

For the Record

Maryland's Records Management Newsletter

New Disposal Certificate Website

On July 1, 2011, the Department of General Services (DGS) Records Management Division and the Maryland State Archives launched a new website for the electronic submission of Certificates of Records Destruction, which are commonly called disposal certificates. This website, located at <http://disposal.msa.md.gov>, was designed to improve the efficiency of the disposal process. To create an account to access the website, contact Kathryn Baringer at schedule@mdsa.net or 410-260-6467. An agency can have multiple accounts to access the website.

As public officials we should all know that in order to lawfully destroy records no longer needed for government business, the records must be listed on an approved Records Retention and Disposition Schedule (commonly called a retention schedule). This retention schedule should be on file with both DGS and the Archives. Also, to document records destruction, a disposal certificate must be filed with the Archives. For any questions about retention schedules or the records disposal process, call Thomas Wellman, DGS Records Administrator, at 410-799-4640 or Kathryn Baringer, Acting Director of Appraisal and Description, at the Archives at 410-260-6467.

Dealing with Transitory Material

During your business day, you encounter a considerable amount of temporary and transitory material, such as personal notes, copies of drafts, routing slips, etc. To account for this material and their destruction, we recommend including in your retention schedule an entry for temporary and transitory material, providing a description of what sorts of material it would encompass, and stating that it will be destroyed at the discretion of the employee without a disposal certificate.

Reporting Cumulative Destruction

The new website at <http://disposal.msa.md.gov> makes it easy to submit a disposal certificate every time you destroy a record. However, we realize that when record destruction takes place over several days, it may be impractical to submit a disposal certificate for every day. In these cases, you can submit a disposal certificate that documents records destruction over a period of time, such as a week or a month. On your disposal certificate form, be sure to include in the description field the date range over which the destruction took place.

Questions?

Visit our Records Management Guidance page at http://www.msa.md.gov/msa/intromsa/html/record_mgmt/homepage.html

Our contact information is below. Call us or drop us a line if you want to discuss records management issues. We are also available to provide presentations to your agency on records management topics.

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