case or project is closed." This code can also be applied to records where a subjective decision is needed to determine when the records become inactive, as with a subject file. The record is retained "until it is determined to be inactive." The retention period is applied when the ACT condition has been met. For instance, a case file might be retained until the case is closed (ACT) plus five years.

CR = Creation

A creation code is assigned to records when a definitive retention period can be assigned. The retention period is usually based on a calendar year and where there are no conditions that must be met. For instance, correspondence has a two-year retention period. The retention period begins from the date the correspondence is created or received.

EXP = Expiration

An expiration code is typically assigned to contracts, grants or other types of agreements that must be retained until an expiration date or other legal condition has been met. For instance, contracts may be held until contract expiration (EXP) plus six years.

FY = Fiscal Year

A fiscal year code is similar to a CR code. The code is assigned to records when a definitive retention period can be assigned, however the retention is based on a fiscal year rather than a calendar year. This retention code is usually assigned to accounting records and their supporting documentation.

SUP = Superseded

A superseded code is typically assigned to records that are updated or revised at various times during the records lifetime. Examples would include policies or procedures. As a policy is updated and the old version is replaced or superseded, only the current version is needed.

EVT = Event

Event codes are assigned to records when a retention period is based on a future action or condition. We use this code when we know that a future action or condition will be met, but we don't know exactly when it will happen. For instance, deeds are retained to document the ownership of land by the State of Michigan. If and when the State of Michigan divests itself of that land, a retention period can be applied to the records. The records will be retained until the State of Michigan sells the land (EVT).

DISP = Immediate Disposal

Immediate Disposal is a retention code that is used when an agency requires an authorization to destroy obsolete records upon the approval of their Records Retention and Disposal Schedule. Once the Retention Schedule is approved the agency has the legal authority to destroy the obsolete records.

PERM = Permanent

These records are not authorized for destruction at any point in time, and will be retained in the custody of the creating agency.

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