# *ARCS* and *ORCS* User Guide

## 2011 • Version 1.0

# Contents

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 General

This document explains the purpose, organization, and elements of the *Administrative Records Classification System* (*ARCS*) and *Operational Records Classification Systems* (*ORCS*).  It is designed to help you understand, interpret and use *ARCS* and *ORCS*.

### 1.2  What are *ARCS* and *ORCS*?

*ARCS* and *ORCS* are combined records classification and scheduling systems that facilitate the efficient and systematic organization, retrieval, storage, and destruction or permanent retention of the government's records.  *ARCS* is the government standard for **administrative records**.  *ORCS* are specific to **operational records**.

A standard **classification system** is the cornerstone of an effective records management program.  *ARCS* and *ORCS* identify and describe the records created by offices throughout government, and organize them into a structure that reflects administrative and operational functions.  This organizational structure ensures that records can be quickly and easily identified, documented and retrieved.

*ARCS* and *ORCS* are also records scheduling systems.  A **records schedule** is a timetable that governs the life span of a record from creation, through active use within an office and retention in off-site storage, to destruction or transfer to the government archives.

The records schedules in *ARCS* and *ORCS* ensure that records are retained for sufficient periods of time to meet the legal, operational, audit, fiscal or other requirements of government.  Records schedules identify records with enduring value for transfer to the government archives.  Records schedules also provide for the timely destruction of records when they are no longer required to support the government's operational and administrative functions.

> *Records that have only short-term or temporary usefulness are considered to be **'transitory records'** and may be disposed of when no longer needed.  Since they will not become part of a final record of decision, and do not fulfill any administrative or operational functions, they do not need to be filed in the office recordkeeping system and should be destroyed when no longer needed. For more information see the special schedule for Transitory Records (schedule 102901).*

### 1.3. The Organization of *ARCS* and *ORCS*

*ORCS* and *ARCS* have one or more numbered sections covering broad categories corresponding to major operational or administrative functions and program activities.

*ORCS* also include:
- An Information System Overview Section, which identifies and describes electronic records.  For more information about electronic records and the Information System Overview, see **2.12**.
- An Executive Summary, Table of Contents, Introduction, and Index.

- Appendices (optional) that provide additional information relevant to the *ORCS* and the records it covers.

For more information about *ORCS* and a selection of approved *ORCS*, see the IAO Records Management web site.

The primary is the basic building block of *ARCS* and *ORCS*.  Primaries are identified with a three, four, or five digit number.  Each primary also has a descriptive title.  Primaries are subdivided into two-digit secondary classifications.

The first primary in each section is called a section default primary.  It provides general information relating to the whole section and to records repeated in other primaries throughout the section.

Groups of related primaries, called **primary blocks**, appear together, indicated by two-part titles and an initial "general" primary.

## 2. How to Read a Primary

The format of *ARCS* and *ORCS* primaries, although nearly identical for both systems, does allow for slight variations. The fictional sample primary below includes pointers to text to explain why each annotated element of the primary is important. Where necessary these explanations will cover any inconsistencies between the *ORCS* and *ARCS* format.

OPERATIONAL RECORDS CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

This records schedule is approved in accordance with the *Document Disposal Act* (RSBC 1996, c. 99). It constitutes authority for retention and disposition of the records described herein provided it has been implemented according to government policy and procedures. For assistance, contact your Records Officer.

**2.1**                                                                 A          SA          FD

23120   EXTRATERRESTRIAL REGISTRATION AND TRACKING

**2.2** — Records relating to the registration of extraterrestrial visitors to the province. Extraterrestrials are registered and tracked to ensure they do not contravene provincial legislation. Registrants must provide identifying information and report regularly to the government liaison.

Record types include registration forms, reference materials, photographs, videotapes, correspondence, and reports.

**2.4** — For a description of the Extraterrestrial Registration System (ERS), see Information System Overview (ISO) section.
For records relating to diplomatic etiquette and protocol, see *ARCS* primary 415.                                                                 **2.5**

**2.6** — Unless otherwise specified below, the ministry OPR (Unidentified Flying Objects Branch) will retain these records for:          CY+1y          3y          DE

Except where non-OPR retention periods are identified below,
all other ministry offices will retain these records for:          SO          nil          DE

**2.3**   -00   Policy and procedures          - OPR          SO          5y          FR
                                              - non-OPR          SO          nil          DE

-01   General

(continued on next page)

**2.7**

| A = Active | CY = Calendar Year | SO = Superseded or Obsolete |
|---|---|---|
| SA = Semi-active | FY = Fiscal Year | DE = Destruction |
| FD = Final Disposition | NA = Not Applicable | SR = Selective Retention |
| PIB = Personal Information Bank | w = week   m = month | FR = Full Retention |
| FOI = Freedom of Information/Privacy | y = year | OD = Other Disposition |
| OPR = Office of Primary Responsibility | | VR = Vital Records |

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## OPERATIONAL RECORDS CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

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|  |  | | A | SA | FD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

23120   EXTRATERRESTRIAL REGISTRATION AND TRACKING
(continued)

| | -03 | Extraterrestrial reports and statistics | CY+1y | 3y | FR |

FR = The government archives will fully retain these records because they document extraterrestrial visitors to the province.

| | -04 | Visits by unidentified extraterrestrials | SO | NA | NA |

NA = Reclassify to secondary 23120-20 when visitor confirmed.

**2.8** — FOI: Access is restricted under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (RSBC 1996, c. 165, s. 15(1)(b)).

PIB   -20   Extraterrestrial registrant case files          SO+3y   300y   SR
(arrange by registration number)

**2.9** — SO = when extraterrestrial visitor leaves the province

303y = allows for file to be reopened if registrant returns

SR = The government archives will selectively retain these records because they document the effect of extraterrestrial visitors on the province. The office will box files relating to green extraterrestrials with other records with a final disposition of FR; all other files will be boxed separately and destroyed.

VR   -30   Extraterrestrial Registration System (ERS)          SO   nil   DE
**2.10** (electronic database)

**2.11** SO = when the function supported by the database is no longer performed by government

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| | | |
|---|---|---|
| A   = Active | CY = Calendar Year | SO = Superseded or Obsolete |
| SA = Semi-active | FY = Fiscal Year | DE = Destruction |
| FD = Final Disposition | NA = Not Applicable | SR = Selective Retention |
| PIB = Personal Information Bank | w = week   m = month | FR = Full Retention |
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## 2.1 Primary Number and Title

Each primary in *ARCS* and *ORCS* has a primary number and a title.  The title reflects the function to which the records grouped under the primary relate.

## 2.2 Scope Note

The scope note describes the records to be classified within the primary; the administrative or operational function to which the records relate; and the activities and/or work processes leading to records creation.  It also lists the record types (e.g., memos, forms, reports) and media (e.g., photographs, video recordings).

## 2.3 Secondary Number and Title

Secondary numbers and titles designate specific record series or groupings of records relating to the function covered by the primary.  Secondary titles describe specific types of records and secondary numbers link them to the records retention and disposition schedule.  The two-digit secondary number is added to the primary number to form the file number (e.g., 100-20 or 23120-04).

There are three types of secondaries:  reserved secondaries, subject secondaries, and case file secondaries.

### 2.3.1. Reserved Secondaries

Reserved secondaries cover records series that are repeated in several primaries.  For example, secondaries -00 and -01 are reserved throughout *ARCS* and in all *ORCS*.



Secondary -00 is reserved for "Policy and procedures" records; that is, records that document the requirements for how an organization carries out its business.  This includes draft and approved policy documents, working materials and correspondence, precedent-setting documents, procedural guidelines and manuals, and standards documentation.

Secondary -01 is reserved for "general" records that cannot be classified in specified subject or case file secondaries.  Use secondary -01 when:

- The document does not relate to any of the existing secondaries, but does fall within the primary.
- The document contains information of a general nature and does not reflect actions or decisions of the creating office.

Note that the retention period for secondary -01 is often shorter than related subject or case file secondaries and that the designated final disposition is most often destruction.

Do not use the "General" secondary for records that relate to two or more of the subject or case files secondaries.  Instead, file the official file copy in one folder and duplicates in the other relevant folder(s).  When appropriate, provide a cross-reference between files.

### 2.3.2 Subject Secondaries (-02 to -19)

Secondary numbers -02 to -19 are used for specific subjects and other non-case file series.  These are commonly referred to as subject files.

Subject files may be coded to aid in retrieval.  Coded subject files usually consist of many different files, each dealing with a different aspect of the same subject.  Codes may take the form of names, titles, abbreviations, or other alphabetic/alphanumeric codes.  An oblique (/) separates the code from the secondary number.

In the fictional sample primary, secondaries -03 (Extraterrestrial reports and statistics) and -04 (Visits by unidentified extraterrestrials) are subject secondaries.

### 2.3.3.  Case File Secondaries (-20 and higher)

Case file secondary numbers are used for files relating to a common function or activity.  A case file is part of a series of similar files, each containing records pertaining to a specific time-limited event, project, transaction, or product, or to a specific person, organization, or other entity.  The records within each file are generally consistent with other files in the same series.  For example, the same types of forms may appear in every file.  Case file series are assigned secondary numbers -20 and higher (-30, -40, -50, etc.).

Individual files within case file series are usually identified with a file code.  The code identifies the specific person, event, project, or other entity covered by the file.  Codes can take many forms (e.g., proper names, acronyms, alphanumeric).  An oblique (/) separates the code from the secondary number.  For guidelines on developing file codes, see the Standard Coding System.

In the fictional sample primary, secondaries -20 (Extraterrestrial registrant case files) and -30 (Extraterrestrial Registration System) are case file secondaries.

### 2.4    Cross References

Cross references point users to other related classifications.

### 2.5    Records Retention and Disposition Schedule

The retention and disposition schedule, which is linked to each secondary (or record series, indicates how long records should be retained in active storage space, when or if they should be transferred to semi-active storage, what their final disposition will be, and when that will take place.

Scheduling information for each record series is indicated in the A (Active), SA (Semi-active), and FD (Final Disposition) columns to the right of the secondary classification.  The abbreviations used in each column are explained in 2.7, "Key of Terms."

### 2.5.1.  Active (A) Retention Period

The active column indicates the length of time a record is retained in the active phase of its life cycle.  Active records are used frequently and therefore are maintained in the office space and equipment of the creating office.

Entries in the active column use the designations of "SO", or "CY" or "FY", and when applicable, have an additional time period indicated.  For example:

CY+1y
Maintain all records created or received within the calendar year (1 January to 31 December) together until the end of the calendar year.  Then retain them for an additional calendar year.

In the fictional sample primary, extraterrestrial reports and statistics (secondary -03) are active for the calendar year (CY) of their receipt or creation, plus one more year.

FY+1y
Maintain all records created or received within the fiscal year (1 April to 31 March) together until the end of the fiscal year.  Then retain them for an additional fiscal year.  When required by financial administration policy and procedures, place financial records relating to the prior fiscal year, but created or received after March 31, on the file for the prior fiscal year.

For information about Superseded or Obsolete (SO) and other terms and abbreviations used in the active retention period column, see 2.7.1.

### 2.5.2.  Semi-active (SA) Retention Period Column
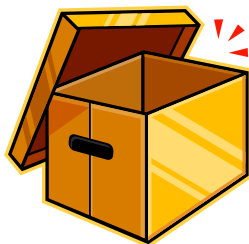
Semi-active records are used only occasionally and therefore need not be maintained in expensive office space.  Semi-active records retain administrative, operational, fiscal, audit, or legal value for the ministry or agency that created the records.  Semi-active records should be stored in a government-approved records storage facility (see *Core Policy and Procedures Manual*, c. 12.3.3, part 111, a), 5) or, if they are electronic, in your office  record keeping system.

In the fictional sample primary, the extraterrestrial reports and statistics (secondary -03) are semi-active for three years.

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### 2.5.3.  Final Disposition (FD) Column

The final disposition column indicates that records with enduring value to the Province are preserved and those that have no enduring value are destroyed.  Records are eligible for final disposition when their active and semi-active retention periods have expired.

In the fictional sample primary, extraterrestrial reports and statistics (secondary -03) are fully retained.  This means they will be transferred to the custody of, and can be accessed only through, the British Columbia Archives (also referred to as the government archives).  The Extraterrestrial Registration System (secondary -30) will be destroyed when the function supported by the database is no longer performed by government.

## 2.6   Office of Primary Responsibility (OPR)

The OPR maintains the official or master record in order to satisfy operational, financial, legal, audit, and other requirements.  All other offices are non-OPR offices.  Non-OPR retention periods and final dispositions are differentiated from OPR retention periods by being underscored.  The disposition of non-OPR records must coincide with or precede the disposition of OPR records.  Your Records Officer is responsible for designating OPR offices.

### 2.6.1.  OPR in *ORCS*

In *ORCS*, the name of the OPR appears in a statement beneath the cross-references (e.g., *Unless otherwise specified below, the ministry OPR (Unidentified Flying Objects Branch) will retain these records for...*).

The *ORCS* non-OPR retention and dispositions can appear in the active, semi-active, and final disposition columns to the right of a secondary classification or they default to a non-OPR retention and disposition established for the primary as a whole.  The default non-OPR retention and disposition appears in a statement beneath the cross-references (e.g., *Except where non-OPR retention periods are identified below, all other ministry offices will retain these records for: SO nil DE*).

To simplify the use of *ARCS* and *ORCS* in automated systems (e.g., EDRMS TRIM), all new and amended *ORCS* have a standard non-OPR retention period and final disposition of SO nil DE.

### 2.6.2.  OPR in *ARCS*

OPR names do not appear in *ARCS*.  Instead ministries designate the OPR based on their individual requirements.  *ARCS* has a standard non-OPR retention period and final disposition of SO nil DE.  For the names of your ministry or agency's *ARCS* OPRs, contact your Records Officer.

In the fictional sample primary, the Unidentified Flying Objects Branch is the OPR. All other offices holding records covered by this primary are <u>non-OPR</u> with a retention and disposition of <u>SO nil DE</u>.

## 2.7   Key of Terms

A variety of terms and abbreviations are used in the active, semi-active and final disposition columns.

### 2.7.1 Terms Used in the Active and Semi-Active Retention Period Columns

#### a.   Calendar-based abbreviations

These are used in combination with numbers, to indicate how long records will be kept in the office or offsite:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| w | = | week |
| m | = | month |
| y | = | year |
| CY | = | Calendar Year (1 January to 31 December) |
| FY | = | Fiscal Year (1 April to 31 March) |

#### b.   SO = Superseded or Obsolete

"SO" identifies records for which an active retention period cannot be predetermined because retention is dependent upon the occurrence of some event or action.  This retention category is used in _ARCS_ and _ORCS_ in the following different ways:

i.   Routine Records

"SO" is commonly used to indicate the active retention period for records that are useful for reference or informational purposes.  In those cases, "SO" is not defined by a specific event or action, but is used to allow the creating offices the authority to decide when the records have no further value and are ready for storage or disposition.

The most common retention period is:

| <u>Active</u> | <u>Semi-Active</u> | <u>Final Disposition</u> |
|---|---|---|
| SO | nil | DE |

SO is used throughout _ARCS_ and _ORCS_ to streamline the disposition of records with short-term retention value, especially for <u>non-OPR</u> offices.  Upon authorization of the Records Officer, records with the above retention and disposition schedule may be destroyed when no longer required.

In the fictional sample primary, <u>non-OPR</u> policy and procedures files (secondary -00) are designated SO.

ii.   Specific Definition of SO

"SO" is also used to identify the active retention period for records that must be retained until a case is closed or some other specified event occurs.  It may not be possible to predict the length of time a file may be required for active use, and "SO" is defined in terms of some specific action, event, or the completion of a procedure.

In the fictional sample primary, Extraterrestrial registrant case files (secondary -20) are active for SO+3y, with SO defined as "when extraterrestrial visitor leaves the province".  This means that the OPR will retain a file in active storage space for three years after the relevant visitor has left, after which the records upon authorization of the Records Officer will be transferred to off-site storage.

### c.  NA = Not Applicable

"NA" is used when records are not covered by the secondary at a specified stage of their lifecycle.  The reasons for the "NA" designation are stated in a note under the secondary.

In the fictional sample primary, visits by Unidentified extraterrestrials files (secondary -04) have a semi-active and final disposition of "NA" because files are reclassified to secondary -20 when the visitor is identified.

### d.  nil = no semi-active retention period

"Nil" is used in the semi-active column to identify records with no semi-active retention period.

Many types of government records remain active as long as they serve an administrative or operational function, after which, they have no semi-active retention period and are ready for final disposition.

In the fictional sample primary, the semi-active period for records in <u>non-OPR</u> offices is designated as <u>nil</u>.  This means that the records are ready for destruction (as designated in the final disposition column) upon expiry of the active period and authorization of the Records Officer.

### 2.7.2 Terms Used in the Final Disposition Column (FD)

The purpose of the final disposition column is explained in <u>2.5.3</u>.

Some government records contain information that has long-term value to the agency responsible for them, the government generally, and/or the public. These records are part of the documentary heritage of the Province of British Columbia and are transferred to the custody government archives for permanent retention.

The final disposition of records can be full retention, selective retention, or destruction, as explained below.

Check to ensure that you have authorization from your Records Officer prior to disposing of government records.

### a.  FR = Full Retention

"FR" means that a government archivist has determined that all of the records covered by a secondary have enduring value and will be preserved in their entirety by the British Columbia Archives. Under the terms of full retention, the archivist responsible may destroy unnecessary duplicates, publications, waste and scrap materials, ephemera, and other items which are not an integral part of the record series. The reasons for full retention may be explained in an "FR =" statement.

In the fictional sample primary, Extraterrestrial reports and statistics (secondary -03) are FR "because they document extraterrestrial visitors to the province."

### b.  SR = Selective Retention

"SR" means that a government archivist has determined that a portion of these records have enduring value and should be retained by the government archives. The reasons and criteria for selective retention may be explained in an "SR =" statement.

In the fictional sample primary, Extraterrestrial registrant case files (secondary -20) are SR "because they document extraterrestrial visitors to the province" and the selection criteria is to retain "all files relating to green extraterrestrials."

SR statements may include instructions to box selected records separately from those to be destroyed. The instructions for extraterrestrial registrant case files require the OPR to box records selected for retention in the government archives separately from those identified for destruction.

### c.  DE = Destruction

The final disposition of records that have insufficient enduring value to justify their preservation is physical destruction. In some cases, especially in section default primaries, the destruction is justified with a "DE =" note.

### d.  OD = Other Disposition

"OD" means that the final disposition of the records will be through permanent transfer from the Government of British Columbia to another entity.  A final disposition note will provide information relating to the specific method to be used for alienation of the records (e.g., sale, transfer, or other method).

### e.  NA = Not Applicable

Where appropriate, some government records are reclassified to a new primary and/or secondary at the end of their active or semi-active retention period.  The final disposition of such records is NA.  See the explanation of NA in 2.7.1.

## 2.7.3 Other Terms

The purpose of the other terms that appear in the key of terms is explained in other sections; see references below:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **FOI =** | **Freedom of Information/Privacy** | see 2.8 |
| **OPR =** | **Office of Primary Responsibility** | see 2.5 |
| **PIB =** | **Personal Information Bank** | see 2.8 |
| **VR =** | **Vital Record** | see 2.11 |

## 2.8    Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy

**Personal Information Banks** (PIB) The *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (RSBC 1996, c. 165, s. 69 (1)) defines a PIB as a collection of personal information that is organized or retrievable by the name of an individual or by an identifying number, symbol, or other particular assigned to an individual.  PIBs can be identified in *ARCS* and *ORCS*.  In the fictional sample primary, the PIB acronym appears to the left of the Extraterrestrial registrant case files secondary (-20).  In *ARCS*, PIBs are identified with a note underneath the relevant secondary.

Where more information about why the information contained in a record series is restricted, in whole or in part, from public disclosure, a special form of explanatory note ("FOI =") is used to explain the access restrictions for the secondary and to point to the section of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* that allows for the exemption.  In the fictional sample primary, the Visits by unidentified extraterrestrials secondary
(-04) has an FOI note which quotes section 15 (1)(b) of the *Act* to justify restricting access.

### 2.9    Explanatory Notes

Explanatory notes are used in *ARCS* and *ORCS* to help you understand the records, to explain office procedures and practice, and to summarize provisions governing the creation, processing, accessing, and disposition of documents.  There are two types of explanatory notes: qualifiers and other notes.

#### 2.9.1 Qualifiers

Qualifiers provide information that will help you organize and access the files covered by a secondary.  They appear directly under a secondary title, in curved brackets.

- "Includes" qualifier lists types or forms of records covered by the secondary.  If there is no includes qualifier, see the "Records types include …" sentence in the scope note for this information.
- "Arrange" qualifier gives the method of arrangement.  In the fictional sample primary, the Extraterrestrial registrant case files secondary (-20) instructs records creators to "arrange by registration number."
- Physical format designations: see 2.10 for an explanation of this qualifier.

#### 2.9.2 Other Notes

The notes below are presented in the order in which they may appear below a secondary.

| | |
|---|---|
| **OPR =** | Provides the name of the office of primary responsibility if it is different from the primary default OPR.  See discussion of OPR in section 2.5. |
| **SO =** | Explains when a file designated SO should be closed.  See discussion of SO in section 2.7.1. |
| **##y =** | Gives reasons for active and/or semi-active retention periods that are longer than seven years.  In the sample primary, there is a "303y =" note under secondary -20. |
| **NA =** | Explains why the usual active, semi-active, or final disposition designation does not apply.  See discussion of NA in section 2.7.1. |
| **SR/FR/DE =** | Explains why records are being selectively or fully retained, or (if not self-evident) why they are being destroyed.  See discussion of these notes in section 2.7.2. |
| **FOI:** | Explains issues of confidentiality relating to the records.  See discussion of the FOI note in section 2.8. |
| **NOTE:** | Provides other useful information related to the scope of the secondary, such as history of the records, volume of the records, filing procedures, whether there is an ongoing accession number, or location of copies. |

## 2.10 Physical Format Designations

Physical format designations are used if the records classified under a particular secondary consist of textual records in physical formats other than text on paper or textual records stored in electronic form (e.g., Word documents).

Records relating to a common function or activity, but in a different physical format, are classified under the same secondary, unless the versions contain different information or require different retention periods.  In those cases, the physical formats may have separate secondaries, with the format identified in the secondary title rather than in a qualifier.

The physical format designation is expressed as a qualifier under the secondary title.  In the fictional sample primary, the Extraterrestrial Registration System (secondary -30) is identified in a qualifier as an electronic database.

Examples of physical format designations are:  paper, microfilm, microfiche, computer output microfilm (COM), computer output microfiche (COMfiche), optical disk, electronic database, and electronic records.

Information about special media, such as photographs, maps, and sound recordings, is conveyed in an "(includes)" qualifier or in the paragraph of the scope note beginning "Includes" or "Records types include".  All records in a file or folder are covered by the same retention schedule, regardless of media.  Related information in an electronic database is subject to the same schedule; for example, in the fictional sample primary, registration information in the ERS (secondary -30) concerning a specific extraterrestrial can be purged when the relevant extraterrestrial registrant case file (under secondary -20) becomes inactive.

## 2.11 Vital Records

**Vital records** are those containing information essential to the functioning of government during and after a disaster, and essential for preserving the rights of citizens.

In the fictional sample primary, the Extraterrestrial Registration System (secondary -30) is identified as a vital record.

## 2.12 Electronic Records and the Information System Overview (ISO)

Information required for the scheduling of electronic records in ORCS is documented in an ISO and Information System Overview for a Subsystem (ISOS).

An ISO serves three purposes:
- It provides a high-level description of the function and information content of the system, in other words a map of the data managed by the system and the major stages through which it flows while being processed;
- It documents the recordkeeping context of the system by identifying how the system and related records are classified in the *ORCS;*

> ⬧ It may be used to schedule the electronic system by indicating when its active life ends and what the final disposition will be.

Electronic records (i.e., records created and maintained on an electronic system) are scheduled under secondaries like all other forms of records, as well as being documented in the ISO.

An [electronic system](#) may be scheduled in the ISO Section, and also may be included under the primary covering the function or activity to which it relates.  In the fictional sample primary, the Extraterrestrial Registration System (ERS) appears as secondary -30.

A system related to functions covered by an entire section of the *ORCS* will appear in the section default primary, or if it relates to the entire *ORCS*, in the *ORCS* default primary.  Information in the database relating to specific entities is covered by the schedules relating to the relevant case files; for example, the registration information in the ERS concerning a specific extraterrestrial can be purged when the relevant extraterrestrial registrant case file (under secondary -20) becomes inactive.