

**DATE:** 3 February 1999  
**TO:** Registrars of Births Deaths and Marriages  
**FROM:** Brian Clarke, Registrar-General of Births Deaths and Marriages

## BIRTHS DEATHS AND MARRIAGES CIRCULAR 1999/1

### BDM RECORDS DISPOSAL & RETENTION SCHEDULE - SOURCE DOCUMENTS

**Background** A number of Registrars approached me during 1998 asking if they could dispose of certain BDM source documents because of their increasing storage difficulties. At the time, I sent out a Circular asking all Registrars not to destroy any source documents until further notice. The reason for this was that I had become aware that BDM needed a schedule authorised by National Archives for legally disposing of such documents.

**How the schedule was developed** Late last year, all BDM offices were asked to provide information about what kind of records they held and what use in made of them. We then provided a report to National Archives and negotiated with them about what needed to be kept and what could be disposed of.

**Schedule approved** In December, the Chief Archivist and I signed an agreed schedule for the disposal of certain BDM source documents. This Circular sets out the contents of that schedule.

**Reasons to keep some source documents** The potential uses of the source documents tend to dictate the length that they are kept for. Some examples include:

Uses	Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resolving disputes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>when a customer questions an error on a certificate, the source document may be used to determine if it was the result of informant error or clerical error.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legal proceedings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>disputing/establishing paternity- especially questioning signatures on birth notifications.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Genealogy or other research</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>information about bloodlines and Maori and Pacific Island tribal affiliations, or about certain occupations, which was not recorded in the register.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As the official record-base</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Change of Name by Statutory Declaration forms (BDM120 &amp; BDM122), where they relate to people whose births are not registered in NZ, are the only record of those changes of names.</li> </ul>

**Maori Registers** Source documents relating to the separate (1911-1962) Maori Registers will be retained because of the higher risk that discrepancies may exist between the source documents and the registers, as names may have been spelled in various ways. The use of these source documents is increasing.

**Pre-1981 documents** BDM has kept only a limited number of source documents dated earlier than 1981. National Archives has decided that we should keep all remaining source documents that date before 1981 in case they have any historical value.

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**Destruction of some Source Documents** In the case of many types of source documents, all relevant information from each form was recorded in the local and national registers. In such cases, the source document has little use after registration.

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**Method of Destruction** When destroying the BDM source documents, please bear in mind that these forms contain personal, and perhaps sensitive, information. They should not, therefore, be dumped in street-side waste bins, or left to blow around on top of your local tip. The preferred methods of destruction would be to use a Confidential Document Destruction service or other method involving shredding.

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**Immediate Action** You may dispose of the following records now:

- RG9/BDM9 Birth Notice forms or schedules: 1/1981-1/1996
- RG60/BDM60, RG58/BDM58: 1/1981-1/1994
- RG222/BDM222 Advice of correction to marriage registrations & Other documents authorising changes to marriage registrations  
1/1981-1/1994
- RG93/BDM93 & certificate cover sheets: destroy any documents that were inspected in an audit undertaken a year or more ago
- (Central Registry only) Source documents relating to Certificate of No Impediment applications: up to 1/1997

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**Any queries, contact Brian Hesketh (BDM Helpdesk): 0800 22 52 52.**