



*Oregon Association of
Municipal Recordors*

CITY RECORDS MANAGEMENT MANUAL

Revised 2009

Records Management Committee

"A government's records are important resources to both the government that creates them and to the citizens it serves. Records contain the information that keeps government functioning. They document the origin, evolution and operation of its programs. They reveal how government operated, how it responded to needs and how it served its citizens."

Program Reporting Guidelines, 1989, National Association of Government Archivists and Records Administration (NAGARA)

Oregon Association of Municipal Recordors

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CITY RECORDS MANAGEMENT MANUAL

Table of Contents

| Chapter | Page Number |
|--|-------------|
| Introduction | v |
| Chapter 1 - Public Records | 1 |
| General Records | 1 |
| Subpoenaed Records..... | 1 |
| Certifying Documents | 2 |
| Chapter 2 - Goals, Objectives and Policies | 3 |
| Program Goal | 3 |
| Objectives..... | 3 |
| Policies | 3 |
| Chapter 3 - City Records Managers | 5 |
| Administrative Rule..... | 5 |
| City Records Manager/Archivist | 5 |
| Department Records Supervisors..... | 5 |
| Chapter 4 - Starting A Records Management Program | 7 |
| Initial Steps In Starting A Records Management Program | 7 |
| Need Assistance?..... | 8 |
| Where To Start? | 8 |
| Summary | 10 |
| Chapter 5 - Life-Cycle of Records | 11 |
| Creation | 11 |
| Active Use | 11 |
| Semi-active..... | 11 |
| Final Disposition | 11 |
| Chapter 6 - Records Retention Schedule | 13 |
| Why Create Records Retention Schedules | 13 |
| What Are Records Retention Schedules? | 13 |
| What is a General Records Schedule?..... | 13 |
| What is a Special Records Schedule?..... | 13 |
| For Further Information..... | 14 |

| | |
|---|---------------|
| Chapter 7 - Filing Systems | 15 |
| Selecting a Filing System | 15 |
| Determining the Appropriate System..... | 15 |
| Types Of Filing Systems..... | 16 |
| Alphabetic Systems | 16 |
| Subject Systems..... | 17 |
| Numeric Systems | 18 |
| Geographic Systems | 20 |
| Chronological Systems..... | 20 |
| Establishing the Files..... | 21 |
| Getting Started | 21 |
| Chapter 8 - Forms Management..... | 23 |
| Chapter 9 - Records Storage..... | 25 |
| Preparing Records For Storage..... | 25 |
| Storage Containers..... | 26 |
| The Records Center - Archives | 27 |
| Chapter 10 - Records Destruction | 29 |
| Administrative Rules..... | 29 |
| General Records Destruction Policy..... | 29 |
| Records Destruction Exception Policies | 29 |
| Instructions for Records Destruction..... | 31 |
| Chapter 11 - Electronic Records | 33 |
| What Is An Electronic Record..... | 33 |
| Electronic Mail Policy and Procedure | 34 |
| Electronic Records: Access and Privacy | 36 |
| Electronic Storage Media | 38 |
| Electronic Mail | 40 |
| Legality of Electronic Records | 42 |
| Chapter 12 - Electronic Imaging..... | 45 |
| Oregon Revised Statutes | 45 |
| Oregon Administrative Rules..... | 45 |
| Available Technologies..... | 47 |
| Microfilming Services..... | 47 |
| Micrographics | 47 |
| Types of Microfilm | 47 |
| Microforms..... | 48 |
| Decision Making | 50 |
| For Assistance..... | 50 |

| | |
|--|---------------|
| Chapter 13 - Records Disaster Planning | 51 |
| What Is A Records Disaster?..... | 51 |
| Consequences..... | 52 |
| What Can Be Done To Prepare?..... | 52 |
| What is a Records Disaster Plan? | 52 |
| What Are The Benefits Of A Records Disaster Plan? | 52 |
| What Will It Cost? | 53 |
| What Is Involved In A Records Disaster Program?..... | 54 |
| What Is The Planning Process? | 55 |
| Summary | 58 |
| Chapter 14 - Vital Records..... | 59 |
| What Are Vital Records? | 59 |
| Importance of a Vital Records Program..... | 59 |
| Establishing a Vital Records Program | 59 |
| Vital Records Operating Procedures | 63 |
| Summary | 63 |
| Appendix A - Networking..... | 65 |
| Appendix B - Glossary..... | 67 |
| Appendix C - Bibliography & Sources..... | 75 |
| Appendix D - Oregon Administrative Rules..... | 79 |
| Appendix E - Sample Forms..... | 83 |

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CITY RECORDS MANAGEMENT MANUAL

Introduction

This publication was originally prepared by the Oregon Association of Municipal Recorders (OAMR) Manual Committee and members of the State Archives staff in 1990-91, updated in 1998-99, 2004-05 and 2008-09 by the OAMR Records Management Committee and staff from the State Archives Division.

The manual is divided into chapters including filing systems, forms management, records storage, records disposition, electronic records, microfilm, and disaster planning. It is intended to provide basic guidelines on forming and implementing a records management program.

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CITY RECORDS MANAGEMENT MANUAL

CHAPTER 1

PUBLIC RECORDS

General Records

The “*Attorney General’s Public Records and Meetings Manual*” published by the State Department of Justice is an opinion of the Attorney General that interprets legislation pertaining to records and provides general legal advice. To purchase contact: Department of Justice, Publications Center, 100 Justice Building, 1162 Court Street NE, Salem, OR 97310, (503)378-2992, ext. #1.

This manual covers the following questions related to Public Records:

- A. Who has the right to inspect public records?
- B. Who is subject to the Public Records Law?
- C. What records are covered by the law?
- D. How can a person inspect or obtain public records?
 - 1. Records Custodian
 - 2. Proper and reasonable opportunity to inspect
 - 3. Copying
 - 4. Public body prerogatives
 - a. Protective rules
 - b. Fees
 - c. Consultation with legal counsel
 - d. Destruction of public records
- E. What public records are exempt from disclosure?
- F. Can a public body voluntarily disclose an exempt record to selected persons without waiving exemption generally?
- G. How should a person proceed if access is refused?

Subpoenaed Records

When an employee is served with a subpoena requiring appearance in court with any public record, they should immediately contact his/her legal counsel and any destruction of records should stop, even if the destruction is in the normal course of business.

Certifying Documents

Occasionally a request for photocopies and/or certified copies of records is made pursuant to ORS 192.430 and 192.440.

If the “record copy” is in the custody of a department other than the office of the City Recorder, the custodian of the record must certify before the City Recorder (similar to a notary) who will attest and affix the city seal. The City Recorder will certify documents maintained in the recorder’s office. Sample forms are contained in Appendix E. A stamp stating “Certified to be a true and correct copy of the original record” with a line for the City Recorder’s signature and name of city can also be used.

CITY RECORDS MANAGEMENT MANUAL

CHAPTER 2

GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

Program Goal

To establish an efficient and economic records program for creation, maintenance, retrieval and disposal of records.

Objectives

- To save valuable office space by systematically removing semi-active records and duplicate records that are not the official record.
- To save money by providing low-cost storage and controlling equipment purchased.
- To identify and protect vital records (records that would be required to continue or re-establish a city's operation following a disaster) and systematically identify the record copy.
- To save time in man-hours and promote public trust by developing an orderly, efficient system for maintaining retrieving, storing, and disposing of records.

Policies

- Store only active records in valuable office space.
- Move semi-active records to low-cost storage.
- Preserve valuable historical or archival records under adequate conditions.
- All valueless records shall be destroyed after meeting minimum retention and retained longer only under special circumstances.
- All public records, including those stored on electronic media, shall be accessible to the public, unless exemption status is obtained.

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CITY RECORDS MANAGEMENT MANUAL

CHAPTER 3

CITY RECORDS MANAGERS

Administrative Rule (OAR 166-030-0016)

To establish a records management program insuring orderly retention and destruction of all public records and to insure the preservation of public records of value, each state or local agency should designate a records officer to organize and coordinate scheduling records retirement, storage, and destruction.

City Records Manager/Archivist:

- Is aware of current records laws;
- Maintains, monitors, and updates the city's records retention schedule through coordination with the state archivist and department supervisors;
- Reviews requests for new records equipment and assists departments with storage facilities;
- Knows current records management procedures and informs and educates departments on innovations and new procedures;
- Develops systems for indexing historical records and assists departments with their systems;
- Assists departments in the orderly disposition of records, including destruction as authorized by the records retention schedule;
- Has knowledge of the most efficient and economic means of destroying records;
- Coordinates the microfilm program to insure proper records retention;
- Assists in approving storage locations for the storage of inactive and archival records; and
- Develops a records disaster plan.

Department Records Supervisors

Department directors should designate one staff position as the department records supervisor. This person should have substantial knowledge of the operation and the records in their department.

The records supervisor should:

- Administer the policies and procedures of the city records management manual and any department records procedures;
- Supervise the disposition of records, including destruction of records meeting the minimum retention periods and the transferring of semi-active records to "low-

cost” storage. Destruction should only be carried out with the approval of the records officer/city recorder and department head;

- Assist in establishing and maintaining filing systems, standards, and procedures for record keeping; and
- Serve as liaison between the department and the records officer.

CITY RECORDS MANAGEMENT MANUAL

CHAPTER 4

STARTING A RECORDS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Initial Steps In Starting A Records Management Program

1. The city manager or council should appoint a records officer who will be responsible for scheduling retention and destruction of records. The city charter may specify the City Recorder/Clerk as the Records Manager. Notify the State Archivist of the appointment.

“To establish a records management program to insure orderly retention and destruction of all public records, and to insure the preservation of public records of value, each state or local agency should designate a Records Officer to organize and coordinate records scheduling, retirement, storage and destruction....” OAR 166-030-0016

2. Analyze storage needs and other capabilities including:
 - Adequate storage for inactive records awaiting destruction.
 - Adequate and suitable storage for “permanent” records.
 - Microfilming as an option.
 - Sufficient funds for a storage facility/records center.
 - Application for grants to assist in data entry, systems design, inventories, and preservation. Information on available grants can be found on the internet.

3. Inventory to Final Disposition - This process can be accomplished through a committee, an individual assigned in each department, or the records officer.

- Using a copy of the current City General Records Retention Schedule, identify records according to the schedule and mark the records with the series title and/or number. See [“Glossary”](#) for definition of a [series](#). Label the record series, file cabinets, and boxes.

“Unless otherwise stated, a retention period is calculated from the date the public record was created.” OAR 166-030-0027(2)

“No public records of fiscal transactions shall be destroyed, even though the required minimum retention period has passed, until after the required audit for the period covered by the public records has been completed and the auditor has released the public records for destruction.” OAR 166-030-0041

- Separate permanent and non-permanent records. This is a good practice when preparing new files. See “[Filing Systems](#)” (Chapter 7, page 15).
 - Once records have been identified, they may be stored as “inactive” records or destroyed in accordance with the current City General Records Retention Schedule. See “[Records Storage](#)” (Chapter 9, page 25) and “[Records Destruction](#)” (Chapter 10, page 29).
4. Records not identifiable in the General Schedule - If records do not match with those listed in this schedule, scan surrounding record series titles and descriptions in the most likely section for more clues. Use a records series which matches most closely within reasonable limits. If the city records appear to be a combination of two or more record series in the schedule, use the listing with the longest retention period. Consult the city records officer (usually the city recorder) or the city attorney for assistance. If city records cannot be reasonably interpreted to match any series in this schedule, contact the State Archives for appraisal assistance or information on special records schedules.

Need Assistance?

OAMR website – Records Management Committee: www.oamr.org

Oregon Secretary of State website: www.sos.state.or.us

Where To Start?

Before a records management program can be initiated, it must be presented to management and “sold” as an asset that will help the organization meet its goals.

A good records management program saves manpower, office space and money.

Step 1. Accumulate Information

Acquire the professional training needed to understand records management. Study this manual, state statutes pertaining to records, the city code and charter, and records management publications. Attend professional seminars on records issues and collect information to present to management. Keep a file of ideas.

Determine city needs, necessary elements, expenses and limitations, manpower necessary to support the program, and unique department issues. Visit each department, talk with records personnel, and view the records. Explain the plan to staff members who will assist.

Armed with an understanding of retention schedules and record processing procedures, records, organization charts, files, micrographics, data processing equipment, and record storage/retrieval equipment can be inventoried.

Collect information about:

- Volume of existing records
- Records storage/retrieval equipment and storage containers

- Commercial microfilming services, including computer output microfilm (COM) services
- Clerical, professional/technical and managerial labor
- Electronic media

Step 2. Developing Goals And Objectives

Sell practical ideas that will help the city reach its objectives. Develop a clear job description and/or work plan citing planned steps and goals. (See [Records Manager – Chapter 3, page 5](#))

Consider:

- Why is the program needed?
- Are goals realistic and reasonable?
- Do objectives and goals support city objectives and goals?
- What elements of a records management program already exist?

Step 3. Benefits

- An established records management program lends credibility to city maintenance of the public record and can be useful if records are subpoenaed during court proceedings.
- In the event of a disaster a records disaster and recovery program avoids allegations of neglect which could lead to litigation or denial of an insurance claim.
- Once identified, vital records would be protected from loss and the organization could recover quickly in the event of a disaster.
- Savings could be realized by identifying and destroying duplicate documents.
- An efficient records management program could reduce personnel needs.
- Regular scheduled destruction of records eliminates the need for added storage and frees up space for more productive uses.

Step 4. Developing The Draft Plan

Assemble the program plan, develop staff assignments and schedules to propose to top management. Keep the plan realistic and within reasonable time limits. Determine which personnel will work full time in the records management program, which will work part time, and which will assist.

When preparing the plan, take into consideration that management views records management primarily from a financial perspective. Also, consider preparing more than one plan based on budgets and time availability. Include awards and fun events like “appreciation ceremonies” or a “records destruction day” with contests and prizes to make the program enjoyable and rewarding. Keep track of the people who help and reward them. There will be more support and enthusiasm for the program if those involved are rewarded. Acknowledge everyone involved. Notify the local media. Consider starting an in-house newsletter to provide personnel with updated records management information and education.

Step 5. Presenting Recommendations to Top Management

First distribute the proposal several days prior to the meeting date to allow sufficient time for study and formulation of questions. Request that questions be submitted in advance and in writing to allow adequate time for developing a response. Then present the program to management and those involved in order to provide a forum for discussion.

SUMMARY

- Accumulate information and obtain professional training.
- Develop reasonable goals and objectives, an overall records program, or program enhancements.
- Identify tangible and intangible benefits.
- Develop a draft plan that identifies personnel requirements and a schedule for implementing the recommendations.
- Present the program to top management, outlining the plan along with expected goals and benefits.
- Ask for support, discuss it, and once obtained, use it to convince personnel of the importance of the program, its goals and policies.

Once the program is successfully established, continue to promote the concept, possibilities, and benefits of records management.

CITY RECORDS MANAGEMENT MANUAL

CHAPTER 5

LIFE CYCLE OF RECORDS

Creation

Information created in relation to public business is a public record. Public records are the heart of government operations. These records are:

- Created for the citizens,
- The property of the citizens,
- Protected in the interest of citizens,
- Documentation of how the government serves the needs of the citizens, and
- Historical, legal, administrative or fiscal records.

Active Use

Records in active use are stored in areas of easy access also known as “high-cost storage” areas. These records are usually no older than two years.

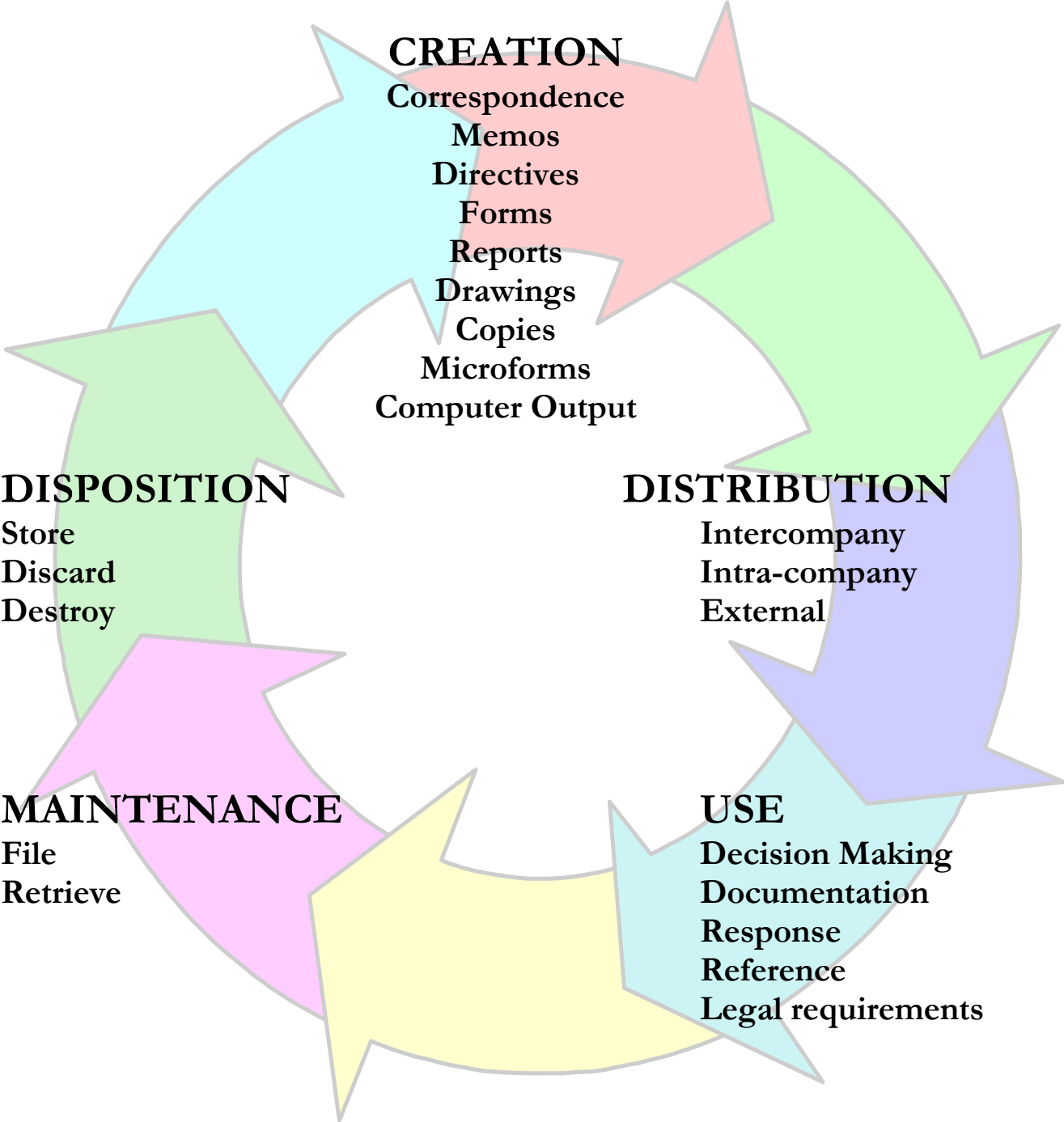
Semi-active

Records in this phase are needed less frequently but must be retained until the legal minimum retention has been met. These semi-active records are usually stored in “low-cost storage” areas that meet special storage conditions. Separating semi-active records from active records allows staff to become more efficient in maintaining and accessing active records.

Final Disposition

When a record has served its purpose for the operation of the office, it is ready for final disposition. Some records are destroyed after meeting the authorized minimum retention. Other records are retained indefinitely (as permanent documents) when they have historical or archival value. Records retained indefinitely should be stored under special storage conditions.

LIFE CYCLE OF A RECORD



CITY RECORDS MANAGEMENT MANUAL

CHAPTER 6

RECORDS RETENTION SCHEDULE

Why create records retention schedules?

Oregon state and local governments produce a staggering amount and variety of records. Some of these records need to be kept long-term for legal, fiscal, administrative, or historical reasons. Others may be disposed of relatively quickly after their usefulness has expired. Government records are an important resource both to the agency and the general public and must be managed with the same care, concern, and skill as any other key asset.

What are records retention schedules?

Records retention schedules are lists and descriptions of public records. They include information about how long each type of record should be kept (retention period) and what should happen to it at the end of that period (disposition). Records retention schedules cover records in all formats, including but not limited to paper, microfilm, and electronic media.

What is a general records schedule?

A general records schedule applies to an entire group of state or local government entities. Thus, a city general records schedule applies to the records of all cities in Oregon. The only exception is if a valid "special schedule" exists for a particular state or local government entity or an office or record within that entity. In these cases, special schedules override the requirements of a general schedule.

The City General Records Retention Schedule can be found at
<http://arcweb.sos.state.or.us/rules/OARS_100/OAR_166/166_200.html>

What is a special records schedule?

A special records schedule can be written for local governments to describe in detail certain records unique to an individual city. These limited schedules expire five years after creation. For more information, contact the State Archivist.

For Further Information

The records officer for the appropriate agency can answer specific questions related to a particular records retention schedule. The city recorder is typically designated as the records officer. For further information, refer to the Records Retention Schedules Frequently Asked Questions at

<<http://arcweb.sos.state.or.us/recmgmt/defaultrecmgmt.html>>

Contact the Oregon State Archives for general questions about records retention schedules or to create a records retention schedule.

Oregon State Archives
800 Summer Street NE
Salem, OR 97310
(503) 373-0701
<http://arcweb.sos.state.or.us>

CITY RECORDS MANAGEMENT MANUAL

CHAPTER 7

FILING SYSTEMS

Selecting A Filing System

Records management is intended to control recorded information from its creation until its disposition. The ability to file and retrieve information easily and effectively is central to this process. The correct type of filing system is largely dependent on the characteristics of the records involved. All filing systems have advantages and disadvantages. This chapter offers guidelines and recommendations for the selection and use of different types of filing systems. Although records come in all formats – paper, microfilm, audio-visual, and electronic media – this chapter will focus on paper based filing systems.

Determining The Appropriate System

Before setting up a particular filing system evaluate:

- Types of records and office needs.
- Records use and retrieval. Types of records and the usual method of retrieval will help determine a filing system. For example, a numeric system would work well for purchase orders retrieved by number. An alphabetic system would make more sense for business license files retrieved by business name.
- Number of records created and storage needs.
- Storage equipment and supply needs.
- Indexing and cross referencing.
- Logic. Logic facilitates learning, so staff members do not have to rely on memory alone. The method behind the system should be clear and reasonable.
- Practicality and effectiveness. Avoid academic and overly complex classifications; the system should be designed to use common terms known to all users.
- Simplicity. The system should be straightforward, with little or no room for interpretation.
- Functionality. Classification terms should reflect the function of the records regardless of their operational location.
- Retention. The filing system should be linked to the records retention schedule in a way that allows removal of records from active to inactive storage and destruction when retention periods have expired. These activities should be done according to government approved records control schedules. The efficiency and practicality of a filing system should not be sacrificed to retention considerations.

- Expandability. Additional or different classifications might be needed in the future or unforeseen growth may occur.
- Standardization Using different terms to describe the same record or subject will cause confusion. In order to avoid lost files, misfiles and unnecessary duplication of records and filing locations, a written set of rules should be in place for all filing personnel to follow.

Types Of Filing Systems

A filing system is a method of organizing records by placing them in predetermined locations according to an overall plan of classification. There are five basic types of filing systems: *alphabetic*, *subject*, *numeric*, *geographic*, and *chronological*. With the exception of chronological, each of these systems uses alphabetic concepts in its operation. *Alphanumeric* is a common combination using letters and numbers.

The following procedures for records storage are common to all systems:

1. Inspecting a record means to confirm its readiness to be filed. A release mark from the person receiving the record shows that the record is ready to be stored.
2. Indexing means choosing the filing segments (or name) under which a document is to be stored.
3. Coding is the actual marking of the record to identify its placement in storage. Coding is a physical act, as contrasted to indexing, which is a mental determination. Examples would be to highlight or underline a name or write the file name or number on the top of the page.
4. Cross-reference the record if it could be requested by a name other than the one selected for coding.
5. Sorting places the documents in correct sequence before storing. Prepare the document for storage by removing paper clips and rubber bands, stapling related papers, mending torn records, and flattening any folded records. Remove papers from three-ring binders.
6. Storing is the actual placing of the records in file folders and containers.

Alphabetic Systems

Alphabetic storage arranges all material in dictionary (A through Z) order. Following each letter of the alphabet there are individual folders containing records that have accumulated regarding a designated entity or activity and/or one general folder containing information for entities/activities with a very low volume of records.

Advantages:

- A-Z order is familiar
- Misfiles are easily checked
- Less costly than other filing methods
- Only one sorting is needed

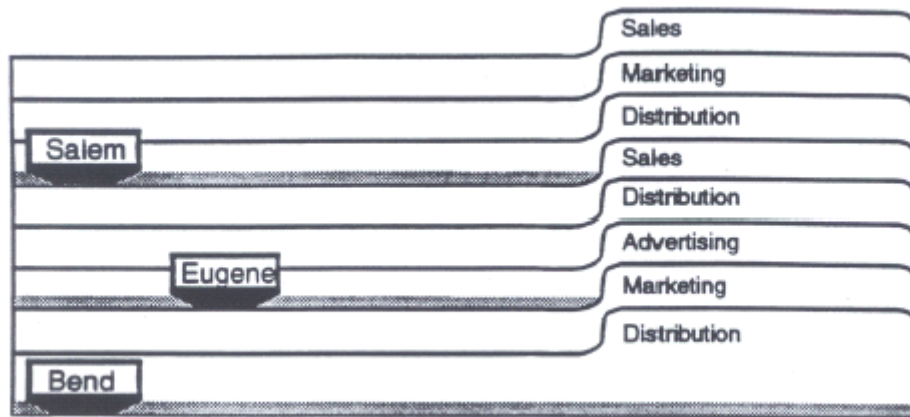
Disadvantages:

- Frequent mis-filings where no standard rules are followed.

- Similar names are confusing.
- Easy to make transposition errors.
- Labels can be time-consuming to prepare if complete information is used (i.e. United States Government Federal Bureau of Investigations).

ARMA International has prepared an excellent handbook entitled [Establishing Alphabetic, Numeric and Subject Filing Systems \(PDF\)](#) . This handbook provides standards to insure consistency in filing thus making retrieval easier. The book (download) may be purchased from [Association of Records Managers and Administrators \(ARMA\) International](#).

Figure 1: Alphabetic Classification, Geographic System



Subject Systems

Subject files are used when the content of the record is more important than the names of the individual or organization whose records are being stored. The files are in alphabetic arrangement according to the subject. Within the subject folder, records are arranged alphabetically by correspondent's name or chronologically.

To function efficiently, a master and relative index are needed. The master index alphabetically lists all subjects in the system. The relative index, or cross reference, lists all headings and subdivisions and all possible variations of those headings.

A brief explanation of the records stored in each subject folder would be helpful for new personnel (i.e. for the file "Budget" records include the City Recorder's proposed budget, copy of publication notice or affidavits, copies of related resolutions and ordinances, and related correspondence).

The standard arrangements for subject storage are straight dictionary or encyclopedic. In straight dictionary arrangement, the subject folders are arranged behind A to Z guides in their correct alphabetic order according to subject title. In encyclopedic

arrangement the subjects are subdivided so that several folders contain small portions of the records pertaining to one main subject.

The Dictionary arrangement is appropriate for small systems; however, as the system begins to grow it might need to be changed to an encyclopedic system. Larger systems are subdivided in secondary and tertiary categories. This increases the system's flexibility; entire sections can be added or removed without destroying the system's appearance or usability. It also limits the number of files to search through by keeping related records together.

Advantages:

- Documents can be grouped by topic
- New subjects can be added easily for expansion of files
- Statistical information can be easily gathered (i.e. "Office Supplies" How many envelopes were ordered?)

Disadvantages:

- Overlapping subjects and similarity of terms can cause confusion (*real property or land*)
- Selecting topics can be difficult, time consuming and expensive
- New personnel frequently have difficulty using subject storage efficiently
- Lack of indexing can delay retrieval
- Retrieval by names of persons or agencies or by locations is difficult

Numeric Systems

Numeric filing systems arrange files by numbers or by dates. Records are assigned numbers and then stored in a sequence. This is useful where confidentiality is a concern and where many people have access to the records. A numeric file consists of the file; an index, in the alphabetic form; and an accession book which serves as a consecutive record of assigned numbers.

Straight numeric systems simply number files consecutively and arrange them in sequence. They are simple to use, manage, and expand.

Duplex numeric systems consist of two or more number segments used to classify numeric codes assigned to files. Files are arranged numerically based on combinations of these segments. Duplex systems are usually used for large volumes of records. They allow high activity files to be evenly distributed throughout the records and support the assignment of blocks of files to individuals for filing and retrieving.

Consecutive numbering (10-20-30; 100-200-300; 1010-1020-1030; etc.) is the easiest to understand method of numeric storage as it uses numbers arranged in sequence from left to right.

Advantages:

- Re-filing is rapid – numeric sequence is familiar
- Expansion is easy and unlimited
- Transfer of old records is less complicated
- Cross-reference is simpler

- Folders can be labeled in advance of their use
- Misfiles are easier to spot than in an alphabetic file system

Disadvantages:

- Indirect method of locating file
- Higher material cost
- Alphabetic file must be meticulously maintained
- Large numbers more difficult to work with
- Transposition of numbers easy to do
- High activity folders are usually located at the end of the system, causing congestion
- Difficult to assign blocks of files to individuals for filing or retrieving
- Difficult to handle miscellaneous records

Nonconsecutive numbering is a system of numbering that uses numbers in random order. The groups of digits (23-34-45) are identified as tertiary, secondary, and terminal reading from left to right.

Terminal digit filing is sorted by reading in groups (46-29-37) from right to left instead of from left to right.

Advantages:

- Color coding easy to use with this method; sorting can be done by color
- Overcomes problem of congestion in working area
- Fewer errors in number transposition because numbers are divided into small groups
- Training is easier

Disadvantages:

- Staff may feel fearful that it is too complex
- Takes time to learn to read from right to left
- If not color coded, misfiles can be hard to find
- If a large block of numbers needs to be retrieved, filer must go to several locations.

Middle digit filing is sorted by reading in groups (23-32-45) except the filer reads the middle number first, then the left number, then the right number.

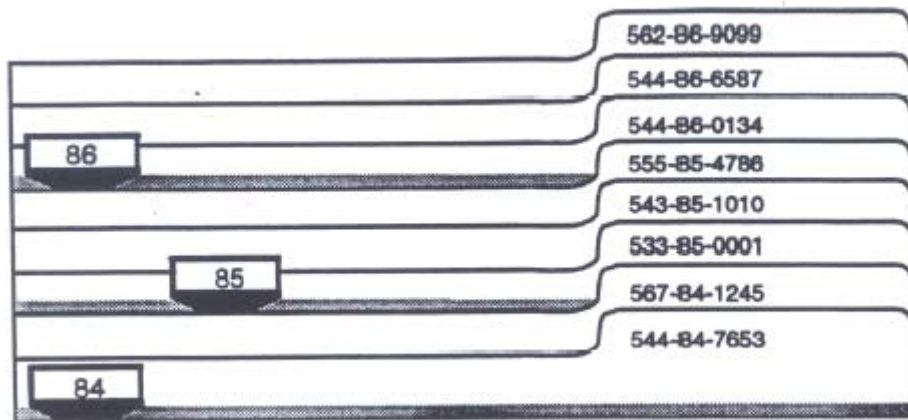
Advantages:

- Conversion from a consecutive numbering system is easier than converting to a terminal digit system.
- Color coding can improve filing efficiency

Disadvantages:

- May be confusing

Figure 2: Numeric Classification, Middle Digit Duplex System



Other methods of nonconsecutive numbering systems include “Skip Numbering”, “Block Codes” and “Group Coding.”

Decimal systems use ten general divisions which can be subdivided by groups of ten. The Dewey Decimal System used in 90 percent of the world’s libraries is the most famous example.

Advantages:

- Unlimited expansion
- Groups similar subjects

Disadvantages:

- Limited to ten general classification areas

Geographic Systems

Geographic storage is often used when reference is made first to a place or location instead of a name. An alphabetic file system for individual names is important to locate records if a request is made by a name rather than an address. It is organized according to either the location name guide plan or the lettered guide plan.

The location name guide plan bases storage on location names (counties, states, countries, cities) as the filing segments that comprise the main division. The lettered guide plan uses guides printed with alphabetic letters – sometimes with letters and numbers – in addition to guides with location names printed on them. It is not often used because of its cluttered appearance. This method works well for utility purposes and for documents (agreements, liens, and easements) related to specific properties.

Chronological Systems

Chronological storage is filing by calendar date. It is used within each of the other filing methods to reorganize records in individual file folders.

Establishing the Files:

- Prepare a “filing procedures manual” that is easy to follow and review it periodically. The rules and procedures developed should be standardized and followed by everyone who uses the system. Standard filing rules and examples can be found in [Establishing Alphabetic, Numeric and Subject Filing Systems](#), published by [ARMA International](#).
- Rules should include: creation of a folder, labeling and color coding, how to use guides, correct alphabetic filing order, indexing, charge-out and follow-up procedures of borrowed files, cross-referencing, transfers, how to repair records, and how to store records.
- Allow about 3”- 4” of open space in each file drawer; filing and retrieval time increases when file drawers are “tight”.
- File drawers should have between five and twenty file guides; too much time will be spent filing and retrieving if there are more than twenty.
- File folder tabs and labels should be consistent and not a mixture of different styles. Labels should be typed in an established format and not handwritten.
- File label could include the file date, identification of the “Record Series Title” and the “Minimum retention” as approved by the State Archivist.
- Folders are manageable up to a thickness of ¾ inches. To prevent obstruction of the file label consider a large “accordion” file for files thicker than ¾ inches.
- Out indicators (for guides, folders and sheets) should be used to show location of borrowed records.
- Keep record series together. Keep “permanent” documents separate from “temporary” documents for easy disposition. (i.e. put permanent records on the right side of the folder and temporary records on the left.)
- The standard size for documents should be 8 ½” x 11”. Maps, charts, and other oversized records that would be unreadable at the standard size are excluded from this requirement.
- Documents created by thermal “fax” machines should be photocopied if the document is to be retained for more than 15 to 20 days. The thermal “fax” documents begin fading in that time period.
- The transfer of records from active storage to inactive storage to final disposition (archival storage or destruction) should be continual or on a periodic basis.
- Transferred records must be appropriately indexed and stored for later retrieval.

Getting Started

Start with the most current records a little at a time and do the older records later. Implement the system chosen and document the filing and indexing procedures for all to follow. Be flexible and evaluate the system periodically to determine necessary revisions.

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CITY RECORDS MANAGEMENT MANUAL

CHAPTER 8

FORMS MANAGEMENT

Forms are necessary for repetitive information. A completed form is a public record.

Here are some guidelines for developing and using forms:

1. Create a form when there is a real need for standardization of information over a significant period of time.
2. When designing a form:
 - Consider the nature of the information, potential use, and need;
 - Keep the form simple and easy to read and use; and,
 - Use a standard size and format with a title and form number.
3. Provide easy and clear instructions.
4. Every time a new form is created or destroyed, a new record series may be created or destroyed. Therefore, carefully consider the development and destruction of forms.
5. Save forms in a single location on a computer, such as in a shared folder or internal website. Electronic versions of forms could include timesheets, business license applications, public records request forms, etc.

In addition, the book entitled [*Records Management: A Practical Guide for Cities and Counties*](#), by ICMA (International City/County Management Association) contains a chapter on Forms Analysis, Design, and Control. This chapter contains excellent suggestions and recommendations on how to institute a forms management program, analyze forms currently in use, develop user friendly forms, costs, and tips on consolidating forms.

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CITY RECORDS MANAGEMENT MANUAL

CHAPTER 9

RECORDS STORAGE

Protection, accessibility, and security are the keys to operating a successful inactive records storage program.

Most records will become inactive before their retention period has expired. It is extremely costly and inefficient to maintain inactive records in office area filing cabinets. An important part of any records management program is the proper storage of inactive records and the prompt destruction of records at the expiration of their required retention period. These guidelines should help establish an effective inactive records storage and destruction program.

Preparing Records For Storage

- Prepare the records one series at a time. Do not mix records series in boxes except when a series is small and all series have the same retention period.
- Identify the records using the records retention schedule. Consider the physical volume or annual accumulation to determine if inactive storage is necessary.
- Determine if the records will be transferred off-site annually, semi-annually, quarterly, or monthly.
- Evaluate the need for regular access to records that are one month old, six months old or one year old.
- Assess the activity level of older records.
- Once a routine is developed, it should become part of standard operating procedures to ensure continuity.
- Identify every individual record or file. Be consistent.
- Can the file folder be removed from the “permanent” records to avoid damage to the paper documents by the acidic folders?
- Prepare records for storage in the same order that they were stored in “active” office use. (Exception: Terminal Digit Systems)
- It is best to prepare files when they are active. Remove unnecessary duplicates; arrange all files in a consistent order for the record series. Separate permanent from non-permanent records. If both need to be in the file, put permanent on one side of the folder and non-permanent on the other.

Storage Containers

If inactive records are stored and managed on site, ensure their security and accessibility by following a few very basic guidelines and using common sense.

- An archive carton should accommodate both letter- and legal-sized documents. Each carton holds approximately one cubic foot of records. Generally speaking, two cartons will hold the contents of one legal-sized file drawer, and three cartons will hold the contents of two letter-sized file drawers. When the carton is filled, it will weigh between 30 and 50 pounds.
- Sources for these cartons, often called “bankers boxes”, are office supply companies (i.e., Boise Cascade Office Products). [Gaylord Archival](#), [Metal Edge](#) and [Light Impressions](#) are catalog sources for acid-free storage materials and preservation supplies.
- Permanent records should be stored in non-acidic cartons and file folders.
- Avoid over-filling the carton. A minimum of 1.5 inches of free space should be allowed in each carton. Remove records from 3-ring binders.
- All files in the carton should face the same direction and each record should be easily identifiable. Note: Consider removing “permanent” documents from their acidic file folders. If permanent documents are stored in file folders, use non-acidic folders.
- Label cartons with the following information for easy identification:
 - City Name/Department
 - Records Series Title
 - First and Last File Identifier
 - Date of Creation and Date for Destruction
 - Box Number Within That Group of Records(A [sample box label](#) is provided in Appendix E.)
- Always store records in closed containers to decrease the exposure to airborne dust and humidity.
- Never leave cartons of records on the floor to avoid possible damage in case of minor flooding or spillage.
- Do not store records directly under water-bearing pipes.
- Store records in an area that can be secured against intrusion by unauthorized personnel. A specific person or persons should be assigned to the maintenance of inactive storage and all access to those records should be coordinated through that person or persons.
- A reliable method of tracking activity and/or location of individual files should be developed so that inactive files retrieved for use will not become lost or misplaced. This can be as simple as the use of completed “out” cards or the creation of a complete database (Excel, Munimetrix) to track location of individual files removed from the storage box.
- Permanent files should be copied for the requestor so the original is not removed from the storage room or vault.
- Avoid stacking more than two boxes on top of each other for extended periods of time. Stacking not only makes retrieval difficult, but it can also lead to the collapse of the cartons and subsequent damage to the records.

The Records Center - Archives (Records Storage)

A records center and an archive serve different purposes. An archive stores permanent records or records with an “indefinite” retention period. A records center stores inactive records. Archive records and inactive records may be stored in the same location, but should not be mixed in the same storage containers. In addition, do not mix records series in boxes except when a series is small and all series have the same retention period.

Here are a few considerations:

- A [Records Transmittal](#) form should be used to transfer records from active use to the records center (example in Appendix E).
- When storing records, consider the floor strength. Archive cartons can weigh 30-50 pounds each.
- Relative constant temperature should range between 62°F and 68°F with a constant relative humidity between 35% and 45% for the protection of the paper and the comfort of the employees who may be working in the center.
- Records should be secure from hazards like fire, water, vermin, vandals, and rioters.
 - A smoke detector provides warning before the heat triggers the sprinkler system causing serious water damage.
 - Firewalls and non-combustible roofs provide added protection.
 - Records should not be located under water pipes. Basements are also subject to water hazards. Exception: sprinkler systems with a low-delivery rate are necessary to prevent fire damage. If records are located in a basement, a water sensing device is advised.
 - Records centers without windows are preferable, and the doors should be secure with access limited to authorized personnel. Alarm systems provide added security.
- Records Centers should be located within a few blocks of the office unless there is a courier available to retrieve and deliver documents.
- Poor lighting hinders records filing and retrieval. Fluorescent, continuous strip (single tube) lights should not be more than 9 inches wide and should be at least 12 inches higher than the top of the highest record storage container.
- If steel shelving is used for stacking boxes, consider engineering the shelving for earthquake. Units constructed using bolts rather than clips fare better during earthquakes, and steel shelving fares better than wood.
- Main aisles should be 4 to 6 feet wide to comply with fire regulations and aisles between shelves should be 30 to 36 inches wide.
- Consider the following when evaluating a commercial records center.
 - Quality, reliability, efficiency and personnel integrity
 - Space and service fees
 - Adaptability, accessibility and security

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CITY RECORDS MANAGEMENT MANUAL

CHAPTER 10

RECORDS DESTRUCTION

Administrative Rules

Unless otherwise stated, a retention period is calculated from the date the public record was created (OAR 166-030-0027(2)).

No public records of fiscal transactions shall be destroyed, even though the required minimum retention period has passed until after the required audit for the period covered by the public records has been completed and the auditor has released the public records for destruction (OAR 166-030-0041).

Public records which are confidential by law must be destroyed by shredding, pulping, or incineration. The destruction should be supervised and witnessed. Records which are not confidential by law may be sold or traded for recycling of the fiber, including provisions that the records are promptly converted (OAR 166-030-0060).

Once a record has served its purpose and has met the minimum retention, it is ready for final disposition: either permanent retention or destruction (e.g. burning, shredding, etc.). Records are to be retained at minimum for the time indicated in the retention schedule. Policies that can be adopted in part or in full follow.

General Records Destruction Policy

All records shall be destroyed upon reaching the minimum retention period. No city government shall store records beyond the minimum retention unless an exception to the policy applies. Records of a confidential nature should be disposed of by a method that ensures that they are completely destroyed.

Records Destruction Exception Policies

The following exception policies allow retention of records beyond the minimum retention period upon approval by the department director and the City Manager. These policies will control the amount of filing equipment purchased and the need for off-site storage areas.

- ***Exception Policy #1:*** If a record has substantial value, the record may be retained beyond the minimum retention period with written approval from the City Manager through the department director. Obtain assistance from the records officer.

- **Exception Policy #2:** A record retained beyond the minimum retention may be microfilmed with written approval from the City Manager through the department director. Obtain assistance from the records officer.
- **Exception Policy #3:** Equipment to house records or microfilm being retained beyond the minimum retention may be budgeted for purchase with written approval from the City Manager through the department director. Obtain assistance from the records officer.

If a document is truly a duplicate, its destruction does not need to be documented. However, if the duplicate is the only remaining copy, it can be the “record copy”. In such instances, the duplicate record cannot be destroyed until the minimum retention is met and a destruction form is completed.

The city may wish to have the City Manager establish an “Annual Destruction Day” for departments to purge documents *that have met the minimum retention*. When possible, regular duties should cease so that maximum effort can be applied to the purge. The departments will prepare the documents for recycling or shredding and will complete a “[destruction form](#)” (example in Appendix E). However, departments may also destroy documents throughout the year as the need arises and where the records have met the minimum retention.

METHODS OF DESTRUCTION

| <i>Type of Destruction</i> | <i>Advantages</i> | <i>Disadvantages</i> |
|---|---|--|
| Refuse Collection | Easy way to dispose of documents | Lack of confidentiality |
| Incinerating | Confidentiality assured; documents completely disintegrated | Pollution may violate federal, state, and/or local clean-air regulations |
| Shredding | Shredded paper can be bailed and sold | Documents partially destroyed; confidentiality not completely assured |
| Selling as Scrap | Income from sale of scrap; recycling helps environment | Lack of confidentiality |
| Chemical Disintegration | Confidentiality assured; documents completely disintegrated | Not practical for small business organizations |
| Pulping | Confidentiality assured; documents completely disintegrated | Not practical for small business organizations |
| Source: <i>Records/Info Management and Filing</i> , Nathan Krevolin | | |

Instructions For Records Destruction

Request: Complete a [records destruction form](#) (see example in Appendix E). Attach a copy of the record and/or a copy of the series inventory form or a copy of the microfilm format form to assist in considering approval for destruction.

If the records are located in the Records Center, the records officer will initiate the destruction form and send it to the department for the appropriate signature(s).

Eligible For Destruction: Route the form to the city records officer who will verify that the record is eligible for destruction. If so, the records officer will sign and date the form and return it to the requestor. After the department director signs off, the record will be eligible for destruction.

Director's Approval: Have the department director sign for approval. This gives the director one last opportunity to retain the record(s). The director may be aware of circumstances where the records need to be retained for special reasons, especially in instances where there may be pending litigation.

Certificate Of Destruction: Records destroyed in accordance with city retention schedules should have documentation identifying the records that were destroyed. There may be occasions when it will be necessary to show "proof" that the records were destroyed appropriately, or to identify some records. The records destruction form provides the information about the records destroyed and includes the signatures of those with authority to destroy records. Forward the original to the records officer for the official permanent record and make a copy for department records.

If there is a special need to destroy sensitive records, such as those containing Social Security Numbers, contact the records officer for special arrangements. If large amounts of the same records are destroyed frequently and the use of the records destruction form is too cumbersome, contact the records officer for special arrangements.

Sign and identify how the record was destroyed. Destruction of public records without legal authority is a misdemeanor (ORS 162.305).

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CITY RECORDS MANAGEMENT MANUAL

CHAPTER 11

ELECTRONIC RECORDS

What Is An Electronic Record?

An electronic record is any information recorded in a form that requires a computer or other machine to access. This definition is inclusive – any information on a public entity's computer can be a public record. Equipment includes workstations, microcomputers, minicomputers, and mainframes. The number and variety of electronic records created by city employees is substantial.

Types Of Electronic Records: The lines between types of electronic records are becoming increasingly blurred. Numerous software applications combine graphics, text, and sound into single records. Networked systems allow multiple authors to work on a single document. As software becomes more sophisticated, the electronic record can assume different forms depending on the software used to access it. There are, however, some distinct types of electronic records which can be identified.

- **Text:** Although text has traditionally been used to prepare hard copy records, more and more text documents are being created for electronic use only. Even so, most electronic text documents are drafts and copies of letters, memos, reports and publications. Text documents are usually created using word processing or e-mail programs. Most software (including spreadsheet and database management programs) can also create text documents.
- **Database and Database Management:** Databases store vast amounts of information on a variety of subjects. They contain text, numbers, graphics or data fields.

Database management systems (DBMS) are software systems used to access and retrieve data elements stored in a database. The data elements are stored randomly, and each data element has an embedded address system or pointer. The DBMS allow access to the data and combine data elements into records or files to meet user specifications. Think of a database as a box full of Legos and the DBMS as the way of putting the Legos into recognizable shapes.

A specialized type of DBMS is the geographic information system (GIS). A GIS enables a user to present database information graphically. Database information is combined with map data to present information in ways that traditional DBMS cannot. Users of GIS applications include natural resource and planning agencies.

- **Electronic Mail:** (E-mail) is any memo, letter, note, report, or communication among individuals and groups that is stored and/or transmitted in a format that requires an electronic device to capture and access. The term also refers to a package of software or services designed to automate office communication. E-mail can be a public record and should be filed and retained as any other public record.

Public employees have an obligation to apply the appropriate retention to the e-mail sent and received and are also obligated to provide access in compliance with the public records law. The retention requirements apply to records that are either created or received “in connection with the transaction of public business”. All public records, including e-mail, should be disposed of according to the appropriate retention schedule. The City Records Retention Schedule specifies how long the e-mail needs to be kept to satisfy administrative, legal, fiscal, and historical requirements. Retention is determined by the function and content of records, regardless of their physical form and is issued and authorized by the State Archivist.

Included in this chapter is a sample policy entitled “[Secretary of State Policy, Information Systems 05.01 Electronic Mail \(E-Mail\)](#)” which defines e-mail and discusses filing and retention periods for e-mail.

- **Electronic Communication:** The Public Meetings Law expressly recognizes that meetings may be accomplished by telephone conference calls or “other electronic communication.” Such meetings are subject to the Public Meetings Law. ORS 192.670(1). Communications between and among a quorum of members of a governing body convening on electronically linked personal computers are subject to the Public Meetings Law if the communications constitute a decision or deliberation toward a decision for which a quorum is required or the gathering of information relating to said deliberation.
- **Graphics:** Graphics are available from many sources. A variety of software packages allow users to create graphics ranging from the simple to complex. Scanners and video conversion hardware also allow for the direct input of images into electronic storage.
- **Multi-media:** Multimedia is a type of interactive record combining graphics, text, audio and video. Office software can also create records which combine elements of word processing, spreadsheet, database, presentation software and others.

Electronic Mail Policy And Procedure

Secretary of State Policy, Information Systems 05.01 Electronic Mail (E-Mail)

- (1) **PURPOSE:** Electronic mail is a Secretary of State resource and is provided as a business communications tool. All Agency electronic mail is a public record (ORS 192) and is subject to inspection and disclosure, and scheduled retention and disposition. Employees should have no expectation of privacy in their use of electronic mail.

- (2) RESPONSIBILITIES:
 - (a) Secretary of State: Implement, maintain and communicate to all employees an agency policy on electronic mail (E-mail) use.
 - (b) Division Directors: Develop division procedures as appropriate to implement the agency E-mail policy. These procedures should specify whether E-mail documents should be filed electronically or as paper; establish appropriate use of E-mail within the Secretary's policy; establish procedures, where applicable, for providing public access to electronic files and establish fees charged for requests; and monitor compliance with agency policy and division procedures.
 - (c) Information Systems Section: Support and maintain the E-mail system; provide routine backup and off-site storage of E-mail files for disaster recovery purposes only.
 - (d) All employees: Comply with agency policy and divisional procedures.
- (3) PRIVACY/PUBLIC ACCESS:
 - (a) The Secretary of State reserves the right to monitor E-mail messages and to access employee E-mail.
 - (b) No employee shall read E-mail received by another employee when there is no business purpose for doing so.
 - (c) No employee shall send E-mail under another employee's name without authorization.
 - (d) No employee shall change any portion of a previously sent E-mail message without authorization.
- (4) APPROPRIATE USE:
 - (a) E-mail shall be used for business matters directly related to the business activities of the Secretary of State and as a means to further the agency mission by providing services that are efficient, complete, accurate, and timely.
 - (b) E-mail shall not be used for personal gain, outside business activities, political activity, fundraising, or charitable activity not sponsored by the State of Oregon or the Secretary of State.
 - (c) E-mail shall not be used to promote discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, marital status, sex, political affiliation, religion, disability or sexual preference; promote sexual harassment; or to promote personal, political or religious business or beliefs.
- (5) FILING AND RETENTION:
 - (a) The Secretary of State's Policy is to provide for efficient retention of e-mail communications. E-mail communications are considered public records and retention and disposition of public records is authorized by retention schedules issued by the Archives Division.
 - (b) Divisions may retain e-mail in hard copy, electronically, or by a combination of these two means. Divisions are responsible for developing filing systems which include e-mail and are responsible for instructing employees on appropriate use of these systems.
 - (c) When appropriate, e-mail messages may be filed with program records and assume the same retention as the records they are filed with. When

e-mail records do not relate obviously or directly to a program, they may be filed as correspondence. When they are filed as correspondence, the retentions contained in OAR 166, Division 300 may be used.

- (d) Some e-mail systems enable users to enclose or attach records to messages. These enclosed or attached records need to be filed according to their function and content, and they will assume the retention of the records they are filed with.
- (6) Employees found to have violated any provision of this policy shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

ARCHIVES DIVISION: E-mail filing and disposition procedures.

Effective date: May 1, 1996

Applies to: All employees

Reference: Secretary of State Personnel Policy PRS 10.015

- (1) Filing: All E-mail communication other than “ephemeral correspondence” shall be printed and filed in accordance with procedures established by each unit for maintenance of its files.
- (2) Ephemeral correspondence may be deleted when read.
- (3) Communications received by means of subscription to Internet mailing list (listserv) shall not be considered public records under the terms of ORS 192.005(5) and/or 192.410(4) unless there is obvious cause to do so.

Electronic Records: Access And Privacy

Is Public Access Necessary? Under Oregon’s Public Records Law, the public is guaranteed the right to “inspect any public record of a public body in this state” except for those specifically exempted from disclosure by law. This also includes electronic records. In addition to being required by law, providing public access to electronic records is good common sense. The public has a right to access information that is generated by its government. Open government is fundamental to our democratic society – access to records ensures that government is accountable to its citizens. And finally, in many cases it is easier to answer public record requests for electronic records than it is to answer requests for paper records.

Types Of Access

- Copying electronic records is an easy way to provide access to them. Copies can be on a variety of media, including: floppy disk, magnetic tape, optical and compact disks, flash drive/stick or jump drive, computer-output microfilm (COM) and paper.
- Public access terminals can be provided to allow direct access to electronic public records. In some instances, agencies provide dedicated terminals for public use. In others, the public is granted a specified amount of time on an agency computer and must make arrangements to access the information.
- Dial-up access allows users to access information using a modem connection to a computer or computer network.

Access And The Law: Several statutes relate directly to the responsibilities of record custodians to provide access to electronic records.

ORS 192.430(1) **Functions of custodian of public records.** (1) The custodian of any public records, including public records maintained in machine readable or electronic form...shall furnish proper and reasonable opportunities for inspection and examination of the records in the office of the custodian and reasonable facilities for making memoranda or abstracts therefrom, during the usual business hours, to all persons having occasion to make examination of them. If the public record is maintained in machine readable or electronic form, the custodian shall furnish proper and reasonable opportunity to assure access.

ORS 192.440(2) **Certified copies of public records; fees.** If the public record is maintained in a machine readable or electronic form, the custodian shall provide copies of the public record in the form requested, if available. If the public record is not available in the form requested, it shall be made available in the form in which it is maintained.

ORS 192.440(3) The public body may establish fees reasonably calculated to reimburse it for its actual cost in making such records available including costs for summarizing, compiling or tailoring such record, either in organization or media, to meet the person's request.

Access And Privacy: Oregon does not have a general privacy law; it relies instead on statutes which exempt specific records and classes of records from disclosure. The Public Records Law (ORS 192) lists exempted records in 192.501 and 192.502. Other exemptions are found throughout the statutes.

Oregon's Public Records Law strongly favors open records. According to the Attorney General's Office "The guiding principle is: Exemptions do not prohibit disclosure."¹ In many instances this leaves the decision about disclosing information to the record custodian. Questions about disclosure should be referred to the city's legal counsel.

Separation Of Information: Exempt and non-exempt information should be separated if possible so that non-exempt information can be released to the requester. This can be done fairly simply with most electronic records, although information stored on CD-ROM and optical disks is difficult to separate.

Access And Security: By law records systems must be protected against intentional or accidental alteration and unauthorized access. These objectives are easily accomplished when access is provided by copying the information. On-line and public access terminals usually limit access through passwords and user ID's.

¹ For a full discussion of privacy and the Public Records Law, see *Attorney General's Public Records and Meetings Manual*, Oregon Department of Justice, September 15, 1997.

Electronic Storage Media

Media Types:

- *Digital Imaging* is the creation or conversion of documents into electronic images.
- *Floppy disk* is a magnetic information storage medium consisting of a circular polyester substrate coated on one or both sides with magnetic oxide and enclosed within a stiff envelope.
- *Flash drive, flash stick or jump drive* is a digital storage medium that is a 'plug & play' device, accessed through a USB port.
- *Hard disk* is a magnetic information storage medium consisting of several circular platters enclosed within a mechanism which brings the correct disk in contact with the disk drive's heads.
- *Magnetic tape* is an information storage medium consisting of a magnetic coating on a flexible backing in tape form. Magnetic tape can be stored on reels or on cassettes.
- *Optical disk* is a non-contact, random-access disk tracked by optical laser beams and used for mass storage and retrieval of digitized text and graphics. It is sometimes called an optical digital disk or optical digital data disk. CD-RW are erasable optical disks that use a surface which can be melted and repitted, allowing the medium to be re-used.
- *Videodisk* and *videotape* record and store video and/or audio as analog signals.
- *Computer output microfilm (COM)* is computer output produced directly onto microfilm/microfiche without paper printout as an intermediary.

*NOTE: To prevent technological obsolescence and avoid loss of data stored on electronic media devices, it is **imperative** that a migration plan be developed so that information is accessible throughout the life of the record.*

Selecting Storage: The following items should be considered when selecting storage media:

- *Access.* Records custodians must provide access to electronic records (see [Access and Privacy](#)) on page 37. Retrieving specific pieces of information from some storage media is easier than from others. Generally, retrieval is slower and more difficult from analog media (paper or microfilm) than it is from digital media. As a rule, if records are accessed with any frequency, they should be stored on digital media or on-line storage.
- *Cost.* Cost of storage media involves more than just dollar-to-megabyte ratios. Other costs are personnel, special environmental costs for storage locations, special equipment costs to house storage media (like racks for hanging tapes), lease costs of storage floor space, and any conversion costs for moving information to the storage medium.
- *Legality.* Paper and microfilm are recognized by all courts as acceptable sources of evidence. In most cases, electronic records can also be admitted in court as evidence. This applies even to records which are only maintained in electronic form. Electronic records can be admitted in court as hard copy output, on-screen output, COM output, or as a summary. Certain system precautions should be

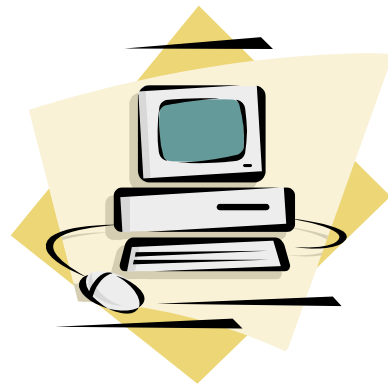
taken, however. Electronic record systems must be able to track and verify the date of a “record”, the date(s) of any alterations, and the authority for creating or altering a record. In many cases systems experts will probably be required to verify the accuracy of computer records introduced as evidence.

- *Longevity.* Some media are more prone to data loss and degradation than others. Paper and silver halide microforms are by far the most stable and long-lived media for data storage. Information stored in these media, however, may lack some of the special features of electronic records, such as searchability. The life-span of electronic storage media range from roughly five years for videotape to ten-plus years for optical disks. The State Archives recommends that electronic records be stored in hard copy as well if they will be needed for a longer period of time than the proven life-span of the electronic storage media.

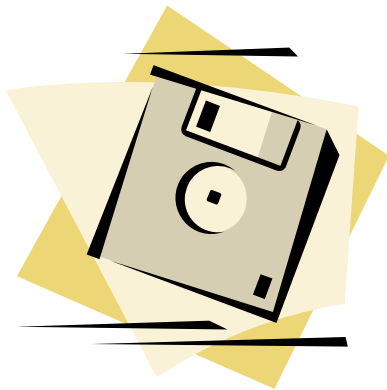
Selected Electronic Storage Media



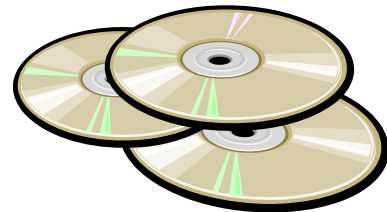
Pre-Electronic High Density Storage Unit



PC Hard Drive and External Hard Drives



3.5" Floppy Disk



CD's/DVD's



Jump Drive/Flash Drive/Flash Stick

Storage Standards: Storage areas for electronic records should maintain a constant temperature between 62°F and 68°F and a constant relative humidity between 35% and 45%. Magnetic tapes should be rewound annually. Any records which have been maintained on magnetic tape or optical disk for ten years should be copied onto new tapes or disks. Tape containers and disks should be labeled. Tapes and disks should be stored in vertical position and kept away from strong electrical and magnetic fields. No unauthorized person should have access to electronic records. Prohibit eating or drinking in the storage room.

Electronic Mail

What is Electronic Mail? The term “electronic mail” or “e-mail” refers to a communication tool and also to the files produced by such communication. Managing the public information transmitted and stored in an e-mail system can be challenging due to the eclectic nature of e-mail (phone messages, calendars, leave slips, notes, letters, memos, and attachments sent routinely through e-mail systems).

Is E-mail A Public Record? Under Oregon’s public records law e-mail messages can be public records. The definition of public records in ORS 192.005 includes any “document, book, paper, photograph, file, sound recording, machine readable electronic record or other material...regardless of physical form or characteristics, made, received, filed or recorded in pursuance of law or in connection with the transaction of public business...”

For further information, refer to the Oregon State Archives’ E-mail Frequently Asked Questions page: <http://arcweb.sos.state.or.us/banners/recmgmt.htm>

Access and Privacy: E-mail records, like other public records, must be available, upon request, to any member of the public unless the record is exempt by law from disclosure. For more information on this subject see [Electronic Records: Access and Privacy](#) on page 36.

Retention: E-mail that constitutes a public record should be identified, managed, protected, and retained as long as needed to meet the administrative, legal, financial, and historical needs of the city. Records needed to support program functions should be retained, managed, and made accessible in a separate filing system in accordance with the appropriate program unit’s standard filing practices. Users should:

- Delete e-mail records after they have been filed in a record keeping system.
- Delete records of transitory or little value that do not document agency activity.

Examples of messages sent by e-mail that typically are public records include:

- Policies and directives
- Correspondence or memoranda related to official business
- Work schedules and assignments
- Agendas and minutes of meetings

- Drafts of documents that are circulated for comment or approval
- Any document that initiates, authorizes, or completes a business transaction
- Final reports or recommendations

Examples of messages that typically do not constitute a public record are:

- Personal messages or announcements
- Copies or excerpts of documents distributed for convenience or reference
- Announcements of social events
- Messages received via a listserv
- Spam

As with other records, retention periods for e-mail records are based on their administrative, legal, fiscal, and historical value. E-mail itself is not considered a record series. E-mail is simply a medium that creates and transmits records that have retention periods. Public business is subject to the same laws, regardless of whether it is in a paper filing system or an e-mail system. Before the retention period of an e-mail message can be identified, its content must be examined to determine the type of record and which records series it falls under. In other words, each e-mail message must be categorized and retained according to its content, rather than simply lumped in with all other e-mail messages. E-mail should be retained in accordance with written retention policy and rules (see [Chapter 2 - Policies](#) on page 3). Following these retention rules will protect both employees and the organization.

Because an e-mail message may be filed in multiple records series, users should identify any and all records series it belongs to. An e-mail message will generally have the same retention period as records in other formats that are related to the same program or function. For example, e-mail relating to an agency's budget submission would be handled and retained as a paper printout of an agency budget document.

Storage: Both retention and access must be considered when storing e-mail records. The storage media must have a life span sufficient to insure the retention of e-mail records for as long as they are valuable to the agency using them. Records officers, program managers, and systems managers should establish indexing standards for providing access to stored e-mail records. (See [Electronic Records: Access and Privacy](#) on page 36 and [Electronic Records: Storage Media](#) on page 37.)

E-Mail and Standards: Standards impact the use and form of e-mail records. Records officers should assist in the procurement and/or planning of e-mail systems to insure that record requirements are met.

For More Information: For information about e-mail records retention, record storage, and record access, contact the [Secretary of State, Archives Division](#), (503) 373-0701. For information about e-mail hardware and software standards, contact: [Department of Administrative Services, Information Resources Management Division](#).

Legality Of Electronic Records

Electronic records are increasingly used as the sole means of documenting public agencies' activities. As such, they are often the only evidence available in court cases involving public agencies. As previously mentioned, electronic records are admissible in court as evidence. The keys to using electronic records as evidence in court are identifying electronic records and verifying their authenticity.

Identification of Electronic Records: Identifying electronic records can be confusing. One solution has been to simply expand the existing definition of record to include electronic or "machine-readable" records. Oregon defines a public record as

"...a document, book, paper, photograph, file, sound recording, machine readable electronic record or other material, such as court files, mortgage and deed records, regardless of physical form or characteristics, made received, filed, or recorded in pursuance of law or in connection with the transaction of public business, whether or not confidential or restricted in use."

An alternative definition is:

Information which is part of a transaction, called a record transaction, which takes place whenever information is communicated to a person or to a store of information available to more than one person.

Two aspects of this definition merit special consideration. First, under this definition, any electronic activity which documents an official transaction is a record. Second, management policy which is concerned with accountability must define what an official transaction is. Agency records officers, program managers, and systems managers must define what constitutes an official transaction.

Authenticity of Electronic Records: Electronic records are easily duplicated, distributed and altered. Electronic records systems must be able to track the dates a record was created or modified, the dates of any alterations, and the authority for creating or altering a record. In many cases system experts will be required to verify the accuracy of computer records introduced as evidence. The only sure way to insure the authenticity, and by extension the legality, of electronic records is to insure that the systems which create electronic records can:

- Document that similar kinds of records generated and stored electronically are created by the same process each time and have a standardized retrieval approach;
- Document that security procedures prevent unauthorized modification of a record and ensure system protection against problems such as power interruptions;
- If vital records are kept in electronic form, document the vital records procedures, including a description of the informational content of the various generations, i.e., the originals and copies of vital records;
- Identify the electronic media on which records are stored throughout their life cycle, the maximum time span that records remain on each storage medium, and the approved retention period of all records; and

- Coordinate all of the above with records officers, program managers, systems managers, and legal counsel.

For More Information in identifying electronic records, contact the [Oregon State Archives](#), 800 Summer Street NE, Salem, OR 97310; (503)373-0701. For assistance in determining the legality of specific electronic records, contact either the [Office of the Attorney General](#) or the city attorney.

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CITY RECORDS MANAGEMENT MANUAL

CHAPTER 12

ELECTRONIC IMAGING

Refer to the following statutes and regulations regarding storage of public records on optical disks.

Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS 192.050)

Copying records; evidentiary effect. A state agency or political subdivision may, with the approval of the proper budgetary authority, cause any public records in its official custody to be photocopied or captured by digital imaging system as in the case of original filings or recordings or recorded by means of analog or digital audio and video tape technology. Each photocopy, digital image and analog or digital audio and video tape shall be made in accordance with the appropriate standard as determined by the State Archivist. Every such reproduction shall be deemed an original; and a transcript, exemplification or certified copy of any such reproduction shall be deemed a transcript, exemplification or certified copy, as the case may be, of the original. [Amended by 1961 c.160 §6; 1991 c.671 §4] <<http://www.leg.state.or.us/ors/192.html>>

Oregon Revised Statutes 192.060

Indexing and filing copied records. All photocopies, digital images and analog or digital audio and video tapes made under ORS 192.040 and 192.050 shall be properly indexed and placed in conveniently accessible files.
<<http://www.leg.state.or.us/ors/192.html>>

Oregon Administrative Rule 166-017-0050

Storage Requirements

- (1) The following standards apply to the storage of optical disks containing public records:
 - (a) Environmental conditions for the operation, maintenance, and storage of digital imaging system equipment and storage media shall meet or exceed manufacturer's specifications;
 - (b) Digital imaging system equipment shall be maintained in proper working condition. Manufacturers' guidelines for preventive maintenance shall be followed, and defective equipment shall not be used.
- (2) In addition to the standards in section (1) of this rule, the following standards apply to the long-term storage of information on optical disk:
 - (a) Digital images shall be recorded and stored by means of a technology that does not allow their subsequent revision or replacement;

- (b) The optical disk substrate shall be either polycarbonate or tempered glass;
- (c) Only optical disks with a 20 year life expectancy based on accelerated aging tests linked to specific disk locations may be used;
- (d) Digital imaging system storage media shall be inspected annually. This inspection should include visual examination of the medium and its housing, followed by the retrieval or playback of recorded information. Documentation describing each inspection shall be maintained for each digital imaging system and shall include the date of inspection, name of inspector(s), storage media inspected, and sample size (if applicable).
<http://arcweb.sos.state.or.us/rules/OARS_100/OAR_166/166_017.html>

Administrative Rule (OAR 166-017-0080(1)(2))

Retention Period

- (1) Public records with a scheduled retention period of less than 100 years may be stored on optical disk devices. The original record may be disposed of following verification of acceptable optical image quality. Images stored on optical disks shall be copied onto new optical disks after no more than ten years. Images must be recopied until the retention period of the original public records has been satisfied.
- (2) Public records with a scheduled retention period of 100 years or more may be stored on optical disk devices provided that the original records are retained in hard copy or on microfilm for the entire scheduled retention period.

Standards

The City of Salem/Marion County Data Center has conducted extensive research into the industry. The amount of data that can be stored on disks ranges from 120 megabytes to 1.2 gigabytes. Since there are no standards between vendors, and in many cases, disks manufactured in the past cannot be “read” on their own current equipment, optical disk technology resembles personal computer technology a few years ago. Therefore, until standards are established by the State Archivist and by the vendors themselves, agencies who purchase and use optical disk systems for records storage are on their own – both in choosing systems and when challenged by the courts where optical disk storage has replaced the paper copy before the minimum retention was met.

Administrative Rule (OAR 166-030-0070)

Microfilming: Microfilming may be substituted for any paper or machine readable records if it is made according to the following conditions:

- (1) A security copy of microfilm of public record which has a required minimum retention period of 100 years or longer must be made and stored in accordance with OAR 166-025-0005 to 166-025-0030. A security copy must be reserved and used solely as a backup security copy or as a master for making working copy duplicate film when required.
- (2) Working copies of microfilm, and microfilm of public records with a minimum retention of less than 100 years, may be made in accordance with agency standards and requirements for the retention of the public records, including

the option of using any film, processing system, or storage containers the agency may select.

Additional information may be obtained regarding State Archives and Records Management from the State of Oregon web site at <http://arcweb.sos.state.or.us>.

Available Technologies

- Basic microfilm 16 mm and 35 mm
- Fiche type microforms
- Aperture cards
- CAR Systems
- Optical Disk Storage
- Bar Code Indexing
- COM (computer output microfilm)
- COLD (computer output to laser disk)

Microfilming Services

The Oregon State Archives does not furnish microfilming services, but will furnish a list of companies who sell microfilming equipment and/or provide microfilming services.

Micrographics

Micrographics refers to a series of activities which record reduced images of documents, called microimages, onto fine grain, high resolution photographic film in a manner that ensures their reproduction, retrieval, and preservation.

There are two broad types of micrographic processes:

1. Source document microfilm systems in which micro-images are produced on film by photographing paper records.
2. Computer output microfilm, or COM systems, in which micro-images are produced on film from digitally encoded data.

Types of Microfilm

Silver halide, diazo and vesicular are the three most popular types of film used in micrographics. Silver halide film is generally used as the original camera film (the film loaded into the camera at the time of photography). Diazo and vesicular film are normally used for producing duplicates of the silver halide camera film. Since diazo and vesicular films deteriorate rapidly, they are inappropriate for the long-term storage of microimages.

- **Silver Halide Film** is the only film used as camera film. Silver halide film requires wet chemical processing and produces a reversed or “negative” image (white characters on a dark background). The characteristics and quality of the final image may be controlled by the exposure and subsequent processing of the film.

Silver halide film is suitable for the preservation of permanent records, and with proper processing and storage, it is acceptable for long-term or archival storage. The film may also be used for creating duplicates of the camera film. Duplicates can be made either in the “negative” image or in a “positive” image (dark characters on a white background), using silver halide film. Silver halide film is expensive, however, and it is usually more economical to use either diazo or vesicular film for duplication.

- **Diazo Film** is used exclusively for duplicate printing and is not made to be used as a camera film. Diazo film is a “sign maintaining” film, which means a negative master will produce a negative copy and a positive master will produce a positive master. The film is exposed by putting the camera (silver halide) film’s emulsion side in contact with the unexposed diazo film stock. The films are then exposed to a strong ultraviolet light source. Diazo film is developed in an ammonia chamber, in which diazonium salts and azo dyes react to form either a white or colorless character against a colored (dyed) background or a colored character against a white or colorless background, depending on the polarity of the original camera film.

Diazo film is inexpensive, and its ease of use and fast duplicating speed make it ideal for high volume or routine duplicating of camera film. Its characteristics make it unacceptable for long term or archival storage. It should never be used as a back-up or security copy.

- **Vesicular Film**, like diazo film, contains diazonium salts, but is not coupled with dye compounds to create an image. Rather, the diazonium salts decompose under ultraviolet light, releasing nitrogen gas in the film base. The ultraviolet light passing through the camera film creates a latent image on the vesicular film during exposure. In film exposure process, the nitrogen released during the exposure bubbles where the ultraviolet light has penetrated the film base. These bubbles, or “vesicles”, become rigid when the film cools and create the final image. The vesicles reflect rather than absorb light. Therefore, vesicular film is a “sign reversing” film, producing a positive duplicate from a negative master and vice versa.

The film’s sensitivity to light and sign reversing characteristic make it particularly well suited for fast, on line duplication of computer output microfilm. It is comparable in price to diazo film, and like diazo film, it is inappropriate for long term or archival storage.

Microforms

Microform is the generic term referring to the various formats that microfilm takes. The specific microform contains the microfilm image. Microforms come in non-perforated stock to allow maximum use of all film area. Film is generally available in widths of 16 and 35 millimeters.

Microforms generally fall into one of two broad categories: roll microfilm or unitized microfilm.

- **Roll Microfilm** is simply a length of microfilm rolled onto a spool. The length may contain images laid out in a “cine oriented” manner or in a “comic oriented” manner. Roll film is usually 100 or 125 feet in length (although 200 foot film is not uncommon) and may be either 16mm or 35mm in width.

Roll microfilm may be placed in cassettes or cartridges to eliminate manual threading of film and to protect against dust, dirt, and fingerprints. Due to the proprietary nature of most cartridge or cassette retrieval systems, however, they are not recommended for long-term or archival storage of roll film.

- **Unitized Microfilm** formats are those that contain discrete units of information. The “unit” may be a single document or a series of documents relating to a single case or report. Although there are some variations, unitized microforms fall into three main categories.

- **Microfiche:** A 105mm by 148mm sheet of microfilm which contains microimages permanently arranged in a grid pattern. A header is contained at the top of the sheet for eye-readable (no magnification required) identification of the images. The headers may be color or digitally coded. Microfiche is particularly appropriate for case file report applications which do not require updating.

A variation on standard microfiche is Computer Output Microfiche (COM Fiche). In a typical COM application, digital information is projected on a cathode ray tube and then photographed or digitally encoded information is written directly onto film using a heliumneon (He-Ne) laser. The physical format of the COM Fiche is otherwise identical to source document microfiche.

- **Jackets:** Similar to microfiche, jackets are a 105mm by 148mm unitized carrier with sleeves into which single images may be arranged in a grid pattern. Either 35mm or 16mm images may be used. As with microfiche sheets, jackets may have eye-readable and/or color coded headers. The ability to rearrange images within the jacket or add subsequent images to the jacket make this format particularly well suited for case file applications which require occasional updating.
- **Aperture Cards:** Opaque cards with openings to allow one image, usually 35mm or 70mm, to be inserted or mounted. The card itself affords the opportunity to present indexing, descriptive or other textual information in an eye-readable format to facilitate retrieval or understanding of the image. Aperture cards are commonly used for large documents which require extremely high resolution and a low reduction ratio, such as engineering

drawings, maps, and charts. The State Archives does not recommend their use as a permanent storage medium.

A variation of the aperture card, the camera card, has raw film stock pre-inserted in the card itself. Despite its ease of use, the proprietary nature of this technology makes it inappropriate for long-term permanent storage.

Decision Making

The decision to convert records to microfilm should be based on the size of the city, amount of records, available storage space and available finances. Cost comparisons of the microform options should be based on records volume and storage space.

For Assistance Check With:

- [The State Archivist: http://www.sos.state.or.us/archives/reference.htm](http://www.sos.state.or.us/archives/reference.htm)
- The local library
- [The International Institute of Municipal Clerks \(IIMC\): http://www.iimc.com/](http://www.iimc.com/)
- [The Oregon Association of Municipal Recordors \(OAMR\): http://www.oamr.org](http://www.oamr.org)
- Other cities and counties that have already microfilmed their records:
 - Beaverton
 - Clackamas County
 - Eugene
 - Forest Grove
 - Lake Oswego
 - Lane County
 - Newberg
 - Redmond
 - Tigard
 - Troutdale
 - Wilsonville

CITY RECORDS MANAGEMENT MANUAL

CHAPTER 13

RECORDS DISASTER PLANNING

City records are a valuable resource requiring protection. They can be protected at very reasonable cost compared with the cost of disaster recovery. Major disasters may be unpredictable and beyond immediate control; however, many disasters can be prevented or their effects minimized.

Taking the following measures to protect city records and information will improve chances of surviving and recovering from a records disaster:

- Identify and protect vital records
- Develop a plan and procedures for guidance during and following a records disaster
- Train the staff in emergency procedures
- Test and exercise the plan and procedures periodically

What Is A Records Disaster?

A records disaster is a sudden and unexpected event which results in loss of records or information essential to an organization's continued operation. A records disaster plan will facilitate record replacement or reconstruction and quick, efficient resumption of normal business operations in the event of sudden and unexpected loss of records or information. Every city's records management program should include procedures designed to prevent a catastrophic event involving its records. Types of disasters include: fire, windstorm, flood, earthquake, vandalism, loss, theft, hacker attacks, and equipment failure. Subtler but still damaging types of records disasters include: leaking pipes, mold, insects, and rodents.

Consider these examples:

- **Example 1:** A broken storm-drain pipe at the University of Oregon Science Library leaked water into an area storing irreplaceable materials. The pipe was broken by vibrations from building construction next door. Two days later another leak, this time in the basement wall, damaged more library materials. (July 1987)
- **Example 2:** About 5:30 p.m. an employee smelled smoke in a state office building. After a half-hour search, a heated hot plate with papers stacked on top was found. (September 1990)
- **Example 3:** A fire at North Salem High School destroyed Student Records. (February 1990)

Consequences

The examples yielded these consequences:

- **Example 1:** One hundred seventy-seven research journals and over three hundred other volumes were soaked with water. Thousands of books had to be quickly moved to safety. Soaked materials were frozen and taken to Oregon Freeze Dry Foods in Albany where the moisture was removed.
- **Example 2:** The stack of papers was badly scorched but did not catch fire. The damage would have been much worse if the alert employee had not reported the incident.
- **Example 3:** Some paper records were destroyed, but the information was reconstructed from computer files and teacher grade books.

Being unprepared when disaster strikes has significant and expensive consequences. Information or records could be lost or destroyed which:

- Protect and document the city's legal rights or interests
- Protect and document the rights or obligations of citizens
- Are needed to conduct emergency operations during a disaster
- Are needed to resume operations after a disaster

What Can Be Done To Prepare?

A records disaster program is an integral part of every records management program and should include procedures designed to prevent a records disaster. The costs of re-establishing operations in the aftermath of a disaster will far exceed the costs of advance preparation.

What Is A Records Disaster Plan?

A records disaster plan is a written, implemented, and periodically tested program to identify, protect, and recover a city's vital records, and to restore normal operations following a disaster.

What Are The Benefits Of A Records Disaster Plan?

Improved protection of important assets: By identifying, protecting, and if necessary, salvaging/reconstructing the city's vital records, a records disaster plan assures continued operation despite hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, fires, strikes, etc.

Reduced insurance costs: Insurance premiums are based on risk. Savings on insurance premiums may be possible if reduced risk can be shown through an effective comprehensive records disaster plan. Risk management and prevention are less expensive than paying for recovery in the wake of a disaster.

Improved security: A records disaster plan provides improved procedures to protect city records, information, facilities and people.

Improved general management: Preparing a records disaster plan will bring priorities into perspective and help management focus on the most important aspects of the city's mission. Disaster planning can create an atmosphere of confidence because the public will be assured that reasonable precautions have been taken to insure against disaster.

Improved records and information management: This planning process can be an opportunity to make management aware of the need for more attention and emphasis on records and information as important city resources to be protected throughout their life cycles. The plan will require a records retention schedule and a comprehensive vital records program.

Increased ability to act decisively in crisis situations: The shock of a major disaster situation typically causes confusion, fear, and ineffectiveness. Disaster planning exercises provide a training ground for staff and test performance during a simulated disaster.

What Will It Cost?

The tangible and intangible benefits of a records disaster plan are numerous, but they do not come without expense and effort such as:

- Staff time to prepare and implement a records disaster plan and to keep it current
- Possible building/equipment modifications or repairs to reduce danger or limit the consequences of disaster
- Possible upgrading of security and insurance programs
- Costs of preparing records retention schedules and vital records procedures
- Possible off-site storage or microfilming costs
- Purchase of disaster supplies and equipment
- Possible contracts or agreements for specific related services such as a computer back-up site or freeze drying of water damaged records
- Training in safety, records security, records salvage and reconstruction, and general crisis management

These costs must be compared with the potential for huge expenses that can be anticipated from a major disaster.

Many elements of a records disaster program are already in place in most cities, such as insurance programs, building and information security and off-site security storage of microfilmed records and computer tapes. A complete plan, however, will review, coordinate and improve existing elements resulting in a comprehensive, cost-effective program. A Records Disaster Plan will help integrate and manage the city's records and information resources.

What Is Involved In A Records Disaster Program?

Each city's records disaster program must be tailored to its own mission, governmental structure, and resources. It should provide reasonable measures to deal with probable risks and be periodically tested and updated. The basic components of a records disaster program are:

- Prevention / Protection
- Vital Records
- Recovery

Prevention/Protection: Prevention is much cheaper and simpler than trying to recover or replace damaged or destroyed records. Most disaster prevention and protection involves straightforward, low cost, common-sense measures such as these:

- Issue a clear policy statement from management initiating the records disaster program and announcing its objectives.
- Establish responsibility and authority by assigning a staff member to implement and manage the program and prepare a disaster plan. Ideally this should be the city records officer. A team composed of representatives from all departments could be formed to assist the records officer.
- Identify, control and protect vital records.
- Survey the potential hazards to records correcting as many as possible in cooperation with the building manager. Examples: roof, basement storage, wiring, heating systems, plumbing, unauthorized access, and theft.
- Make sure insurance coverage is appropriate.
- Contact risk manager, police department and fire department.
- Arrange for help from disaster recovery vendors.
- Assemble and pre-position disaster recovery equipment and supplies.
- Train disaster team members and other employees.
- Periodically test and evaluate the plan and procedures.

Vital Records: Records that contain the information needed to continue or re-establish a city's operation following a disaster.

The basic elements of a vital records program are:

- Identify the vital records needing protection
 - Inventory all city records
 - Classify records according to relative value and essential city functions
- Assess the risks
 - Dangers to specific records
- Protective measures
 - Duplication for dispersal
 - Off-site or remote storage
 - On-site secure storage

A city with a vital records program is better equipped to cope with disasters. A well developed records disaster plan will improve ability to cope with most disasters.

Disaster Recovery: Imagine trying to conduct business without records – including electronic records. Imagine the cost of trying to replace those records or reconstructing the information from other resources. Or worse yet – recreating them from scratch.

Disaster recovery is the process of resuming normal operations following a disaster. Some disasters, such as earthquakes or floods are not preventable. However, if vital records are properly protected before, during, and after the disaster, salvage and recovery will be easier and cheaper.

An effective recovery plan will help impose order in the stressful and chaotic conditions which typically accompany a disaster. It will allow critical decisions to be made in advance. Rapid recovery will promote customer satisfaction and maintain public confidence.

Steps to Recovering After a Records Disaster:

- Establish priorities for restoring city functions.
- Identify priorities for salvaging records.
- Develop a disaster recovery plan with:
 - Quick reaction checklists,
 - Alternate operating locations,
 - Inventory of records and equipment,
 - Supplies and equipment in a safe place, ready to use; and
 - Contracts / agreements with disaster recovery agencies and firms.
- Train disaster recovery team and staff.
- Test and revise the plan and procedures.

What Is The Planning Process?

The planning and implementation process will enable quick and efficient resumption of normal business after a disaster.

Prevention and recovery can be planned concurrently and integrated into a single plan. Following are some general elements and several specialized elements.

General Elements:

- **Policy Statement:** A records disaster recovery plan is a management function. The planning process must have clear, direct authority from top management in the form of a statement spelling out specific goals and objectives. The goal is to specify what the plan will accomplish and inform all staff of what is expected of them.
- **Activation Authority:** The plan must authorize specific staff members to initiate the plan and under what conditions. A disaster to one may only be a nuisance to another.
- **Continuity of Authority:** The plan should include a clear statement of the lines of authority which will be in effect during a crisis and list the staff members responsible for managing the crisis situation and making decisions based on the disaster plan and the current situation.

- **Task Organization and Assignment:** The plan must spell out specific duties. For example, it should assign staff members to action and recovery teams and list the responsibilities of each team.
- **Notification Procedures:** The plan should include procedures for contacting team members, support agencies, and other resources such as vendors, suppliers and consultants. Emergency contact lists should include contact information for each individual.
- **A City Spokesman:** The plan should designate one staff member to keep the media and employees informed about the disaster and the recovery efforts. The media and the public will judge a city's effectiveness and credibility by this.

Specialized Elements:

- **Priority List of Essential Functions to Restore:** The plan should include a guideline concerning the priority order in which functions should be restored following a disaster. This guideline will be the result of a management review of functions as they pertain to the primary mission. This review would logically occur during identification of vital records.
- **A Current Records Inventory, Including Vital Records:** This inventory will be necessary to help restore essential functions. The list should include record series name, storage media, and location, and guide the recovery team to quick identification of records to save or destroy.
- **Blueprints and Building Plans:** These may be very useful during plan development as hazards and risks to city records are reduced or eliminated. Note the locations of utility connections and how to shut off gas, water and electricity. Knowing the routes of plumbing and drains, locations of electrical switches, circuit breakers and alarms will allow more effective planning. Hazardous materials are also of concern. Blueprints, plans and drawings can provide an accurate picture of access routes, records and equipment locations. This knowledge will assist the recovery team in assessing the damage and restoring city operations.
- **Alternate Operation Location Information:** If alternate locations are needed to restore city operations, they should be clearly identified in the plan. Emergency operations and disaster recovery plans should be outlined in a way that guides the recovery team, reduces confusion and facilitates recovery and restoration.

If the city needs the ability to restore information processing immediately, formal arrangements may be necessary for a hot site or cold site. A hot site is a fully configured computer center with equipment installed and ready to operate. A cold site is a computer site or room that is set up and ready for equipment to be installed and immediately begin operations.

A Current Inventory of Information Processing and Communications Equipment: This will help restore computer operations if replacement equipment is needed. The inventory should list specific information, such as manufacturer, vendor, equipment model, date purchased, serial number, modifications and applications.

Contracts or Agreements with Disaster Support Agencies/Firms: Documentation of all support resources should be a part of the plan. Copies of contracts and agreements for support, salvage, reconstruction, alternate sites, and vendors should be kept with the plan. Informal agreements with civil support agencies such as police and fire department should also be included.

A List of Disaster Recovery and Salvage Equipment and Supplies: A disaster kit should be assembled and should contain the equipment and supplies needed to respond to and recover from a disaster. It should be stored off-site to insure that it will be available. An inventory of the contents should be included in the plan.

A List of Additional Recovery Resources: Include contact information for local fire, police, civil defense, ambulance service, disaster response agencies, professional consultants, and vendors. Specific types of support which may be needed include freezer space and/or freeze drying service and document restoration.

For more detailed instruction and guidance, refer to [Public Records: A Manual for Creating A Disaster Preparedness And Recovery Plan](http://arcweb.sos.state.or.us/recmgmt/train/dp/disastermanual.pdf) at: <http://arcweb.sos.state.or.us/recmgmt/train/dp/disastermanual.pdf> .

Recovering From A Water Disaster:

Water can get into records in a variety of ways: leaking roofs, pipes, and basements, sewer backup and fire extinguishing. Some factors to consider during recovery from disasters in which records have been damaged by water are:

- **Paper Records:** Speed and organization are critical. Within 24 hours, paper will stick together and ink may run. Wet paper records can begin to mold within 48 hours. After five days wet paper begins the irreversible process of breaking down chemically and physically.

As soon as possible, find out the linear or cubic footage of paper and other records which will need to be dried. Non-vital records are most likely not worth the cost to dry and restore. Remove disposable and replaceable records as soon as practical; this will lower the humidity in the damage area. Keep an inventory for insurance and replacement purposes.

Freeze wet paper records as soon as possible. Blast freezing is the best but normal freezing is acceptable. Once frozen, they are safe from deterioration but still must be dried. Freeze drying and vacuum drying, the quickest and most effective, are usually the most expensive.

Paper records may be air dried if staff, time and space are available. Air drying may work well for small amounts but does not work for coated (slick) paper. Air dried paper may still need to be treated for mold.

- **Microfilm and Photos:** If silver microfilm is allowed to dry on the reels, it will stick together in a solid mass. The gelatin on all emulsion films will break down and stick together. Color photos will fade. Fungus will destroy images on all types of film. Keep microfilm and photos submerged in water until professional help can be retained. Do not freeze wet film or prints.
- **Electronic Media:** Magnetic media is more sensitive to heat and water than paper records. Water damaged magnetic media can be frozen and vacuum dried and then professionally cleaned. Freezing should be done within 48 hours. Isolate wet tapes from other tapes.

SUMMARY

Disaster recovery is the process of resuming business following a disaster. Being unprepared for a records disaster can be expensive and have a significant impact on business operations. The proper protection of vital records before, during, and after a disaster will greatly simplify salvage and recovery operations.

An effective records disaster plan allows critical decisions in advance, before that unexpected event. The basic elements of the plan are; prevention and protection, vital records, and recovery. The benefits of a records disaster plan include improved protection of valuable assets and improved records and information management. The costs of developing and implementing a plan must be balanced against potential losses which would result from a disaster.

The process of developing, implementing, and testing the plan will focus attention on mission priorities, increase awareness of basic disaster prevention and recovery methods and increase confidence in the efficiency of the city's operations.

CITY RECORDS MANAGEMENT MANUAL

CHAPTER 14

VITAL RECORDS

What Are Vital Records?

Vital records are irreplaceable records necessary to perform the city's primary mission. They document the city's legal and fiscal rights and obligations as well as the rights of citizens. Because vital records are irreplaceable, they require additional levels of protection and a solid backup plan. A solid vital records program ensures that only the truly vital records and information receive special protection. Direction and support must be provided by top management. Each city should have a records officer who has authority to coordinate a city-wide records management program.

Importance Of A Vital Records Program

A vital records program is a cost-effective way to control the risk of loss to one of the city's most valuable assets. An effective vital records program will allow the city to function with a minimum of difficulty following a disaster.

A vital records program can:

- Reduce vulnerability to litigation
- Limit exposure to unplanned expenses due to disaster
- Avoid loss of revenue or sudden loss of efficiency
- Prevent an interruption in customer service or shutdown of the city government operations

Establishing A Vital Records Program

A vital records program is a critical element and an integral part of a comprehensive records management system.

The vital records program must be approached from a corporate perspective to insure that truly vital records and information receive special protection. Direction and support must be provided by top management. The city records officer is in an ideal position to assume responsibility for the program, having both a city perspective and a knowledge of city records. With the support of city management the records officer can develop a program which protects the interests of the city and is effective and easy to manage. Program managers should be given responsibility for protecting vital records in their program area.

There are three basic elements of a vital records program:

- Identifying the vital records
- Assessing the risks
- Taking protective measures

This chapter will explain how to perform each of these three steps.

Identifying Vital Records: Refer to the [City Records Retention Schedule](#) to help identify vital records. A common rule of thumb is that roughly 5 to 10 percent of a city's records are considered vital. Vital records are **not** the same as historical records. They **do not** include records which, although important, are replaceable at reasonable expense. Vital records are one of the city's most important resources.

Top management should identify the city's essential functions and the specific records which would be needed to continue or re-establish those essential functions during and following a disaster. Essential functions are those that are critical to the organization's primary mission. Vital records are those records which the city must have to perform the critical elements of its primary mission. This process should produce a vital records master list.

This assessment must be as objective as possible. The records officer and program managers must coordinate with all areas of the city to determine who has the record copy of vital records and who has copies. Close coordination can eliminate useless duplication.

Levels of value may be graded as follows:

1. Non-essential Records. Loss of these records would present no obstacle to restoring city operation.
2. Useful Records. Loss of these records might cause some inconvenience but they could be easily replaced. Loss does not present a real obstacle to restoring city operations.
3. Important Records. These are replaceable, but at great expense. Loss presents aggravating but surmountable obstacles to resumption of operations.
4. Vital Records. These records are irreplaceable. Without these records the city cannot continue operations.

The process of identifying and protecting the city's vital records will require extensive and ongoing cooperation among management and staff. The success of the program depends on the combined judgment and foresight of top management, program managers and records management. The resulting master list of vital records should be reviewed by the city's legal counsel and auditors.

Assessing The Risks: A vital records program is a form of insurance. Risk management is a way to control and minimize risks. Risks and hazards to records cannot be eliminated, but better decisions can be made before a disaster than during one. Protecting vital records will involve implementation and maintenance costs, but these costs must be compared with the costs of recovery from a disaster.

Costs will vary greatly depending on the city mission, location, and type of records. For the program to be cost effective the consequences of losing certain records must outweigh the costs of protecting and preserving them. Certain records can be replaced for less than it would cost to preserve the originals.

Risk assessment should examine the following areas:

- **Environmental risks** include nature and weather related factors such as earthquakes, floods, windstorms, and humidity. Building related risks include plumbing, wiring, inadequate alarm systems, heating/air conditioning systems and leaking roofs. Other environmental dangers include mold, insects and animals.
- **Technical risks** are hazards to computer systems and records from power surges, static electricity, improper grounding or poor virus protection. Other problems could be unauthorized access, inadvertent deletion of data, files not backed-up, improper storage for disks/tapes and incomplete software documentation.
- **Security risks** include building access, records access, keys, locks, identity theft, alarms and improper destruction of confidential records.

By identifying and reducing risks to records, the city will be better positioned to resume business operations in case of a disaster. Once the vital records are identified and the various risks analyzed and minimized, economical and effective methods of protection should be decided upon.

An effective vital records program will increase the likelihood that the city will be able to function with a minimum of difficulty following a disaster.

Protective Measures: The three most common methods of protecting vital records are:

- **Duplication And Dispersal:** Duplication may be performed by various processes, such as photocopying, micro-imaging and magnetic tape or disk storage. There are two basic types of duplication, each of which may involve dispersal. The first type involves preparing extra copies when the record is created. The second option is to reproduce existing records for the sole purpose of protection.
 - Routine dispersal consists of having duplicate copies in a second location for normal business needs. Records are often distributed to other locations as part of regular operating procedure; for example, information copies sent to branch offices and documents filed with other offices or agencies. If the city depends on this form of dispersal to protect vital records in case of a disaster, then the offices or agencies should be made aware of that. Reliable arrangements must be made regarding retention and protection requirements. If records require special equipment to make the information available, such as a computer or microfilm reader/printer, then that equipment must be pre-positioned. This built-in or routine dispersal of vital records is the least expensive method.

- Improvised or planned dispersal is when an additional copy is created solely for protection. The copy is then sent to a vital records depository or other location for security. At the outset of a vital records protection program, it may be necessary to duplicate all the existing documents. Improvised or planned dispersal tends to be more costly.
- **On-Site Storage** such as vaults, safes, file rooms, and fire-resistant cabinets and containers all provide varying degrees of protection for vital records. They can be located in or near the office area.

Industry standards rate the temperature and humidity tolerances of various types of storage media. Paper begins to deteriorate at 350° F and 65% relative humidity while magnetic and photographic media can only tolerate 150° F and 85% relative humidity.

Vaults are very expensive to build but may be justified if the volume of records is high or the needs of the city dictate this level of protection. In buildings with a high risk of fire, a vault may be the only way to protect records. Standard vault doors come with 2-, 4-, and 6- hour ratings. Vaults resist fire, but are vulnerable to water damage. While fire-proof safes do not give as much protection as vaults, they will resist fire for up to 4 hours. Safes are useful for small volumes of records and for locating the records close to the point of use.

File rooms and fire-resistant cabinets and containers naturally provide less protection than the heavily insulated walls and doors of vaults and safes. They are also less expensive.

Evaluate the risks associated with the loss of the information before investing in any of these on site storage options.

- **Off-Site Storage** can provide extra security and protection to original vital records and economical storage for those that are used very little. It is less likely that an off-site storage facility will be affected by the same disaster that occurs to the primary building. Unlike dispersal techniques where vital records may be distributed to a number of off-site locations, central off-site storage simplifies access and off-site storage usually costs much less than active storage space.

Whether the off-site facility is owned and operated by the organization itself or by another city or commercial firm, certain factors influence the choice of storing vital records in a remote location. The facility should be located away from high risk areas, such as rivers, geological faults, coasts, volcanoes, or man-made structures which might pose a threat. The facility must be accessible to the organization during normal working and emergency conditions. Fire safety, atmospheric conditions, pest control, security and technical services must be carefully evaluated. A communication link between the office and the remote facility may be necessary. Options include city-owned storage, commercial records centers and cooperative records centers.

The decision of how to protect vital records should be based primarily on the basis of cost-effectiveness. Since relative security is all that can be expected, the best choice is the one which best balances the cost of protection and the degree of risk.

Vital Records Operating Procedures

The city should have written policies and procedures covering the use of vital records during daily activities, in emergencies and after disasters. The procedures should cover at least the following areas:

- Access to vital records
- Use of vital records
- Transfer and disposition of vital records
- Emergencies
- Disaster Recovery

Vital records policies should be communicated to the entire staff. The staff should be trained in emergency procedures so that everyone knows what to do when disaster strikes. The city should also have a plan for resuming operations following a disaster. The plan should be tested periodically.

SUMMARY

A vital records program is a cost-effective way to control the risk of losing the city's vital records, an irreplaceable asset. Vital records document essential functions which are critical to the city's primary mission. The vital records program should be an integral part of a comprehensive records management system. The program involves identifying the vital records, assessing and minimizing the risks to those records and then taking protective measures. These efforts should be tied together by implementation of city-wide policies and staff training.

The need for a disaster salvage operation is directly related to the identification and protection of an organization's vital records. A good vital records plan will lessen a city's need for disaster recovery.

For more information regarding records disaster planning see [Public Records: A Manual for Creating a Disaster Preparedness and Recovery Plan.](#)

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CITY RECORDS MANAGEMENT MANUAL

APPENDIX 'A'

NETWORKING

An important City Recorder asset is networking with other City Recorders, Records Managers and the State Archivist:

Mary Beth Herkert
State Archivist
800 Summer Street NE
Salem, OR 97310
(503)373-5196

Additionally, membership in the following organizations which provide beneficial newsletters, handbooks, and educational opportunities may be helpful:

[Oregon Association of Municipal Recorders \(OAMR\)](http://www.oamr.org)

<http://www.oamr.org>

[Association of Records Managers and Administrators \(ARMA\)](http://www.arma.org)

<http://www.arma.org>

[National Association of Government Archivists and Records Administrators \(NAGARA\)](http://www.nagara.org)

<http://www.nagara.org>

[International Institute of Municipal Clerks \(IIMC\)](http://www.iimc.com)

<http://www.iimc.com>

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CITY RECORDS MANAGEMENT MANUAL

APPENDIX 'B'

GLOSSARY

Access – The availability of or the permission to consult records, archives or manuscripts.

Accession – The act and procedures involved in transfer of records or papers into the physical custody of an archival agency, records center or manuscript repository.

Active Record – Records maintained in an area where they are actively referred to during everyday operations. Usually they are no older than two years and are referred to at least bi-monthly.

Adequacy of Documentation – A standard of sufficiently and properly recording actions and/or decisions. Derives from the legal requirement that “agency heads”, make and preserve records containing adequate and proper documentation of the organization’s functions, policies, decisions, procedures, and essential transactions and designed to furnish the information necessary to protect the legal and financial rights of the government and of persons directly affected by the agency’s activities.

Administrative Records – Records relating to budget, personnel, supply and similar housekeeping or facilitative functions common to most agencies, in contrast to program records.

Administrative Value – A record that assists in the operation of government and ensures administrative consistency and continuity.

Alphabetical File – A file in which documents are arranged alphabetically by name or subject.

Alphanumeric – A filing system or code which combines alphabetic and numeric symbols to classify records.

Appraisal – The process of determining the value and disposition of records based on their current administrative, legal, and fiscal use; their evidential and informational or research value; and their relationship to other records.

Archival Records – Records of continuing and enduring value useful to the citizens and necessary to the administrative functions of public agencies.

Archival Value – Records having continuing/long term value and usually assigned a “permanent” or indefinite retention period.

Archives – Records of any public institution which are judged worthy of permanent preservation for reference and research purposes and which have been selected for deposit in the permanent city archives.

Archives Administration – The management or direction of the program and archival agency, including the following basic functions: appraisal, disposition, accessioning, preservation, arrangement, description, reference service, exhibition and publication.

Audio Visual Records – Records in pictorial or oral form, regardless of format. Includes still photographs (or still pictures), graphic arts (poster or original art), motion pictures, video recordings, audio or sound recordings and related records.

Case File – Groupings of documents that pertain to a particular person, place or thing. A case or project file may consist of correspondence, form records, memoranda or a combination of those, all pertaining to the same person, place or thing.

Central Files – The records or files of one or several offices or organizational units physically and/or functionally centralized and supervised in one location.

Closed File – A file in which action has been completed and to which further documents are not likely to be added.

Computer Output Microfilm (COM) – The process of converting the data on a magnetic computer tape directly onto microfilm.

Confidential Records – A record of information requiring protection against unauthorized disclosure.

Continuing Authorization – The legal authority to destroy currently created records at a designated time or upon fulfillment of specific events or conditions.

Copy – A reproduction of an original document. Copies identified include action copy, information or reference copy, official file copy, read or chronological file copy, suspense or tickler file copy, and stock copy.

Correspondence – Letters, memorandums, notes, telecommunications, and any other form of addressed, written communications sent and received.

Cubic Feet – For records inventory purposes, an approximate measurement to describe the amount of space records occupy. Approximations: Letter size file drawer = 1.5 c.f.; legal size file drawer = 2 c.f.; legal/lateral size = 4.5 c.f.; single file folder (3/4" thick) = .10 c.f.; one carton (15"x12"x10") = 1 c.f.

Current Records – Records regularly used for the conduct of the current business of an organization.

Custody – Guardianship or control of records including both physical possession and legal responsibility, unless one or the other is specified.

Deacidification – The process by which the pH of a paper document is raised to a minimum of 7.0 to assist in its preservation. The process is now generally used before documents are thermoplastically laminated.

Declassification – The purpose or result of determining that information is no longer confidential.

Disposition – The actions taken with regard to non-current records following their appraisal. The actions include transfer to a records center for temporary storage, transfer to an archival agency, donation to an eligible repository, reproduction of microfilm and destruction.

Dossier – An accumulation of documents in a folder or file unit concerned with the same purpose and filed together to give information about a real or corporate person. The term is sometimes applied to a case file or a particular transaction.

Electronic Record Keeping – A system of record keeping in which information is stored on electronic or optical media instead of recorded on paper and is identified, controlled and disposed of according to records management practices.

Encapsulation – A method of providing support to a fragile and brittle document, which generally is in a single sheet format, by placing the document between two sheets of polyester film, the edges of which are held together by double-sided tape, machine sewing, heat seal or ultrasonic weld.

Environment – Conditions surrounding the system that influence the system's operation.

Exempt Records – These are documents which can be destroyed under ORS 192.170 when no longer needed for administrative purposes and without authorization by the State Archivists. Including are the following:

1. Inquiries and requests from the public and answers thereto not required by law to be preserved or not required as evidence of public or private legal right or liability.
2. Public records which are duplicated by reason of their having been photocopied.
3. Letter of transmittal and acknowledgement, advertising, announcements and correspondence or notes pertaining to reservation of accommodations or scheduling of personal visits or appearances.

Facsimile (FAX) – An exact copy of a document, drawing, photograph, etc. A method or device for transmitting such a copy via telephone or radio for reproduction elsewhere.

Fumigation – The process of exposing records, usually in a vacuum or other airtight chamber, to poisonous gas or vapor to destroy insects, mildew, or other forms of life that may endanger them.

Governmental Records – State and local records, including all cards, correspondence, disks, maps, memoranda, microfilms, papers, photographs, recordings, reports, tapes, writings, and other data, information or documentary material, regardless of physical form or characteristics, storage media or conditions of use, made or received by an office or agency of the state and/or an officer or agency of the county, city, town, school, district, municipal subdivision or corporation or other public authority or political entity within the state pursuant to state law or in connection with the transaction of public business by an officer.

Holding Maintenance – Unfolding documents, placing them in acid-free folders and boxes and shelving them in environmentally controlled and secure storage.

Image, Microfilm – A micro-image of one side of a single document.

Inspection, Microfilm – Periodic checks of stored original silver halide microfilmed records (and duplicate records stored for security purposes) to detect deterioration or damage (e.g. for brittleness, buckling, mold or mildew, discoloration or fading).

Inventory – A descriptive list of each record series giving such data as title, inclusive dates, quantity, arrangement, relationships to other series, and description of subject content. A survey of records conducted prior to disposition or the development of records retention schedules.

Lamination –

1. A mechanically assisted process, generally preceded by de-acidification, for reinforcing a weak or damaged paper document by enclosing it between two sheets of plastic foil, usually cellulose acetate, and two sheets of tissue which, through the application of heat and pressure, become thermoplastic and impregnate the original. More properly referred to as thermoplastic lamination to distinguish it from hand lamination or commercial and industrial lamination process.
2. A manual process for protecting or reinforcing a weak or damaged paper document by enclosing it between two sheets of tissue which are bound to the document by acetate.

Legal Size – A standard paper size 8 ½ x 14 inches.

Letter Size – A standard size paper 8 ½ x 11 inches.

Linear Foot – The measurement of shelf space occupied by records. One linear foot of textual records is the equivalent of one cubic foot.

Logical Record – A compilation of related data elements, referring to one person, place, thing, or event, treated as a unit. Logical records can have a specified number of characters (fixed length records) or the number of characters in each record can vary within limits (variable length records).

Machine Readable Records – Information recorded on media such as magnetic tapes, disks, diskettes, optical disks or punched paper, the information is coded for retrieval by machines. Increasingly referred to as electronic records.

Microfiche – A sheet of microfilm containing multiple micro-images in a grid pattern. It usually uses a title which can be read without magnification.

Microfilm – A fine grain, high resolution film containing an image greatly reduced in size from the original. The recording of microphotographs on film.

Non-Record – Published books and pamphlets, book and pamphlets printed by a governmental printer, worksheets used to collect or compile data after that data has been included in a record, answer pads for a telephone or other informal notes, desk calendar, stenographers' notebooks after the information contained there in has been transcribed, unused forms except ballots and as indicated in a retention schedule, brochures, newsletters, magazines, newspapers except those excerpts used as evidence of publication, scrapbooks, and physical property artifacts.

Non-Record Materials – Government owned information materials excluded from the legal definition of records. Includes extra copies of documents kept only for convenience of reference, stocks of publications and of processed documents, and library or museum materials intended solely for reference or exhibition. Also called non-records.

Numerical File – A file in which documents are arranged in numerical sequence as a primary means of reference.

Office Files And Memoranda – All records, correspondence, exhibits, books, booklets, drawings, maps, blank forms, or documents not defined and classified as official public records; all duplicate copies of official public records filed with a public agency; all documents and reports made for internal administration of the office but not required by law to be filed or kept with such agency; and all other documents or records determined to be office files and memoranda.

Office Of Record – The office assigned the responsibility for the custody and maintenance of the records of the activities it serves.

Permanent Record – Records which have a permanent or enduring historical, administrative, legal or fiscal value and which, therefore, should be retained and preserved indefinitely.

Personnel Record – Any item, collection, or grouping of information about an individual that is maintained by an agency. This includes, but is not limited to, the individual's education, financial, medical, or employment history, or items that contain or make reference to the individual's name, identifying number, symbol, or other identifying particular assigned to the individual such as finger or voice print or photograph.

Physical Record – A record treated as a unit because of its physical form. A collection of data defined in terms of physical parameter, rather than logical content.

Political Subdivision – A city, county, or district, or any other municipal or public corporation of this state.

Processing, Microfilm – Developing and fixing images on film after exposure.

Production, Microfilm – Exposing images on film and processing them for inspection, duplication and use.

Protective Enclosure – Various types of protective containers for the storage of fragile items.

Public Record – Records created by public funds which are judged worthy of preservation for reference and research purposes to the creating agency, other state agencies, and/or the public and which have been deposited or selected for deposit in the State Archives.

“Public Records” shall include all written, typed or printed books, papers, letters, documents and maps made or received in pursuance of law by the public officers of the state, counties, municipalities and other subdivisions of government in the transaction of public business and shall also include any records authorized to be made by any law of this state belonging or pertaining to any court of record or any public record authorized

by law or any papers, pleading, exhibit, or other writing filed with, in or by any such court, office or officer.

Quality Assurance And Inspection – Procedures required to ensure good quality exposed original silver halide microfilm and reproduction made from them. Including but not limited to such tests as those for residual hyposulfate, density, resolution and base fog as defined by [Association of Information and Image Management](#) and/or [American National Standards Institute](#) standards.

Record – Any nonverbal information created or received pursuant to law, charter, or ordinance, or in connection with any other activity relating to or having effect upon the transaction of public business, regardless of physical form or characteristics. Records include but are not limited to: correspondence, memoranda, publications, forms, ledgers, vouchers, personnel data, magnetic and paper tapes, cards and disks, maps, photographs, engineering drawings, computer generated information and microfilm.

Record Keeping Requirements – Statements in statutes, regulations, or agency directives providing general and specific information on particular records to be created and maintained by the agency. Since each agency is legally obligated to create and maintain adequate and proper documentation of its organization, functions, and activities, agency record keeping requirements should be issued for all activities, at all levels, and for all media, and should distinguish records from non-record materials for agency purposes.

Records Center – A facility, sometimes especially designed and constructed, for the low-cost and efficient storage and furnishing of reference service on semi-current records pending their ultimate disposition.

Records Coordinator – Coordinates the department's records program by administering records policies and procedures, scheduling record destruction, supervising the destruction of records, assisting in establishing and maintaining filing systems; and serving as liaison between the department and the records officer.

Records Management – The application of management techniques to the creation, utilization, maintenance, retention, preservation, and disposition of records, undertaken to reduce costs and improve efficiency in records-keeping. Includes management of filing and microfilming equipment and supplies; information retrieval systems; files, correspondence, reports, and forms management; historical documentation; micrographic systems applications; retention scheduling; vital records protection; and disaster recovery.

Records Retention Plan – A two part plan for identifying the permanently valuable records of an agency. The first part designates categories of records that deserve preservation, or those functions and activities for which the documentation should be preserved; the second part designates the location and titles of particular series or segments of series in which the documentation or categories can be found.

Records Series – Consists of records accumulated over a period of time and arranged in an organized file or set of files which can be described, handled, and disposed of as a unit. A record series may consist of records of a single type or format, or of records kept together because they relate to a particular subject, or result from one activity. The

physical form of records in a series may vary: paper; film, or other media (including computer storage); volumes, folders, reels, etc., being used at different times. The filing arrangement may be chronological, alphabetic, numeric, coded, or any combination of filing arrangements. A series may, at a particular time, consist of a single folder, or of hundreds of feet of files. Each record series must be specifically defined and include only records with the same retention period.

Retention Period – A retention period is calculated from the date the public record was created unless otherwise stated.

Schedule – A document governing, on a continuing basis, the retention and disposition of the recurring records series of an organization or agency. Sometimes referred to as records schedule, a records control schedule, a retention schedule, a disposal schedule, a records retention schedule, and/or a comprehensive records schedule.

Series – File units or documents arranged according to a filing system or kept together because they relate to a particular subject or function, result from the same activity, document a specific kind of transaction, take a particular physical form, or have some other relationship arising out of their creation, receipt, or use, such as restrictions on access and use. Also called a record series.

Specific Authorization – The legal authority to destroy records which are no longer needed or to destroy records through a particular date or under a particular condition.

State Agency – Any state officer, department, board, commission, institution, or court created by the Constitution or statutes of this state excluding the legislative assembly or its committees, officers and employees.

Transfer – Movement of records, usually from a government agency to a records center, for storage, service and protection.

Transitory Records – Records having only transitory value. These include original and informational copies of documents that do not contain procedural or policy matter applicable to the receiving office, that do not require action by the receiving office, that involve a routine transaction, or that do not contain information of continuing reference value.

Vital Records – Records essential to the continued functioning or reconstruction of an organization during and after an emergency and also those records essential to protecting the rights and interests of that organization and of the individuals directly affected by its activities. Sometimes called essential records. Includes emergency-operating records. It is recommended that these be duplicates or extra copies be located off-site.

Working Papers – Documents such as rough notes, calculations or drafts assembled or created and used in the preparation or analysis of other documents.

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CITY RECORDS MANAGEMENT MANUAL

APPENDIX 'C'

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 - [Oregon State Archives](#)
 - [City of Salem, Oregon](#)
 - [The American Archivist](#)

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CITY RECORDS MANAGEMENT MANUAL

APPENDIX 'D'

OREGON ADMINISTRATIVE RULES (OAR)

Division 30 Records Management Procedures

General 166-030-0005

These regulations prescribe procedures for obtaining lawful authority to destroy or otherwise dispose of public records. They specify appropriate methods for destruction of public records. They apply to all public records, regardless of medium or physical format, created and stored by state and local agencies.

Appointment of Records Officer 166-030-0016

To establish a records management program to insure orderly retention and destruction of all public records, and to insure the preservation of public records of value, each state or local agency should designate a Records Officer to organize and coordinate records scheduling, retirement, storage, and destruction. The State Archivist will provide training and assistance for Records Officers.

Inventory and Appraisal (State Agencies) 166-030-0021

To insure accurate identification and evaluation of its records, each state agency shall, with the advice and assistance of the State Archivist, prepare an inventory of the records of each of its organizational units, including the records of any other agency in its custody. Records which may be found on the State Agency General Records Retention Schedule, OAR chapter 166, Division 200, shall not be included on this inventory. These inventories shall be used to prepare a Special Schedule (OAR 166-30-026) for public records in agency custody, regardless of medium or physical format.

Public Records Retention and Disposition Authorization (Local Agencies) 166-030-0027

Authorization for destruction of public records by local agencies must be obtained as follows:

1. No authorization is required to destroy materials which are excluded or exempt by statute from the definition of public records. (ORS 192.005(5), 192.170)
2. An applicable General Schedule published in OAR Chapter 166, or a Special Schedule approved by the State Archivist, establishes the appropriate retention and disposition for local agency records. A local agency may destroy public records which have met the terms and conditions of their scheduled retention

period, subject to the prior audit requirements of OAR 166-030-0041 and any suspension ordered under the provisions of OAR 166-030-0045. Unless otherwise stated, a retention period shall be calculated from the date the public record was created.

3. Notwithstanding any retention period listed in a General Schedule, no public record created in or prior to 1920 shall be destroyed without the express written permission of the State Archivist.
4. Specific approval from the State Archivist by means of a Special Schedule is required to dispose of public records which are not listed in an applicable General Schedule found in these rules. Instructions on creating Special Schedules are available from the State Archivist.
5. A Special Schedule approved for an individual local agency shall supersede an applicable General Schedule, insofar as it applies to the same public record.
6. Special Schedules approved after January 1, 1987, shall have an expiration date set by the State Archivist.
7. Notwithstanding any retention period listed in a General Schedule or a Special Schedule, no public record listed on the Oregon Historical Records Inventory shall be destroyed. Copies of lists of records on the Oregon Historical Records Inventory are available from the State Archivist.

Prior Audit of Fiscal Public Records Required 166-030-0041

Public records of fiscal transactions, regardless of medium or physical format, may not be destroyed until the minimum retention period has passed and the person charged with their audit has released them for destruction. If federal funds are involved, requirements of the United States government shall be observed.

Suspension of Scheduled Public Records Destruction 166-030-0045

A scheduled destruction of records, regardless of medium or physical format, which are the subject of a public records request shall be suspended until the request has been resolved. Only those records which have been specifically requested need be retained.

Public Records Disposition and Destruction (State and Local Agencies) 166-030-0060

A Special Schedule approved by the State Archivist, or an applicable General Schedule published in these rules, authorizes disposition of public records. Disposition includes:

1. Transfer to the custody of the State Archivist. When the scheduled retention specifies transfer to the State Archives, an agency shall transfer its custody of the specified records to the custody of the State Archivist.
2. Shredding, Pulping, or Incineration. Public Records which are confidential by law and negotiable instruments (even when canceled or satisfied in writing) must be destroyed by shredding, pulping, or incineration. The destruction should be supervised and witnessed by a responsible employee of the agency. When using a contractor to destroy public records, the state or local agency must require posting of a bond of undertaking by the contractor to indemnify the state or local

agency against any claims or actions resulting from his failure to protect the confidentiality of the public records, and must require a provision precluding sale, transfer, or delivery of the public records to a third party prior to data obliteration. The agreement shall also include provisions requiring secure transit to and handling by the contractor; and prompt processing of the public records by the contractor to fully obliterate the data they contain by shredding, pulping, or incineration.

3. Recycling. Records which are not confidential by law may be sold or traded for recycling of the fiber or chemical they contain, provided that the sale or trade agreement includes provisions to insure that the public records are promptly converted into a form which precludes use of the information they contain.
4. Deposit in a Library, Museum, or Historical Society with the permission of the State Archivist. The originals of public records which have been microfilmed in compliance with ORS 192.040 to 192.070 and OAR 166-030-0070, and other public records which have continuing local historical value although destruction is authorized, may be deposited in a Library, Museum, or Historical Society if disclosure of the record is not prohibited by law and the depository agrees to comply with ORS 162.305, 192.420, and 192.430. Agreements for such deposits must stipulate that the depository cannot sell or otherwise dispose of the records except by lawful and complete destruction or by returning them to the depositing agency. Permission of the State Archivist is required prior to the transfer of records.

Microfilming 166-030-0070

Microfilming may be substituted for any paper or machine readable records if it is made according to the following conditions:

1. A security copy of microfilm of public record which have a required minimum retention period of 100 years or longer must be made and stored in accordance with OAR 166-025-0005 to 166-025-0030. A security copy must be reserved and used solely as a backup security copy or as a master for making working copy duplicate film when required.
2. Working copies of microfilm, and microfilm of public records with a minimum retention of less than 100 years, may be made in accordance with agency standards and requirements for the retention of the public records, including the option of using any film, processing system, or storage containers the agency may select.

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CITY RECORDS MANAGEMENT MANUAL

APPENDIX 'E'

SAMPLE FORMS

SAMPLE

**Certification of Public Record
Of the City of (name of city), Oregon**

I, (city recorder's name), hereby certify that I am the duly appointed, qualified, and acting City Recorder of the City of (name of city), Oregon, and

I further certify that the attached photocopy of (describe document: title numbers, dates) is a true and correct copy of said (type of document).

Witness my hand and the Seal of the City of (name of city), Oregon, this ____ day of _____, _____.

(Impress City Seal over signature.)

City Recorder*

*A Deputy Recorder may be authorized to certify as well.

SAMPLE

**CERTIFICATION OF PUBLIC RECORD
OF THE CITY OF (name of city), OREGON**

I, (name of employee), certify and say that the attached photocopy is a correct, true and exact copy of an official public record of the City of (name of city), Oregon, and that the record copy thereof is in my official care, custody and control in my capacity as set forth below my signature.

Signature: _____

Title: _____

Department: _____

ATTEST

I, (city recorder's name*), hereby certify and attest that I am the duly appointed and acting City Recorder of the City of (name of city); and that the person whose signature is affixed above is, in fact, an officer or employee of the City of (name of city), Oregon, acting in the capacity set forth below such signature; and that such signature is genuine.

Witness my hand and the Seal of the City of (name of city), Oregon, this ____ day of _____, 1999.

(Impress city seal over signature.)

City Recorder

*A Deputy Recorder may be authorized to certify as well.

SAMPLE POLICY

City of _____ Retention Scheduling and Destruction Effective Date: _____

I. POLICY

The City of _____ will follow the City Records Retention Schedule as transmitted by the Oregon State Archivist and may be updated from time to time.

II. PURPOSE

This policy is intended to provide guidelines to control retention and destruction of City records.

III. PROCEDURES

The Recorder is authorized to have all papers, documents and records received in all city departments maintained and stored to assure an expeditious and orderly filing system. The Recorder is directed to implement records scheduling as allowed by the City Records Retention Schedule following the procedures below.

A. Each department will be responsible for the retention of the “record copy” created or received in their department with the exception of records such as ordinances, resolutions, agreements and purchase orders.

B. It is strongly recommended that the record copy be stamped, in blue ink, “Record Copy”.

C. Transfer to Short-Term Storage: As records are transferred from active storage to inactive storage, but have not met the minimum retention period, the following steps should be followed:

- (1) Only one cubic foot boxes will be accepted, unless approved by the Recorder. Two cubic foot boxes will not be accepted.
 - a. Only one record series per box, except if series is small, mix series by same retention.
 - b. Records should be boxed in annual time frames that reflect the use of the records, i.e. Fiscal or calendar year.
 - c. Arrange records in box using the 8 ½ x 11 standard.
 - d. Do not store hanging folders or binders in the boxes, they break down the sides of the boxes. Use a rubber band, clip or colored paper to separate the records.
 - e. Attached a completed archive label to the outside of the box below the handle.
- (2) List records on the Records Transmittal form, two copies to be included in the box and a copy retained by the department.

- a. Records that are of a sequential nature must be listed in full, if there is an exception, the items not included and a reason why they are required.
- (3) Deliver the boxes to the permanent records storage facility.
- (4) Records will be added to the storage inventory and assigned a box location number. The box location number will be added to the Transmittal form, a copy retained in the box and one copy returned to the department.
- (5) Permanent records, or those records having a retention period of over 10 years, may be eligible for microfilming.

D. Transfer to Permanent Storage: As records are transferred from active storage to permanent storage, the following steps will be followed:

- (1) Only one cubic foot boxes will be accepted, unless approved by the Recorder. Two cubic foot boxes will not be accepted.
 - a. Only one record series per box, except if series is small, mix series by same retention.
 - b. Records should be boxed in annual time frames that reflect the use of the records, i.e. Fiscal or calendar year.
 - c. Arrange records in box using the 8 ½ x 11 standard.
 - d. Do not store hanging folders or binders in the boxes; they break down the sides of the boxes. Use a rubber band, clip or colored paper to separate the records.
 - e. Attached a completed PERMANENT archive label to the outside of the box below the handle.
- (2) List records on the Records Transmittal form, two copies to be included in the box and a copy retained by the department.
 - a. Records that are of a sequential nature must be listed in full, if there is an exception, the items not included and a reason why they are required.
- (3) Deliver the boxes to the permanent records storage facility.
- (4) Records will be added to the storage inventory and assigned a box location number. The box location number will be added to the Transmittal form, a copy retained in the box and one copy returned to the department.
- (5) Permanent records, or those records having a retention period of over 10 years, may be eligible for microfilming.
- (6) Generally, records will be destroyed after meeting the minimum retention. If a record is determined to have substantial value, the record may be retained beyond the minimum retention upon approval of the department head, City Manager, City Attorney and City Recorder.
- (7) Destruction: Once a record has served its purpose and has met the minimum retention, it is ready for final disposition using the following process:

- a. If the records are not in a records storage facility, the department will complete the Records Transmittal form.
- b. The department head will sign the form and forward it to the Recorder.
- c. The Recorder shall complete a form entitled "Certificate of Records Authorized to be Destroyed" which includes the following statement: "*I hereby certify that the above records have been destroyed by _____ this ___ day of ___, 19__.*" Signed by the City Recorder.
- d. The Certificate shall be signed by the City Manager, the City Attorney, the Mayor, the department head and the Recorder.
- e. After approval, the records shall be destroyed by an appropriate method.
- f. After the records have been destroyed, the Recorder will sign and file the Certificate.

BOX NO:

ARCHIVES

RECORD SERIES NO: _____

CONTENTS:

RETENTION: _____

DESTROY: _____

DEPARTMENT: _____

SAMPLE FORM

Note: Please type or print. Attach a copy of the record, inventory sheet, or microfilm form

RECORDS DESTRUCTION REQUEST

SECTION 1. REQUEST: (Dept. Records Supervisor)

Series Title _____

Schedule # _____ Minimum Retention Period _____

Brief Description of Record Series: _____

Inclusive Dates: _____

Records: On Microform – Job # _____ Film Date _____ Verified _____

Paper files – Cubic Feet _____ Current Storage Location _____

Dept. Records Supervisor: _____

Signature _____ Date _____
Dept. _____ Division _____

Phone Ext. # _____

SECTION 2. ELIGIBLE FOR DESTRUCTION. (City Recorder’s Office)

Records Manager: _____
Signature _____ Date _____

SECTION 3. DIRECTOR’S APPROVAL

Director’s Signature: _____
Date _____

SECTION 4. CERTIFICATE OF DESTRUCTION

Destroyed by: _____
Date _____

Title _____ Dept. _____

Describe Destruction Method _____

(shred, recycle, other)

Original: City Recorder/Records Manager

Copy: Department