



Records Management Normal Administrative Practice (NAP)

Overview

Normal Administrative Practice (NAP) is one of the mechanisms the *Archives Act 1983* authorises for the destruction of records. NAP is provided in the interests of efficient recordkeeping practices and extends to material of ephemeral or transitory value.

NAP applies to destruction of material that is of low-value and short term information where there is a low level of risk. It applies to the routine destruction of drafts, duplicates and publications created, acquired or collected by agency staff in the course of their official duties.

All other records must be covered by a Records Authority (RA) issued by the National Archives of Australia (NAA). An RA is a legal instrument that allows agencies to make decisions about keeping, destroying or transferring official records. Records not covered by NAP can only be disposed of in a destruction program when the records have been approved for destruction by the Information Management Section, or if it is prescribed in another guide or by legislation.

Support

Contact: Information Management Section via email: [Records Management](#)

Purpose

The purpose of this guide is to provide support to enable all staff to apply NAP as part of daily business activity. The correct application of NAP will ensure better work practices, reduction of unnecessary information, and will ensure that only low value and short term information (as outlined below), is routinely destroyed in the course of normal business.

Types of material that can be destroyed under NAP

Materials that can be deleted under NAP with confidence include:

- Word processing documents and spreadsheets in electronic format after updating, or transfer to electronic recordkeeping systems;
- Drafts and rough notes captured in an official record and not intended for further use;
- Brochures, catalogues, price list, unsolicited promotional material received from external sources;
- Duplicates of procedures, manuals, guidelines, plans, other than master or authorised copies;
- Extra copies of records no longer required for reference purposes;
- Copies of published items kept for personal reference;
- Unimportant messages or notes e.g. those required for only a few hours or a few days;
- System printouts used to verify or monitor data, or answer ad hoc queries, that are not part of regular reporting procedures and are not required for ongoing use; and
- Transitory electronic data or documents not relating to or supporting the business.

Delete with care

- Low-risk emails such as system reminders and alerts, discussion lists and RSS feeds, duplicate emails kept for reference purposes, parts of an email thread where the full thread is saved into Health's electronic recordkeeping systems, 'for your information' communications, email bounce backs.
- Invitations, diaries and calendars (with the exception of SES).
- Duplicates of Health department publications and promotional material. Note: the business area responsible for the publication has responsibilities to keep master copies. Contact [Health Communications](#). Check before deleting if you are unsure if they would have the original.
- Drafts, rough or routine calculations and working papers.
- Business information held in shared work spaces such as shared drives and business systems.
- Information and Communication Technology information such as backup tapes created for business continuity and recovery, some computer logs, some data clean-ups.
- Documents prepared with the involvement of senior staff; these are often important and may not be appropriate for destruction using NAP.

Do not delete

Valuable business information that is required:

- for accountability purposes;
- for the ongoing efficient administration of agency business;
- to protect rights and entitlements of individuals, groups, or the Government; or
- because of its cultural or historical value, or to meet community expectations.

Documents that may not be disposed of under NAP

NAP **must not** be used to destroy information where any of the following apply:

- Information that is likely to be required as evidence in current or future legal proceedings;
- Information that is required to be kept by law (including by a records authority or disposal freeze);
- Information that is required to be kept under an agency policy, procedure or guideline;
- Information that is a draft of a Cabinet or ministerial submission;
- Information that is a draft of an agreement or other legal document;
- Information that is needed to document a significant issue;
- Information that is needed to clarify, support or give context to an existing record;
- Information that is needed to show how a decision was made;
- Information that is needed to show when or where an event happened;
- Information that is needed because it indicates who made the decision or gave the advice;
- Information that is needed because it contains information on the rights, privileges or obligations of government, organisations or private individuals; and
- Information that is a draft or working paper that contains decisions, reasons, actions and/or significant or substantial information where this information is not contained in later documents or the document remains not finished.

NAP Checklist

The following checklist is provided to assist in identifying when NAP can be applied. If the answer to any of these questions is **Yes** then the material **must not** be destroyed under NAP. This applies to all information in all formats including email.

- Does the material provide evidence of a Health business transaction?
- Does it show how a transaction occurred?
- Does it show how a decision was made?
- Does it relate to an assessment, supervision or investigation?
- Is the record required to support legal proceedings?
- Does it show when or where an event happened?
- Does it indicate who was involved or what advice was given?
- Is it a formal draft of a Health submission, an agreement or a legal document?
- Is the document subject to a Disposal Freeze or under Hold Order?

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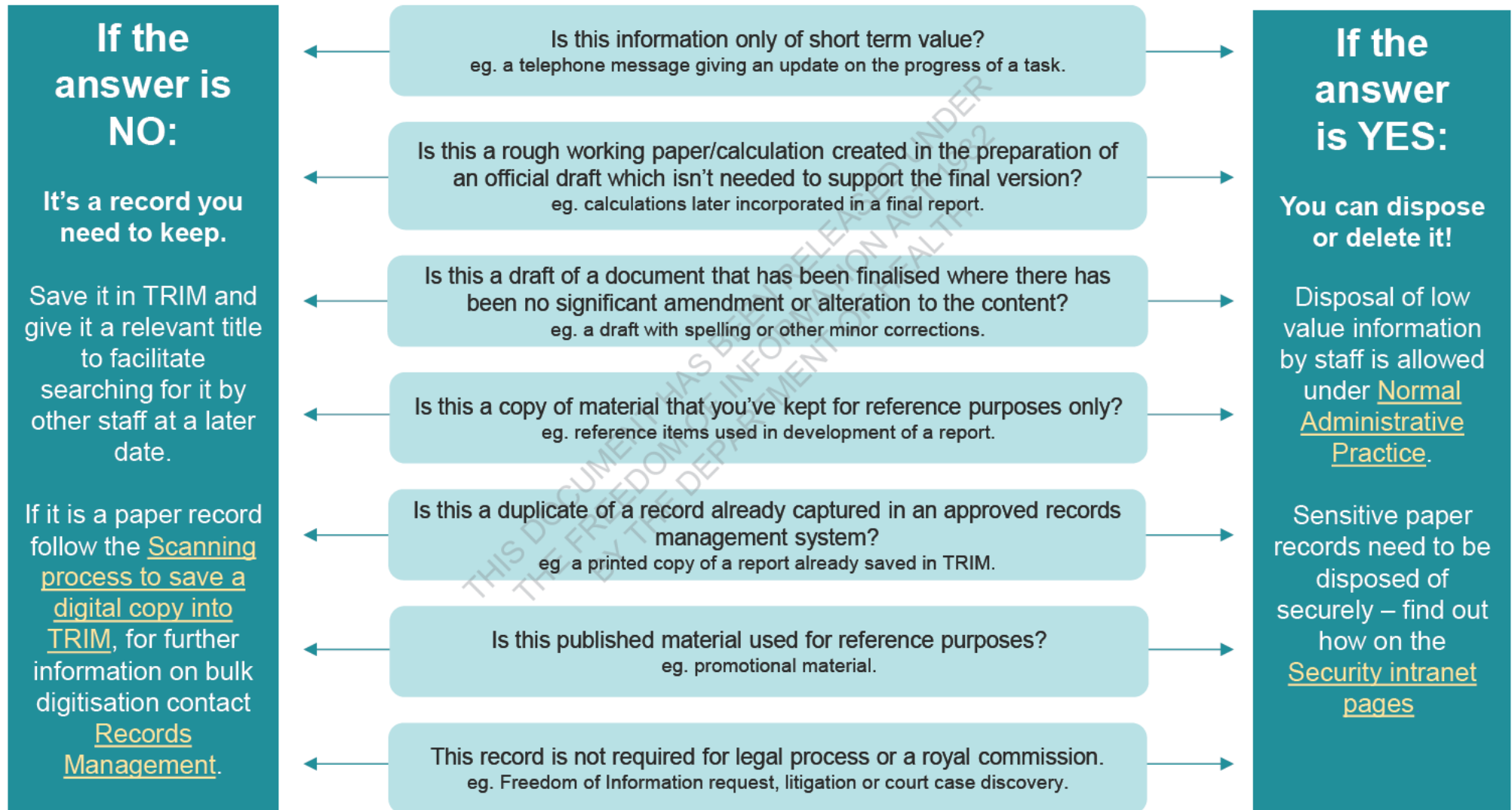
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BY THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Recordkeeping Decision Tree

We know we need to store records appropriately, but **what is a record?**

This decision tree will help you determine what you need to keep and what can go.



If you're still not sure, contact records.management@health.gov.au for tailored advice.