



3. File Planning and Moving Files

What is a File Plan? Review records management best practice for file planning. Plan out your new file system and how you will get there. Reorganize your records.

Why is this important to my work? A clean, and records management friendly file system allows for the records to be accessible and identifiable while they are actively used. Proper organization also allows them to be dispositioned appropriately. Planning out and reorganizing your files in this way will allow you to accomplish this.

Plan the reorganization. First decide, do you want to:

- Begin with a clean slate and build an entirely new structure and move records into it?
- Or, reorganize and rename your current folder to be more records management friendly?

Your “clean” folder structure, or FILE PLAN should:

- Organize records at the top (parent folder) level to align as closely as possible with records series from your retention schedule.
- Parent folder names should clearly identify the contents of the folder and the record category (from the retention schedule).
 - Example:
Project Files
Budget Development Files
- Avoid extra levels of subfolders. But if you do use them, organize subfolders in a manner which allows for disposition. This is generally by cutoff, or which allows records to be identified by cutoff.
 - Record series with a year-end cut off are organized by year
 - Record series with variable cut offs (for example: case close, project completion, termination of employment, etc.) are organized to allow these dates to be identified and applied to the files, such as by project name, case identifier, employee name.
 - Example:
Project Files
ABC Project
XYZ Project
(Project Files CUT-OFF is “project close”. Project files should be arranged in a way that separates the records based upon the variable, per-project, cut-off.)
Financial Transactions General
2019 Finance
2018 Finance
(Financial Transactions CUT-OFF is year end. General finance records should arranged in a way that separates them at cut-off)
- This organization allows records to be grouped by category *and* cut-off, and then retention initiated upon the cut-off.





Draw out your file plan. Additional file planning guidance is available on the Record Management website.

You can also use an optional [file mapping template](#).

Move records

- If starting with a new/different file structure, build out your folders and then move only actively used records to the new folder structure
- If reorganizing your current structure:
Reorganize your current structure so that is more closely aligns with record series
Rename the folders to identify both the contents and record series.

File inactive records to Content Manager

- Identify records that have met their cut-off and still have retention requirements (i.e. inactive records).
- File these inactive records into their appropriate folders in Content Manager

