The Essentials of Public Records Management

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Overview of Today’s Session

• What Is a Public Record?
• Disposition Authority
• Records Retention Schedules
• Electronic Records
• Resources
What is a Public Record?

- For the purposes of retention and destruction, two criteria (chapter 40.14 RCW):
  1. Made or received in connection with the transaction of public business
  2. Regardless of format

- For public disclosure, refer to chapter 42.56 RCW.
Who Creates/Receives Public Records?

• Elected officials...
• All other public employees...
• Including contractors and volunteers...

...Anyone working on behalf of a state or local government agency, commission, board or committee.
Chapter 40.14 RCW

• All public records shall be and remain the property of the state of Washington.

• They shall be delivered by outgoing officials and employees to their successors and shall be preserved, stored, transferred, destroyed or disposed of, and otherwise managed, only in accordance with the provisions of this chapter.
Records Retention Schedules

• Per chapter 40.14 RCW and chapter 434-630 WAC, the Local Records Committee grants disposition authority to agencies in the form of records retention schedules.

• Records retention schedules describe:
  – Type of records approved for destruction;
  – Minimum period for which they need to be retained; and
  – Whether the records have archival value.
Records Management - Local Government

- Basics of Records Management
- Disaster Preparedness and Response
- Education and Training
  - Advice Sheets
  - Online Tutorials
  - Training Calendar
  - Recent Presentations
- Electronic Records Management
- Records Retention Schedules
  - Records Retention Schedules
  - Local Records Committee
- Local Records Grant Program
  - 2009-11 Grant Program
  - 2011-13 Grant Program

Local Government Updates
Click here to automatically receive updates on records retention schedules, training opportunities, and records management advice.
Local Government Records Retention Schedules - By Type of Agency

COUNTRIES
- Assessors
- Auditors
- Clerks
- Coroners
- Prosecuting Attorneys
- Sheriffs
- Treasurers

CITIES AND TOWNS
- Includes Police and Fire Departments

- Air Pollution Control Authorities
- Airport Districts
- Cemetery Districts
- Conservation Districts
- Diking / Drainage Districts
- District Courts
- Educational Service Districts
- Emergency Service (911) Communication Districts
- Ferry Districts
- Fire / Emergency Medical Service Districts
- Flood Control Districts
- Health Districts
- Hospital Districts
- Housing Authorities
- Irrigation and Reclamation Districts
- Library Districts
- Metropolitan Park Districts
- Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs)
- Mosquito Control Districts
- Municipal Courts
- Park and Recreation Districts and Service Areas
- Port Districts
- Public Facility Districts
- Public Stadium Authorities
- Public Transportation Benefit Areas
- Public Utility Districts (PUDs)
- Rail Districts
- Regional Transportation Planning Organizations
- Roads and Bridges Service Districts
- School Districts
- Solid Waste Collection / Disposal Districts
- Superior Courts
- Television Reception Improvement Districts
- Transit Authorities
- Water / Sewer Districts
- Weed Districts
What Do Agencies Do With Non-Archival Records?

1. **Retain** for the minimum retention; *THEN*
2. **Destroy**.

- Records subject to current public disclosure requests or litigation (current or reasonably anticipated) must not be destroyed.
- The Archives strongly recommends documenting records destruction.
Why Not Keep Everything?

Storage may seem cheap and easy, but:

• Records remain subject to public records requests, litigation, discovery
• Harder to find what you need (the Google effect)
• Ongoing data migration costs for electronic records
What Do Agencies Do With **Archival** Records?

• Archival records **must not be destroyed**.

• Agencies must either:
  1. Retain the records themselves **indefinitely**; OR
  2. Arrange with Washington State Archives for appraisal/transfer (at no cost) after the records have met their retention.
“Born Digital” Records

• Electronic records must be retained in electronic format...for the length of the designated retention period.

• Printing and retaining a hard copy is not a substitute for the electronic version.

(WAC 434-662-040)
Agencies wishing to scan non-archival paper records and then destroy the originals before their required retention has been met (“scanning and tossing”) must meet or exceed State Archives requirements as set forth in the document **Requirements for the Destruction of Non-Archival Paper Records After Imaging**.
Local Government Records Management Homepage


• View, search, and download current retention schedules
• Download advice sheets, recent PowerPoints, and other guidance on RM topics
• View our training calendar and register for upcoming classes
• Sign up for our Local Government Agency Notification List
Searching the schedules for an appropriate record series?

Staring down decades’/gigabytes’ worth of paper/e-records and not sure where to start?

Contact us! We can provide advice and consultation by email, by phone, or (if appropriate) in person.

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Washington State Archives: Partners in preservation and access.
www.sos.wa.gov/archives