



# COUNTY CORONER

**GENERAL**  
**SUPERSEDED**  
**RECORDS RETENTION SCHEDULES**

and

**RECORDS DISPOSITION MANAGEMENT**

**GUIDELINE**

State of  
Washington

PAPERWORK MANAGEMENT HANDBOOK No. 9

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In developing the County Coroner Schedules the  
Washington State Archives  
was particularly fortunate in having the cooperation

of

WASHINGTON STATE CORONER'S ASSOCIATION

**SUPERSEDED**



## COUNTY CORONER GENERAL SCHEDULES

**PURPOSE:** The County Coroner Records Disposition Management Manual has been prepared to provide guidance in matters relative to the disposition of public records held in common by the County Coroner System. Of particular interest are the schedules of retention, disposal and transfer of records. The schedules do not obligate a coroner to destroy any of the records which he/she desires to preserve for longer periods of time than indicated. Rather, they provide recommendations as to the length of time various records should ordinarily be retained, and authority to dispose of the listed records subsequent to the recommended retention.

**SCOPE:** The manual contains information concerning the preservation, retention, disposal, transfer and microfilming of public records. Matters relative to the creation, systems of recording, reproduction, filing systems, selection of durable papers and inks, etc., have not been included. The Division of Archives will, however, assist, advise and/or locate qualified assistance for County Coroners who may have specific problems or questions concerning such matters.

**STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS:** No public record other than Office Files and Memoranda, of any local government agency shall be destroyed until it is either photographed, microphotographed, photostated, or reproduced on film, or until it is seven years old. Except as otherwise provided by law, no public record including Office Files and Memoranda shall be destroyed until approved for destruction by the Local Records Committee. Reference RCW 40.14.070 and WAC 414-24-010.

**AUTHORITY TO ADOPT GENERAL SCHEDULES:** RCW 40.14.070 and WAC 414-24-050 provide that the Local Records Committee may approve and issue Records Retention and Disposition Schedules, which shall constitute authority to dispose of specific records, held commonly by many agencies, after a required retention period on a recurring basis until the Schedule is either amended or revised by the Committee.

**PUBLIC RECORDS DEFINED:** "Public Records" means any paper, correspondence, form, book, photograph, film, sound recording, map drawing, or other document, regardless of physical form or characteristics, and including all copies thereof, that have been made by any agency or received by it in connection with the transaction of public business. RCW 40.14.010 and WAC 414-12-020.

**RECORDS AS PUBLIC PROPERTY:** All public records shall be and remain the property of the agency. They shall be delivered by outgoing officials and employees to their successors and shall be preserved, stored, transferred, destroyed, and otherwise managed, only in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 40.14 RCW and as otherwise provided for by law. WAC 414-12-010.

**AUTHORITY TO TRANSFER RECORDS TO THE STATE ARCHIVES:** In lieu of retention in the Office of Record, records of archival or historical value may be officially transferred to the Washington State Archives or other depository officially designated by the State Archivist. See WAC 414-12-030 for further information concerning records transfer.

**IMPLEMENTATION OF COUNTY CORONER SCHEDULES:** The County Coroner General Records Retention Schedules constitute authority for any County Coroner in the State of Washington to dispose of the records listed thereon after the specified retention, per the General Schedule authority of the Local Records Committee pursuant to Chapter 40.14.070 RCW.

RE: COUNTY CORONER GENERAL RECORDS RETENTION SCHEDULES

With the mailing of the enclosed publication, County Coroner General Records Retention Schedules and Records Disposition Management Guideline, issued by the Washington State Local Records Committee in accord with provisions of Title 40, RCW, hopefully this guideline will contribute to efficient record management practices and provide guidance in matters relative to the disposition of public records held in common by the County Coroner System.

We hope this material is of some help to you. If we can be of any assistance, please advise.

Sincerely,

FOR THE WASHINGTON STATE LOCAL  
RECORDS COMMITTEE

Sidney F. McAlpin  
State Archivist

SFMcA:hm

Enclosure



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Enclosure

I. THE PROBLEM

Our ability to control information has not kept pace with the capacity of office and data processing machines to spew it out.

FOR EXAMPLE, WHO IN YOUR OFFICE KNOWS?

The Total Volume Of Records Being Held  
What Portions Of Those Records Are Active, Inactive Or Obsolete  
How Rapidly Your Records Are Expanding  
How Many Forms Are Being Used  
How Much Time Is Required To Prepare Each Form  
How Many Periodical Reports Are Created And Who Receives Them  
How Much Time It Takes To File, Reference And Refile Records

These are important considerations. The conditions they relate to have a tremendous impact upon your agency's efficiency and success. Their importance may also be gauged by the amount of money that the agency has invested in its records.

II. OUR INVESTMENT IN RECORDS

The costs of records creation, maintenance and storage are not always apparent. They are hidden in manhours, building and equipment expenses.

A. Records Creation

Each inch of file space contains up to 160 pieces of correspondence, reports or forms. Original correspondence costs a minimum of \$4.58 in professional and clerical time to prepare. That adds up to \$733.00 per inch or \$19,000.00 per file drawer! <sup>1</sup>

B. Records Maintenance

The average annual cost of filing and retrieval is about \$7.80 per file inch in clerical and supervisory time. <sup>2</sup>

C. Records Storage

The average cost of office space is about \$10.00 per cubic foot per year. On that basis, it costs \$80.00 per year to house each letter size four-drawer filing cabinet and \$120.00 per year to house each legal size four-drawer filing cabinet. <sup>3</sup>

1. Cost estimates were obtained from a study done by the Washington State Department of Licensing in 1975. The figures have been adjusted to reflect 1983 salary levels.
2. This is a national average estimated in 1970 by Management Information Services of Detroit. The figure is based on a ratio of one clerk for every eleven four-drawer filing cabinets and has also been updated to reflect 1983 salary levels.
3. Boeing Aircraft Corporation - 1975.



As the examples indicate, records keeping costs and records management problems come from several different directions. The overall solution to the "paperwork explosion" involves the control of a myriad of factors.

### III. THE SOLUTION: RECORDS MANAGEMENT DEFINED

"RECORDS MANAGEMENT" is a general term which encompasses a number of activities that contribute to the common goal of making records keeping easier, more efficient and less costly. These include:

RECORDS RETENTION SCHEDULING

NON-CURRENT RECORDS STORAGE

FILES MANAGEMENT

FORMS MANAGEMENT

MICROGRAPHICS

ESSENTIAL RECORDS PROTECTION

COPIER CONTROL

REPORTS MANAGEMENT

PUBLIC DISCLOSURE

Any or all of these activities may be incorporated into a specific program to meet the needs of a particular agency. The remainder of this manual deals with the single element of Records Retention Scheduling. However, the other elements of Records Management must be considered in developing a complete, effective program. Further information on any of the topics listed above may be obtained through your nearest State Archives Regional Branch.

Section B: RECORDS RETENTION & DISPOSITION

The retention of obsolete records is an unnecessary expense and a management hazzard. Often, such material takes valuable working space and hinders the use of active records through the crowding and chaos it can create.

The object of a Records Retention Schedule is to provide for the disposition of records that bear no further legal obligation or administrative usefulness by setting up a continuous cycle for retaining and disposing of each type of record kept by an agency. It also provides for the identification of historically valuable records which should be transferred to the nearest State Archives Regional Branch at the end of their administrative or legal lives.

Whether in the public or the private sector, Records Retention Scheduling makes good management sense. However, there are also statutory requirements involved.

I. LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

In most states, statutes regulate the retention and disposition of government records. In Washington State, the PUBLIC RECORDS ACT, Revised Code of Washington (RCW 40.14), is the primary statement of public policy on government records. RCW 40.14 and the Washington Administrative Code include the following provisions.

A. Public Records Defined

The term "Public Records" applies to any paper, correspondence, form, bound volume, film, magnetic medium, drawing or other document, regardless of form or physical characteristics, that has been created or received by any state or local government agency during the course of public business. (RCW 40.14.010 & WAC 414-12-010)

B. Records As Public Property

All such Public Records shall be and remain the property of the agency. Outgoing officials and employees must pass such records on to their successors. Furthermore, Public Records shall be preserved, stored, transferred, destroyed and otherwise managed according to the provisions of RCW 40.14 unless otherwise provided by law. (WAC 414-12-010)

C. Custody of Public Records

Public records must remain in the custody of the agency in which they were originally filed. They shall not be placed in the custody of any other person or agency, public or private, or released to individuals except for disposition pursuant to law or as otherwise provided by law. (RCW 40.14.070 & WAC 414-12-020)



D. Disposition Of Public Records

Public Records may be destroyed or transferred only in accord with the instructions and approval of the State of Washington's LOCAL RECORDS COMMITTEE. (RCW 40.14.070)

E. Local Records Committee

The State of Washington's Local Records Committee includes the State Archivist and representatives from the offices of the State Auditor and State Attorney General. This committee has the authority to review and approve the disposition of all local government records. (RCW 40.14.070)

F. Records Retention Schedule

A local government agency may establish a records control program based on a recurring Records Retention Schedule submitted for the approval of the Local Records Committee on forms provided by the State Archives. The committee may either approve, veto or amend the schedule. Once a Records Retention Schedule is approved by the Local Records Committee, it gives an agency authority to dispose of the records listed thereon on a recurring basis until it is amended or revised by the committee. (RCW 40.14.070)

G. Authority To Adopt General Records Retention Schedules

The State of Washington's LOCAL RECORDS COMMITTEE may approve and issue Records Retention Schedules which give authority to like agencies for the disposition of specific types of commonly held records. These General Records Retention Schedules provide this authority on a recurring basis until such time as they might be amended or revised by the committee. (RCW 40.14.070 & WAC 414-24-050)

H. The Use of Microfilm

Microfilm copies of Public Records, the completeness and clarity of which are officially guaranteed, have the legal status as the paper originals. (RCW 5.46, RCW 36.23.065 & RCW 36.23.067 (See Appendix E))

I. AUTHORITY TO TRANSFER RECORDS TO THE STATE ARCHIVES

Instead of being retained permanently by the agency, records designated as having archival or historical value may be officially transferred to the State Archives or one of its Regional Branches. It is illegal to transfer Public Records to private parties or to repositories not designated by the State Archivist. (RCW 40.14.070 & WAC 414-12-030)

## J. Methods of Records Destruction

The primary objective of destruction is to reduce obsolete records, not eligible for transfer to the custody of the State Archives, to an illegible condition. Burning, pulping and shredding are considered to be the most effective records destruction methods. It is recommended that agencies keep summary logs and compile certificates or affidavits recording the date and details of destruction for their future reference. (See Appendix F)

An agency may use either of the two methods described below to recycle obsolete records.

1. Agency personnel may take records eligible for destruction to a recycling facility, witness them being pulped or shredded and fill out a certificate of destruction and the agency's destruction log.
2. Records eligible for destruction may be released to a recycling agency under the following conditions.
  - a. The prompt destruction of the records shall be insured and the ultimate responsibility for such destruction shall continue to be that of the office of record.
  - b. The recycling agency shall have in effect, or provide, a performance bond in the penal sum of 100,000.00 or the face value of the records being destroyed, whichever is less.
  - c. Records shall not be left unattended or unprotected while awaiting destruction.
  - d. The office of records shall obtain and preserve evidence of the destruction of such records in the form of a certificate from the recycling agency. (WAC 414-24-070 - WAC 414-24-080)

## II. RECORDS RETENTION SCHEDULING

### A. What is a Records Retention Schedule?

A Records Retention Schedule lists specific types of records maintained by an agency and the period of time that each type should be retained. Once a Records Retention Schedule is approved for an agency by the Local Records Committee, it serves as the agency's authority to dispose of those specific types of records on a recurring basis until such time as it may be revised or amended.

### B. Basic Elements of a Records Retention Schedule (Also See Appendices C & D)

#### 1. Records Series

Each type of record listed on a Records Retention Schedule is a Records Series. A Records Series can be defined as a group of records, performing a particular function, which is used as a unit, filed as a unit and can be disposed of as a unit.

#### 2. Retention Period

Each Records Series listed on a Records Retention Schedule has a corresponding Retention Period. This is the minimum amount of time that records in that particular series must be retained by the agency to meet its legal obligations and administrative needs



### 3. Records Classification

For the purpose of determining Retention Periods, Public Records are divided into two classifications. Whichever classification the various Records Series held by a Public agency may fall under, the amounts of time they are retained must be accounted for on a Records Retention Schedule or a General Records Retention Schedule.

#### a. Official Public Record (OPR)

The classification of Official Public Record applies to any Records Series which serves legal or official proof of an action, transaction or agreement. OPR records include all original vouchers and other documents necessary to isolate and prove the validity of transactions relating to the receipt, use and disposition of all public property and public income from all sources; all original contracts and agreements to which the agency is a party; all original fidelity, surety and performance bonds; all original claims filed against the agency; all records or documents required by law to be filed with or kept by the agency; all other records determined by the Local Records Committee to be Official Public Records. Unless otherwise provided by law, the minimum legal Retention Period for Official Public Records is 6 years after completion of the action that they document.

#### b. Office Files and Memoranda (OFM)

The classification of Office Files and Memoranda applies to all records not classified as Official Public Records; all secondary copies of Official Public Records; all documents and reports made for the internal administration of an agency but not required by law to be filed with or kept by that agency; all other records determined by the Local Records Committee to be Office Files and Memoranda.

### 4. Archival Value

Each Records Series which has a permanent historical or research value beyond its assigned Retention Period will bear the designations of Archival, Potentially Archival or Selected Files Potentially Archival. All records from series which bear these designations should be set aside for appraisal by State Archives staff and transfer to the nearest State Archives Regional Branch upon expiration of their Retention Periods.

C. Other Important Information

1. Location of Primary and Secondary Copies

The original or primary copy of a record, especially an Official Public Record, should usually be retained longer than secondary copies. Therefore, the status of a particular Records Series as a primary or secondary copy often has a direct impact on the length of its Retention Period.

2. The Use of Microfilm

The use of microfilm may also effect the Retention Periods of certain Records Series because microfilm copies may be retained as substitutes for the paper originals. The expense of microfilming, in most cases, is justified only when a Records Series is extremely voluminous, has a long Retention Period and a high rate of reference.

3. Disposition Remarks

The Disposition Remarks or Remarks Column does not apply to every Records Series. It is used for information that clarifies the provisions of a Retention Period, cites special legal requirements or designations of Records Series having archival value which should be set aside for appraisal and transfer to the nearest branch of the State Archives.

D. What is a General Records Retention Schedule?

A General Records Retention Schedule fulfills all of the functions of a Records Retention Schedule approved for an individual agency by the Local Records Committee. However, a General Schedule is issued by the Local Records Committee to serve as the retention standard and disposition authority for Records Series commonly held by particular types of local government agencies. Disposition authority for records not covered by a General Records Retention Schedule must be obtained separately through Local Records Committee approval of an individual Records Retention Schedule.

E. The Use and Application of General Records Retention Schedules

1. Formulation of Internal Working Schedules

A General Records Retention Schedule may be applied directly to the disposition of the Records Series it lists. However, it may also list Records Series which a particular agency does not have. Therefore, an Internal Working Schedule, which is restricted to listings that relate specifically to the agency's holdings, should be abstracted from the General Records Retention Schedule.

2. Distribution

The Internal Working Schedule should be broken down into functional units and distributed to those persons who will be directly responsible for the disposition of various Records Series.



F. The Use and Application of Individual Records Retention Schedules

1. Disposition of Records Series Not Covered by the General Retention Schedule

Those Records Series not covered by the General Records Retention Schedule should be entered on an SSA-24 "Public Records Retention Schedule & Destruction Authorization" form to be submitted for Local Records Committee approval. These forms can be obtained from the nearest branch of the State Archives. Once approved, Individual Records Retention Schedules should be incorporated in the Internal Working Schedule.

2. Reduction of General Records Retention Schedule Retention Periods

Generally, Retention Periods for Official Public Records are fixed by law and cannot be reduced. The Retention Periods for Office Files and Memoranda are often more flexible. If an agency wishes to have Retention Periods for OFM Records Series reduced, it should prepare an SSA-24 and submit it to the Local Records Committee for approval.

**SUPERSEDED**

Section C: IMPLEMENTING A RECORDS RETENTION PROGRAM

The following outline shows how a Records Retention Program can be implemented step by step. This outline can be applied to the establishment of any records management program. The steps described below may be modified to meet an agency's specific needs.

I. ESTABLISH THE PROGRAM

A. Support from the Top

The success of any program is dependent on top level management support. If a Records Retention Program is to be successful, it must be actively promoted by the head of the agency.

B. Appoint a Records Officer

A member of the administrative staff should be appointed as Records Officer. The Records Officer is responsible to oversee the establishment and coordinate the maintenance of the program.

C. Announce the Program

A program announcement should be issued before further steps are undertaken. It should include a statement of support from top management, identification of the Records Officer and a request for staff cooperation. The example below has been used by many agencies with great success.

To: All Departments - All Personnel

From: Agency Head

Subject: Records Retention Program

It is the policy of this agency to encourage efficient records management practices. This includes compliance with state law regarding the retention, protection and disposal of all agency records.

A formal Records Retention Program will help us in several ways. It will reduce the need for additional file equipment, release existing equipment and space for other uses, save time in records handling and insure the preservation of essential and permanently valuable records.

Mr/Ms XXXXXXXXX has been appointed as the agency Records Officer and will be responsible for coordinating the program. He/she has my full support in this effort. Please give him/her your complete cooperation.

D. Appoint a Records Retention Committee (OPTIONAL)

In large agencies a Records Retention Committee, consisting of high level administrators from key departments, may provide effective program direction and advice for the Records Officer. It may also enhance the Records Officer's authority and generate a greater degree of cooperation for the Records Retention Program.

E. Establish a Records Retention Management File

A file containing the General Records Retention Schedule, Internal Working Schedules, SSA-24 Public Records Retention Schedule & Destruction Authorization forms, state records management handbooks, destruction certificates and logs, other forms and supplies related to the Records Retention Program should be maintained by the Records Officer and other responsible participants.

F. Designate a Records Coordinator for each Functional Unit

Records Coordinators may be supervisors or clerical personnel with substantial knowledge of the operation and the records in a particular functional unit (department, division or office). They will be responsible for working with the Records Officer to implement the Records Retention Program in their own units.

G. Establish Formal Records Retention Policies and Procedures

Records Retention Policies and Procedures should state the purpose of the program, who is effected by it and agency policy regarding the retention and disposition of Public Records. Terms unique to the program should be defined. The responsibilities of all functional units and participants should be outlined. Program procedures should be fully explained.  
(See Appendix A)

## II. BEGIN THE PROGRAM

A. Orientation

Conduct orientation meetings with Records Coordinators, managers and other concerned individuals.

B. General Records Retention Schedule Distribution

The General Records Retention Schedule should be divided into sections relating to the agency's functional units. These should be distributed to the appropriate Records Coordinators.

C. Preparation of Internal Working Schedules

Records Coordinators should transfer listings which cover the holdings in their own functional units from the General Records Retention Schedule to Internal Working Schedules.

D. Disposition of Obsolete Records

Internal Working Schedules should be applied to the disposition of obsolete records in the agency's various functional areas. Special care should be taken to identify and set aside records for archival value by the General Records Retention Schedule. An appointment should be made with staff of the State Archives for the appraisal and transfer of these items.

E. Annual Disposition Procedures

Procedures should be established for the continuing annual disposition of obsolete records, including the regular transfer of historically valuable records to the nearest regional branch of the State Archives.



F. Disposition of Records Not Covered by the General Records Retention Schedule

During the initial disposition of obsolete records, series may be discovered which are not listed on the General Records Retention Schedule. Disposition authority for such items must be obtained by submitting an Individual Records Retention Schedule for the approval of the Local Records Committee. SSA-24 Public Records Retention Schedule & Destruction Authorization forms should be used for this purpose. These can be obtained through the nearest branch of the State Archives. Individual Records Retention Schedules approved by the Local Records Committee should be abstracted onto Internal Working Schedules to complete the process.

G. Non-Current Records Storage

If possible, establish a non-current records storage unit which is separated from the agency's active office area. The active reference life of most Records Series varies from one to two years. Older, less active records should not pass the remainder of their Retention Periods cluttering valuable office space or hindering the use of current records. Guidelines and procedures for establishing efficient, accessible non-current storage units can be obtained through the nearest branch of the State Archives. To accommodate the flow of older records into non-current storage, the Retention Period for each Records Series should be divided into active and non-current phases.

H. Files Cutoff

Where ever possible, files should be broken or cut off an annual basis so that they can be moved from active storage to their ultimate disposition in large units rather than through the laborious, time consuming process of purging.

III. MAINTAIN THE PROGRAM

A. Monitor Implementation

The Records Officer should make sure that Internal Working Schedules are applied to the removal of non-current records from active storage, disposal of obsolete records and the transfer of historically valuable material to the nearest branch of the State Archives on an annual basis.

B. Update Records Retention Schedules

Internal Working Schedules should be examined annually to determine if new items should be added or existing ones revised. In either case, Individual Records Retention Schedules should be prepared for the approval of the Local Records Committee.

#### IV. COMPILE AND REPORT RESULTS

##### A. Statistics

1. Amount of records storage equipment emptied for reuse.
2. Volume of records held at the beginning of the reporting period.
3. Volume of new records created or received.
4. Volume of obsolete records disposed.
5. Net holdings at the end of the reporting period.

##### B. Cost Savings

1. Cost of records storage equipment released for reuse.
2. Cost of floor space converted or released for other uses.
3. Clerical time saved by eliminating the handling of non-current records in active office areas.

**SUPERSEDED**

## APPENDIX A

### RECORDS RETENTION PROGRAM POLICY & PROCEDURE

(Suggested Format and Content)

#### I. PURPOSE

To establish a policy and procedure for the identification and systematic disposal of obsolete records; to remove non-current records from active office space; to transfer historically valuable records to the State Archives once their usefulness to the agency has passed.

#### II. DEPARTMENTS EFFECTED

All Departments

#### III. POLICY

All agency records shall be inventoried, analyzed and entered onto retention schedules to insure that:

Only active records are stored in valuable office space.

Non-current records are shifted to low cost storage units.

Valuable historical records are adequately preserved and are transferred to the nearest branch of the State Archives when the agency no longer needs them.

Obsolete, valueless records are effectively destroyed.

#### IV. DEFINITIONS

##### PUBLIC RECORDS

Any paper, correspondence, form, book, map, chart, photograph, magnetic medium or other document that has been made or received during the course of public business. Public Records are exclusively public property and may be transferred or disposed of only under the provisions of records retention schedules approved for the agency by the State of Washington's Local Records Committee.

##### LOCAL RECORDS COMMITTEE

The Local Records Committee includes the State Archivist and representatives from the offices of the State Auditor and Attorney General. The committee has the authority to review and approve the disposition of all local government records. The Local Records Committee gives agencies continuing records disposition authority by approving individual Records Retention Schedules and issuing General Records Retention Schedules.

##### RECORDS RETENTION SCHEDULES

A list of functional records groups (Records Series), including minimum retention periods for each one, prepared by the agency and submitted for Local Records Committee approval. Once approved, it gives the agency recurring authority to dispose of obsolete records.

##### GENERAL RECORDS RETENTION SCHEDULES

Records Retention Schedules issued by the Local Records Committee to give agencies of the same kind blanket authority for the disposition of commonly held records.

##### INTERNAL WORKING SCHEDULES

Listings abstracted from General Records Retention Schedules which relate directly to the types of records held by a particular department, division or office.



## RECORDS SERIES

Any group of records, accomplishing a particular function, which is used as a unit, filed as a unit and can be disposed of as a unit. Each listing in a Records Retention Schedule is a separate Records Series.

## RECORDS OFFICER

The person designated by top management to coordinate the agency's Records Retention Program, serve as liaison with the State Archives and represent the agency before the Local Records Committee.

## RECORDS COORDINATOR

The person designated in each functional unit of the agency who works with the Records Officer.

## V. PROCEDURES & RESPONSIBILITIES

### RECORDS OFFICER

1. Coordinates the Records Retention Program.
2. Educates and advises Records Coordinators and other agency personnel regarding program procedures and retention standards.
3. Packages and distributes General Records Retention Schedules to Records Coordinators.
4. Serves as the agency contact for the State Archives.
5. Represents the agency before the Local Records Committee on questions relating to records retention policy.
6. Coordinates and provides technical assistance to Records Coordinators in preparing Internal Working Schedules for each functional unit.
7. Reviews and approves all Records Retention Schedules prepared by Records Coordinators for submittal to the Local Records Committee.
8. Designates primary offices of record and location of official copies.
9. Coordinates disposal of obsolete records, non-current records storage and transfer of historically valuable records to the nearest regional branch of the State Archives.

### RECORDS COORDINATORS

1. Implement and maintain the Records Retention Program in each of the agency's functional units.
2. Prepare Internal Working Schedules.
3. Recommend revisions to the Records Retention Schedule and prepare SSA-24 PUBLIC RECORDS RETENTION SCHEDULE & DESTRUCTION AUTHORIZATION forms for review by the Records Officer and submittal to the Local Records Committee.
4. Supervise the destruction of obsolete records, prepare less active records for non-current storage and oversee the transfer of historically valuable records to the nearest regional branch of the State Archives.

### STATE ARCHIVES/REGIONAL ARCHIVIST

1. Provides Records Officer with forms, manuals, procedural instructions and materials for agency use.
2. Provides advice and technical assistance on specific problems related to records retention or other aspects of records management.
3. Makes presentations and conducts workshops for agencies upon request .

## Chapter 40.14 RCW

# PRESERVATION AND DESTRUCTION OF PUBLIC RECORDS

Sections	
40.14.010	Definition and classification of public records.
40.14.020	Division of archives and records management—State archivist—Powers and duties—Duties of public officials.
40.14.025	Division of archives and records management—Schedule of fees and charges—Archives and records management account.
40.14.030	Transfer to state archives—Certified copies, cost.
40.14.040	Records officers—Designation—Powers and duties.
40.14.050	Records committee—Composition, travel expenses, meetings, powers and duties—Retention schedules.
40.14.060	Destruction, disposition of official public records or office files and memoranda—Record retention schedules.
40.14.070	Destruction, disposition of local government records—Preservation for historical interest—Local records committee, duties—Record retention schedules.
40.14.080	Chapter not to affect other laws.
40.14.100	Legislative records—Defined.
40.14.110	Legislative records—Contribution of papers by legislators and employees.
40.14.120	Legislative records—"Clerk", "secretary" defined.
40.14.130	Legislative records—Duties of legislative officials, employees and state archivist—Delivery of records—Custody—Availability.
40.14.140	Legislative records—Party caucuses to be advised—Information and instructions.
40.14.150	Legislative records—Use for research.
40.14.160	Legislative records—Rules for access to records.
40.14.170	Legislative records—Sound recordings.
40.14.180	Legislative records—Construction—Confidentiality of bill drafting records.

Materials specifically authorized to be printed and distributed by secretary of state: RCW 43.07.140.

**RCW 40.14.010 Definition and classification of public records.** As used in this chapter, the term "public records" shall include any paper, correspondence, completed form, bound record book, photograph, film, sound recording, map drawing, machine-readable material, or other document, regardless of physical form or characteristics, and including such copies thereof, that have been made by or received by any agency of the state of Washington in connection with the transaction of public business, and legislative records as described in RCW 40.14.100.

For the purposes of this chapter, public records shall be classified as follows:

(1) Official public records shall include all original vouchers, receipts, and other documents necessary to isolate and prove the validity of every transaction relating to the receipt, use, and disposition of all public property and public income from all sources whatsoever; all agreements and contracts to which the state of Washington or any agency thereof may be a party; all fidelity, surety, and performance bonds; all claims filed

against the state of Washington or any agency thereof; all records or documents required by law to be filed with or kept by any agency of the state of Washington; all legislative records as defined in RCW 40.14.100; and all other documents or records determined by the records committee, created in RCW 40.14.050, to be official public records.

(2) Office files and memoranda include such records as correspondence, exhibits, drawings, maps, completed forms, or documents not above defined and classified as official public records; duplicate copies of official public records filed with any agency of the state of Washington; documents and reports made for the internal administration of the office to which they pertain but not required by law to be filed or kept with such agency; and other documents or records as determined by the records committee to be office files and memoranda. [1982 c 36 § 3; 1981 c 32 § 4; 1971 ex.s. c 102 § 1; 1957 c 246 § 1.]

**RCW 40.14.020 Division of archives and records management—State archivist—Powers and duties—Duties of public officials.** All public records shall be and remain the property of the state of Washington. They shall be delivered by outgoing officials and employees to their successors and shall be preserved, stored, transferred, destroyed or disposed of, and otherwise managed, only in accordance with the provisions of this chapter. In order to insure the proper management and safeguarding of public records, the division of archives and records management is established in the office of the secretary of state, and, under the administration of the state archivist, who shall have reasonable access to all public records, wherever kept, for purposes of information, surveying, or cataloguing, shall undertake the following functions, duties, and responsibilities:

(1) To manage the archives of the state of Washington;

(2) To centralize the archives of the state of Washington, to make them available for reference and scholarship, and to insure their proper preservation;

(3) To inspect, inventory, catalog, and arrange retention and transfer schedules on all record files of all state departments and other agencies of state government;

(4) To insure the maintenance and security of all state public records and to establish safeguards against unauthorized removal or destruction;

(5) To establish and operate such state record centers as may from time to time be authorized by appropriation, for the purpose of preserving, servicing, screening and protecting all state public records which must be



preserved temporarily or permanently, but which need not be retained in office space and equipment;

(6) To gather and disseminate to interested agencies information on all phases of records management and current practices, methods, procedures and devices for efficient and economical management of records;

(7) To operate a central microfilming bureau which will microfilm, at cost, records approved for filming by the head of the office of origin and the archivist; to approve microfilming projects undertaken by state departments and all other agencies of state government; and to maintain proper standards for this work;

(8) To maintain necessary facilities for the review of records approved for destruction and for their economical disposition by sale or burning; directly to supervise such destruction of public records as shall be authorized by the terms of this chapter. [1981 c 115 § 1; 1957 c 246 § 2.]

**Transfer of records, property, funds, employees, etc.—Savings—**  
**1981 c 115:** "Sec. 5. All reports, documents, surveys, books, records, files, papers, or written material in the possession of the department of general administration and pertaining to the division of archives and records management shall be delivered to the custody of the secretary of state. All cabinets, furniture, office equipment, motor vehicles, and other tangible property employed by the division of archives and records management of the department of general administration shall be made available to the secretary of state. All funds, credits, or other assets held in connection with the division of archives and records management shall be assigned to the secretary of state.

Any appropriations made to the department of general administration for archives and records management shall, on the effective date of this act, be transferred and credited to the secretary of state.

If any question arises as to the transfer of any personnel, funds, including unexpended balances within any accounts, books, documents, records, papers, files, equipment, or any other tangible property used or held in the exercise of the powers and the performance of the duties and functions transferred, the director of financial management shall make a determination as to the proper allocation and certify the same to the state agencies concerned." [1981 c 115 § 5.]

"Sec. 6. All classified employees of the division of archives and records management of the department of general administration are transferred to the jurisdiction of the secretary of state. All employees classified under chapter 41.06 RCW, the state civil service law, are assigned to the secretary of state to perform their usual duties upon the same terms as formerly, without any loss of rights, subject to any action that may be appropriate thereafter in accordance with the laws and rules governing state civil service." [1981 c 115 § 6.]

"Sec. 7. All rules and regulations and all pending business before the division of archives and records management of the department of general administration shall be continued and acted upon by the secretary of state. All existing contracts and obligations shall remain in full force and effect and shall be performed by the secretary of state." [1981 c 115 § 7.]

"Sec. 8. The transfer of the powers, duties, functions, and personnel of the division of archives and records management of the department of general administration shall not affect the validity of any act performed by such employee prior to the effective date of this act." [1981 c 115 § 8.]

"Sec. 9. If apportionments of budgeted funds are required because of the transfers directed by sections 5 through 8 of this act, the director of financial management shall certify the apportionments to the agencies affected, the state auditor, and the state treasurer. Each of these shall make the appropriate transfer and adjustments in funds and appropriation accounts and equipment records in accordance with the certification." [1981 c 115 § 9.]

**Effective date—1981 c 115:** "This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, and safety, the support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and shall take effect July 1, 1981." [1981 c 115 § 10.]

**RCW 40.14.025 Division of archives and records management—Schedule of fees and charges—Archives and records management account.** The secretary of state and the director of financial management shall jointly establish a schedule of fees and charges governing the services provided by the division of archives and records management to other state agencies, offices, departments, and other entities. The schedule shall be determined such that the fees and charges will provide the division with funds to meet its anticipated expenditures during any allotment period.

There is created the archives and records management account within the general fund, which shall consist of all fees and charges collected under this section. The account shall be appropriated exclusively for use by the secretary of state for the payment of costs and expenses incurred in the operation of the division of archives and records management. [1981 c 115 § 4.]

**Division of archives and records management—Transfer of records, property, funds, employees, etc.—Savings—Effective date—1981 c 115:** See notes following RCW 40.14.020.

**RCW 40.14.030 Transfer to state archives—Certified copies, cost.** All public records, not required in the current operation of the office where they are made or kept, and all records of every agency, commission, committee, or any other activity of state government which may be abolished or discontinued, shall be transferred to the state archives so that the valuable historical records of the state may be centralized, made more widely available, and insured permanent preservation: *Provided*, That this section shall have no application to public records approved for destruction under the subsequent provisions of this chapter.

When so transferred, copies of the public records concerned shall be made and certified by the archivist, which certification shall have the same force and effect as though made by the officer originally in charge of them. Fees may be charged to cover the cost of reproduction. In turning over the archives of his office, the officer in charge thereof, or his successor, thereby loses none of his rights of access to them, without charge, whenever necessary. [1957 c 246 § 3.]

Columbia River boundary compact, transfer of records to division of archives: RCW 43.58.070.

**RCW 40.14.040 Records officers—Designation—Powers and duties.** Each department or other agency of the state government shall designate a records officer to supervise its records program and to represent the office in all contacts with the records committee, hereinafter created, and the division of archives and records management. The records officer shall:

(1) Coordinate all aspects of the records management program.

(2) Inventory, or manage the inventory, of all public records at least once during a biennium for disposition scheduling and transfer action, in accordance with procedures prescribed by the state archivist and state records committee: *Provided*, That essential records shall



be inventoried and processed in accordance with chapter 40.10 RCW at least annually.

(3) Consult with any other personnel responsible for maintenance of specific records within his state organization regarding records retention and transfer recommendations.

(4) Analyze records inventory data, examine and compare divisional or unit inventories for duplication of records, and recommend to the state archivist and state records committee minimal retentions for all copies commensurate with legal, financial and administrative needs.

(5) Approve all records inventory and destruction requests which are submitted to the state records committee.

(6) Review established records retention schedules at least annually to insure that they are complete and current.

(7) Exercise internal control over the acquisition of filming and file equipment.

If a particular agency or department does not wish to transfer records at a time previously scheduled therefor, the records officer shall, within thirty days, notify the archivist and request a change in such previously set schedule, including his reasons therefor. [1982 c 36 § 4; 1979 c 151 § 51; 1973 c 54 § 3; 1957 c 246 § 4.]

**RCW 40.14.050 Records committee—Composition, travel expenses, meetings, powers and duties—Retention schedules.** There is created a committee, to be known as the records committee, composed of the archivist, an appointee of the state auditor, and an appointee of the attorney general. Committee members shall serve without additional salary, but shall be entitled to travel expenses incurred in accordance with RCW 43.03.050 and 43.03.060 as now existing or hereafter amended. Such expenses shall be paid from the appropriations made for operation of their respective departments or offices.

The records committee shall meet at least once every quarter or oftener as business dictates. Action by the committee shall be by majority vote and records shall be kept of all committee business.

It shall be the duty of the records committee to approve, modify or disapprove the recommendations on retention schedules of all files of public records and to act upon requests to destroy any public records: *Provided*, That any modification of a request or recommendation must be approved by the head of the agency originating the request or recommendation.

The division of archives and records management shall provide forms, approved by the records committee, upon which it shall prepare recommendations to the committee in cooperation with the records officer of the department or other agency whose records are involved. [1975-'76 2nd ex.s. c 34 § 83; 1957 c 246 § 5.]

**Effective date—Severability—1975-'76 2nd ex.s. c 34:** See notes following RCW 2.08.115.

**RCW 40.14.060 Destruction, disposition of official public records or office files and memoranda—Record**

**retention schedules.** (1) Any destruction of official public records shall be pursuant to a schedule approved under RCW 40.14.050. Official public records shall not be destroyed unless:

(a) The records are six or more years old;

(b) The department of origin of the records has made a satisfactory showing to the state records committee that the retention of the records for a minimum of six years is both unnecessary and uneconomical, particularly if lesser federal retention periods for records generated by the state under federal programs have been established; or

(c) The originals of official public records less than six years old have been copied or reproduced by any photographic or other process approved by the state archivist which accurately reproduces or forms a durable medium for so reproducing the original.

(2) Any lesser term of retention than six years must have the additional approval of the director of financial management, the state auditor and the attorney general, except when records have federal retention guidelines the state records committee may adjust the retention period accordingly. An automatic reduction of retention periods from seven to six years for official public records on record retention schedules existing on June 10, 1982, shall not be made, but the same shall be reviewed individually by the state records committee for approval or disapproval of the change to a retention period of six years.

Recommendations for the destruction or disposition of office files and memoranda shall be submitted to the records committee upon approved forms prepared by the records officer of the agency concerned and the archivist. The committee shall determine the period of time that any office file or memorandum shall be preserved and may authorize the division of archives and records management to arrange for its destruction or disposition. [1982 c 36 § 5; 1979 c 151 § 52; 1973 c 54 § 4; 1957 c 246 § 6.]

**RCW 40.14.070 Destruction, disposition of local government records—Preservation for historical interest—Local records committee, duties—Record retention schedules.** County, municipal, and other local government agencies may request authority to destroy noncurrent public records having no further administrative or legal value by submitting to the division of archives and records management lists of such records on forms prepared by the division. The archivist and the chief examiner of the division of municipal corporations of the office of the state auditor and a representative appointed by the attorney general shall constitute a committee, known as the local records committee, which shall review such lists and which may veto the destruction of any or all items contained therein.

A local government agency, as an alternative to submitting lists, may elect to establish a records control program based on recurring disposition schedules recommended by the agency to the local records committee. The schedules are to be submitted on forms provided by the division of archives and records management to the



local records committee, which may either veto, approve, or amend the schedule. Approval of such schedule or amended schedule shall be by unanimous vote of the local records committee. Upon such approval, the schedule shall constitute authority for the local government agency to destroy the records listed thereon, after the required retention period, on a recurring basis until the schedule is either amended or revised by the committee.

Except as otherwise provided by law, no public records shall be destroyed until approved for destruction by the local records committee. Official public records shall not be destroyed unless:

(1) The records are six or more years old;

(2) The department of origin of the records has made a satisfactory showing to the state records committee that the retention of the records for a minimum of six years is both unnecessary and uneconomical, particularly where lesser federal retention periods for records generated by the state under federal programs have been established; or

(3) The originals of official public records less than six years old have been copied or reproduced by any photographic, photostatic, microfilm, miniature photographic, or other process approved by the state archivist which accurately reproduces or forms a durable medium for so reproducing the original.

An automatic reduction of retention periods from seven to six years for official public records on record retention schedules existing on June 10, 1982, shall not be made, but the same shall be reviewed individually by the local records committee for approval or disapproval of the change to a retention period of six years.

The state archivist may furnish appropriate information, suggestions, and guidelines to local government agencies for their assistance in the preparation of lists and schedules or any other matter relating to the retention, preservation, or destruction of records under this chapter. The local records committee may adopt appropriate regulations establishing procedures to be followed in such matters.

Records of county, municipal, or other local government agencies, designated by the archivist as of primarily historical interest, may be transferred to a recognized depository agency. [1982 c 36 § 6; 1973 c 54 § 5; 1971 ex.s. c 10 § 1; 1957 c 246 § 7.]

Destruction and reproduction of court records: RCW 36.23.065 through 36.23.070.

**RCW 40.14.080 Chapter not to affect other laws.** The provisions of this chapter shall not be construed as repealing or modifying any other acts or parts of acts authorizing the destruction of public records save for those specifically named in \*section 9 of this act; nor shall this chapter affect the provisions of \*\*RCW 40.04.020 requiring the deposit of all state publications in the state library. [1957 c 246 § 8.]

Reviser's note: \*(1) "section 9 of this act" refers to 1957 c 246 § 9, which repealed RCW 40.08.010 through 40.08.050 and 40.12.010 through 40.12.110.

\*\* (2) RCW 40.04.020 was repealed by 1977 ex.s. c 232 § 12. Later enactment, see chapter 40.07 RCW.

**RCW 40.14.100 Legislative records—Defined.** As used in RCW 40.14.010 and 40.14.100 through 40.14.180, unless the context requires otherwise, "legislative records" shall be defined as correspondence, amendments, reports, and minutes of meetings made by or submitted to legislative committees or subcommittees and transcripts or other records of hearings or supplementary written testimony or data thereof filed with committees or subcommittees in connection with the exercise of legislative or investigatory functions, but does not include the records of an official act of the legislature kept by the secretary of state, bills and their copies, published materials, digests, or multi-copied matter which are routinely retained and otherwise available at the state library or in a public repository, or reports or correspondence made or received by or in any way under the personal control of the individual members of the legislature. [1971 ex.s. c 102 § 2.]

**RCW 40.14.110 Legislative records—Contribution of papers by legislators and employees.** Nothing in RCW 40.14.010 and 40.14.100 through 40.14.180 shall prohibit a legislator or legislative employee from contributing his personal papers to any private library, public library, or the state archives. The state archivist is authorized to receive papers of legislators and legislative employees and is directed to encourage the donation of such personal records to the state. The state archivist is authorized to establish such guidelines and procedures for the collection of personal papers and correspondence relating to the legislature as he sees fit. Legislators and legislative employees are encouraged to contribute their personal papers to the state for preservation. [1971 ex.s. c 102 § 3.]

**RCW 40.14.120 Legislative records—"Clerk", "secretary" defined.** As used in RCW 40.14.010 and 40.14.100 through 40.14.180 "clerk" means clerk of the Washington state house of representatives and "secretary" means the secretary of the Washington state senate. [1971 ex.s. c 102 § 4.]

**RCW 40.14.130 Legislative records—Duties of legislative officials, employees and state archivist—Delivery of records—Custody—Availability.** The legislative committee chairman, subcommittee chairman, committee member, or employed personnel of the state legislature having possession of legislative records that are not required for the regular performance of official duties shall, within ten days after the adjournment sine die of a regular or special session, deliver all such legislative records to the clerk of the house or the secretary of the senate.

The clerk of the house and the secretary of the senate are charged to include requirements and responsibilities for keeping committee minutes and records as part of their instructions to committee chairmen and employees.

The clerk or the secretary, with the assistance of the state archivist, shall classify and arrange the legislative records delivered to the clerk or secretary in a manner that he considers best suited to carry out the efficient



and economical utilization, maintenance, preservation, and disposition of the records. The clerk or the secretary may deliver to the state archivist all legislative records in his possession when such records have been classified and arranged and are no longer needed by either house. The state archivist shall thereafter be custodian of the records so delivered, but shall deliver such records back to either the clerk or secretary upon his request.

The chairman, member, or employee of a legislative interim committee responsible for maintaining the legislative records of that committee shall, on a scheduled basis agreed upon by the chairman, member, or employee of the legislative interim committee, deliver to the clerk or secretary all legislative records in his possession, as long as such records are not required for the regular performance of official duties. He shall also deliver to the clerk or secretary all records of an interim committee within ten days after the committee ceases to function. [1971 ex.s. c 102 § 5.]

**RCW 40.14.140 Legislative records—Party caucuses to be advised—Information and instructions.** It shall be the duty of the clerk and the secretary to advise the party caucuses in each house concerning the necessity to keep public records. The state archivist or his representative shall work with the clerk and secretary to provide information and instructions on the best method for keeping legislative records. [1971 ex.s. c 102 § 6.]

**RCW 40.14.150 Legislative records—Use for research.** Committee records may be used by legislative employees for research at the discretion of the clerk or the secretary. [1971 ex.s. c 102 § 7.]

**RCW 40.14.160 Legislative records—Rules for access to records.** The clerk or the secretary shall, with advice of the state archivist, prescribe rules for access to records more than three years old when such records have been delivered to the state archives for preservation and maintenance. [1971 ex.s. c 102 § 8.]

**RCW 40.14.170 Legislative records—Sound recordings.** Any sound recording of debate in the house or senate made by legislative employees shall be preserved by the chief clerk of the house and by the secretary of the senate, respectively, for two years from the end of the session at which made, and thereafter shall be transmitted to the state archivist. The chief clerk and the secretary shall catalogue or index the recordings in their custody according to a uniform system, in order to allow easy access to the debate on specific questions before either house, and shall make available to any court of record, at the cost of reproduction, such portions of the recordings as the court may request. [1971 ex.s. c 102 § 9.]

**RCW 40.14.180 Legislative records—Confidentiality of bill drafting records.** The provisions of RCW 40.14.010 and 40.14.100 through

40.14.180 shall not be construed as repealing or modifying any other acts or parts of acts authorizing the retention or destruction of public records nor shall RCW 40.14.010 and 40.14.100 through 40.14.180 affect the provisions of \*RCW 40.04.020 requiring the deposit of all state publications in the state library nor shall it affect the confidentiality of the bill drafting records of the code reviser's office. [1971 ex.s. c 102 § 10.]

\*Reviser's note: RCW 40.04.020 was repealed by 1977 ex.s. c 232 § 12. Later enactment, see chapter 40.07 RCW.

## Chapter 40.16 RCW PENAL PROVISIONS

### Sections

- 40.16.010 Injury to public record.
- 40.16.020 Injury to and misappropriation of record.
- 40.16.030 Offering false instrument for filing or record.

Fraud: Chapter 9A.60 RCW.

Materials specifically authorized to be printed and distributed by secretary of state: RCW 43.07.140.

Misconduct of public officers: Chapter 42.20 RCW.

Public works accounts and records, penalty for falsifying: RCW 39.04.110.

**RCW 40.16.010 Injury to public record.** Every person who shall wilfully and unlawfully remove, alter, mutilate, destroy, conceal or obliterate a record, map, book, paper, document or other thing filed or deposited in a public office, or with any public officer, by authority of law, shall be punished by imprisonment in the state penitentiary for not more than five years, or by a fine of not more than one thousand dollars, or by both. [1909 c 249 § 95; RRS § 2347.]

**RCW 40.16.020 Injury to and misappropriation of record.** Every officer who shall mutilate, destroy, conceal, erase, obliterate or falsify any record or paper appertaining to his office, or who shall fraudulently appropriate to his own use or to the use of another person, or secrete with intent to appropriate to such use, any money, evidence of debt or other property intrusted to him by virtue of his office, shall be punished by imprisonment in the state penitentiary for not more than ten years, or by a fine of not more than five thousand dollars, or by both. [1909 c 249 § 96; RRS § 2348.]

**RCW 40.16.030 Offering false instrument for filing or record.** Every person who shall knowingly procure or offer any false or forged instrument to be filed, registered or recorded in any public office, which instrument, if genuine, might be filed, registered or recorded in such office under any law of this state or of the United States, shall be punished by imprisonment in the state penitentiary for not more than five years, or by a fine of not more than five thousand dollars, or by both. [1909 c 249 § 97; RRS § 2349.]



## Chapter 40.20 RCW REPRODUCED RECORDS FOR GOVERNMENTS AND BUSINESS

### Sections

- 40.20.010 "Business" defined.  
40.20.020 Reproduction by film or photograph.  
40.20.030 Use as original.

Court records, destruction and reproduction: RCW 36.23.065 through 36.23.070.

Materials specifically authorized to be printed and distributed by secretary of state: RCW 43.07.140.

Photographic recordation of plats and documents: RCW 65.04.040.

Uniform business records as evidence act: Chapter 5.45 RCW.

Uniform photographic copies of business and public records as evidence act: Chapter 5.46 RCW.

**RCW 40.20.010 "Business" defined.** For the purpose of this chapter, the term "business" shall mean and include business, industry, profession, occupation and calling of every kind. [1949 c 223 § 3; Rem. Supp. 1949 § 1257-6.]

**RCW 40.20.020 Reproduction by film or photograph.** The head of any business or the head of any state, county or municipal department, commission, bureau or board may cause any or all records required or authorized by law to be made or kept by such official, department, commission, bureau, board, or business to be photographed, microphotographed, reproduced on film, or photocopied for all purposes of recording documents, plats, files or papers, or copying or reproducing such records. Such film or reproducing material shall be of permanent material and the device used to reproduce such records on such film or material shall be such as to accurately reproduce and perpetuate the original records in all details, and shall be approved for the intended purpose: *Provided*, That the state archivist shall approve such material for state records use: *Provided, further*, That the state auditor shall approve such material for use by local governmental subdivisions. [1981 c 32 § 5; 1973 c 95 § 1; 1949 c 223 § 1; Rem. Supp. 1949 § 1257-4.]

**RCW 40.20.030 Use as original.** Such photostatic copy, photograph, microphotograph or photographic film record, or copy of the original records shall be deemed to be an original record for all purposes, and shall be admissible in evidence in all courts or administrative agencies. A facsimile, exemplification or certified copy thereof shall, for all purposes recited herein, be deemed to be a transcript, exemplification or certified copy of the original. [1949 c 223 § 2; Rem. Supp. 1949 § 1257-5.]

**RCW 5.46.010 Photographic copies of business and public records as evidence.** If any business, institution, member of a profession or calling or any department or agency of government, in the regular course of business or activity has kept or recorded any memorandum, writing, entry, print, representation or combination thereof, of any act, transaction, occurrence or event, and in the regular course of business has caused any or all of the same to be recorded, copied or reproduced by any photographic, photostatic, microfilm, microcard, miniature photographic, or other process which accurately reproduces or forms a durable medium for so reproducing the original, the original may be destroyed in the regular course of business unless the same is an asset or is representative of title to an asset held in a custodial or fiduciary capacity or unless its preservation is required by law. Such reproduction, when satisfactorily identified, is as admissible in evidence as the original itself in any judicial or administrative proceeding whether the original is in existence or not and an enlargement or facsimile of such reproduction is likewise admissible in evidence if the original reproduction is in existence and available for inspection under direction of court. The introduction of a reproduced record, enlargement or facsimile, does not preclude admission of the original. [1959 c 125 § 1; 1953 c 273 § 1. Formerly RCW 5.44.125.]

Photostatic or photographic copies of public or business records admissible in evidence: RCW 40.20.030.

## Chapter 36.23 RCW COUNTY CLERK

### Sections

- 36.23.020 New bond may be required.  
 36.23.030 Records to be kept.  
 36.23.040 Custody and delivery of records.  
 36.23.065 Destruction and reproduction of court records—Destruction of receipts for expenses under probate proceedings.  
 36.23.067 Reproduced court records have same force and effect as original.  
 36.23.070 Destruction of court exhibits—Preservation for historical purposes.  
 36.23.080 Office at county seat.

Civil actions, generally, clerk's duties: Title 4 RCW.

### County clerk

- as clerk of superior court: State Constitution Art. 4 § 26.  
 not eligible as justice of the peace: RCW 3.04.040.  
 not to practice law: RCW 2.32.090.  
 powers and duties: RCW 2.32.050.

Dissolution of inactive port districts: Chapter 53.47 RCW.

Execution docket, clerk to keep: RCW 4.64.060.

Judgment journal, clerk to keep: RCW 4.64.030.

Judgment roll, clerk to keep: RCW 4.64.040, 4.64.050.

Oaths, clerk may administer: RCW 5.28.010.

Official bonds filed with: RCW 42.08.100.

Record index, clerk to keep: RCW 4.64.070.

Registration of land titles, clerk's duties: Chapter 65.12 RCW.

Support of dependent children, clerk to charge no fees in connection with: RCW 74.20.300.

Tax warrants, clerk's duties: Chapter 82.32 RCW.

Taxes, property, certificate of delinquency, proceedings relating to, clerk's duties: Chapter 84.64 RCW.

Telegraphic copies as evidence, clerk to certify: RCW 5.52.050.

Veterans, clerk to furnish marital status certificates to free: RCW 73.04.120.

Witness fees and expenses, civil proceedings, clerk's duties: Chapter 2.40 RCW, RCW 5.56.010.

**RCW 36.23.020 New bond may be required.** When the judge or judges of any court, or a majority of them, believe that the clerk of the court does not have a good and sufficient bond on file, or that the bond is not large enough in amount, such judge or judges shall enter an order requiring him, within such time as may be specified in the order, to execute and present to them a good and sufficient bond, in such sum as may be fixed by the order. In case of his failure to file the bond within ten days from the expiration of the date fixed the judge or judges shall declare the office vacant. [1963 c 4 § 36.23.020. Prior: 1895 c 53 § 3; RRS § 72.]

**RCW 36.23.030 Records to be kept.** The clerk of the superior court at the expense of the county shall keep the following records:

- (1) A record in which he shall enter all appearances and the time of filing all pleadings in any cause;
- (2) A docket in which before every session, he shall enter the titles of all causes pending before the court at that session in the order in which they were commenced,

beginning with criminal cases, noting in separate columns the names of the attorneys, the character of the action, the pleadings on which it stands at the commencement of the session. One copy of this docket shall be furnished for the use of the court and another for the use of the members of the bar;

(3) A record for each session in which he shall enter the names of witnesses and jurors, with time of attendance, distance of travel, and whatever else is necessary to enable him to make out a complete cost bill;

(4) A record in which he shall record the daily proceedings of the court, and enter all verdicts, orders, judgments, and decisions thereof, which shall be signed by the judge; but the court shall have full control of all entries in said record at any time during the session in which they were made;

(5) An execution docket and also one for a final record in which he shall make a full and perfect record of all criminal cases in which a final judgment is rendered, and all civil cases in which by any order or final judgment the title to real estate, or any interest therein, is in any way affected, and such other final judgments, orders, or decisions as the court may require;

(6) A journal in which shall be entered all orders, decrees, and judgments made by the court and the minutes of the court in probate proceedings;

(7) A record of wills and bonds shall be maintained. Originals shall be placed in the original file and shall be preserved or duplicated pursuant to RCW 36.23.065;

(8) A record of letters testamentary, administration and guardianship in which all letters testamentary, administration and guardianship shall be recorded;

(9) A record of claims shall be entered in the appearance docket under the title of each estate or case, stating the name of each claimant, the amount of his claim and the date of filing of such;

(10) A memorandum of the files, in which at least one page shall be given to each estate or case, wherein shall be noted each paper filed in the case, and the date of filing each paper;

(11) Such other records as are prescribed by law and required in the discharge of the duties of his office. [1967 ex.s. c 34 § 2; 1963 c 4 § 36.23.030. Prior: (i) 1923 c 130 § 1; Code 1881 § 2179; 1863 p 417 § 6; 1854 p 366 § 6; RRS § 75. (ii) 1917 c 156 § 2; RRS § 1372. (iii) 1917 c 156 § 57; Code 1881 § 1384; 1863 p 219 § 118; 1860 p 181 § 85; RRS § 1427. (iv) 1917 c 156 § 72; Code 1881 § 1411; 1863 p 221 § 130; 1860 p 183 § 97; RRS § 1442.]

**RCW 36.23.040 Custody and delivery of records.** The clerk shall be responsible for the safe custody and delivery to his successor of all books and papers belonging to his office. [1963 c 4 § 36.23.040. Prior: Code



1881 § 2181; 1863 p 418 § 8; 1854 p 367 § 8; RRS § 76.]

**RCW 36.23.065 Destruction and reproduction of court records—Destruction of receipts for expenses under probate proceedings.** Notwithstanding any other law relating to the destruction of court records, the county clerk may cause to be destroyed all documents, records, instruments, books, papers, depositions, and transcripts, in any action or proceeding in the superior court, or otherwise filed in his office pursuant to law, if all of the following conditions exist:

(1) The county clerk maintains for the use of the public a photographic film, microphotographic, photostatic or similar reproduction of each document, record, instrument, book, paper, deposition, or transcript so destroyed: *Provided*, That all receipts and canceled checks filed by a personal representative pursuant to RCW 11-.76.100 may be removed from the file by order of the court and destroyed the same as an exhibit pursuant to RCW 36.23.070.

(2) At the time of the taking of said photographic film, microphotographic, photostatic or similar reproduction, the county clerk or other person under whose direction and control the same was taken, attached thereto, or to the sealed container in which the same was placed and has been kept, or incorporated in said photographic film, microphotographic, photostatic or similar reproduction, a certification that the copy is a correct copy of the original, or of a specified part thereof, as the case may be, the date on which taken, and the fact it was taken under his direction and control. The certificate must be under the official seal of the certifying officer, if there be any, or if he be the clerk of a court having a seal, under the seal of such court.

(3) The county clerk promptly seals and stores at least one original negative of each such photographic film, microphotographic, photostatic or similar reproduction in such manner and place as reasonably to assure its preservation indefinitely against loss, theft, defacement, or destruction. [1981 c 277 § 10; 1973 c 14 § 1; 1971 c 29 § 1; 1963 c 4 § 36.23.065. Prior: 1957 c 201 § 1.]

**RCW 36.23.067 Reproduced court records have same force and effect as original.** Any print, whether enlarged or not, from any photographic film, including any photographic plate, microphotographic film, or photostatic negative or similar reproduction, of any original record, document, instrument, book, paper, deposition or transcript which has been processed in accordance with the provisions of RCW 36.23.065, and has been certified by the county clerk under his official seal as a true copy, may be used in all instances, including introduction in evidence in any judicial or administrative proceeding, that the original record, document, instrument, book, paper, deposition or transcript might have been used, and shall have the full force and effect of said original for all purposes. [1963 c 4 § 36.23.067. Prior: 1957 c 201 § 2.]

**RCW 36.23.070 Destruction of court exhibits—Preservation for historical purposes.** A county clerk may at any time more than six years after the entry of final judgment in any action apply to the superior court for an authorizing order and, upon such order being signed and entered, turn such exhibits of possible value over to the sheriff for disposal in accordance with the provisions of chapter 63.40 RCW, and destroy any other exhibits, unopened depositions, and reporters' notes which have theretofore been filed in such cause: *Provided*, That reporters' notes in criminal cases must be preserved for at least fifteen years: *Provided further*, That any exhibits which are deemed to possess historical value may be directed to be delivered by the clerk to libraries or historical societies. [1981 c 154 § 1; 1973 c 14 § 2; 1967 ex.s. c 34 § 3; 1963 c 4 § 36.23.070. Prior: 1957 c 201 § 3; 1947 c 277 § 1; Rem. Supp. 1947 § 81-1.]

**RCW 36.23.080 Office at county seat.** The office of the clerk of the superior court shall be kept at the county seat of the county of which he is clerk. [1963 c 4 § 36.23.080. Prior: 1891 c 57 § 1; RRS § 73, part. Cf. Code 1881 § 2125.]



**RCW 42.17.250 Duty to publish procedures.** (1) Each state agency shall separately state and currently publish in the Washington Administrative Code and each local agency shall prominently display and make available for inspection and copying at the central office of such local agency, for guidance of the public:

(a) Descriptions of its central and field organization and the established places at which, the employees from whom, and the methods whereby, the public may obtain information, make submittals or requests, or obtain copies of agency decisions;

(b) Statements of the general course and method by which its operations are channeled and determined, including the nature and requirements of all formal and informal procedures available;

(c) Rules of procedure;

(d) Substantive rules of general applicability adopted as authorized by law, and statements of general policy or interpretations of general applicability formulated and adopted by the agency; and

(e) Each amendment or revision to, or repeal of any of the foregoing.

(2) Except to the extent that he has actual and timely notice of the terms thereof, a person may not in any manner be required to resort to, or be adversely affected by, a matter required to be published or displayed and not so published or displayed. [1973 c 1 § 25 (Initiative Measure No. 276 § 25).]

**RCW 42.17.260 Documents and indexes to be made public.** (1) Each agency, in accordance with published rules, shall make available for public inspection and copying all public records. To the extent required to prevent an unreasonable invasion of personal privacy, an agency shall delete identifying details when it makes available or publishes any public record; however, in each case, the justification for the deletion shall be explained fully in writing.

(2) Each agency shall maintain and make available for public inspection and copying a current index providing identifying information as to the following records issued, adopted, or promulgated after January 1, 1973:

(a) Final opinions, including concurring and dissenting opinions, as well as orders, made in the adjudication of cases;

(b) Those statements of policy and interpretations of policy, statute, and the Constitution which have been adopted by the agency;

(c) Administrative staff manuals and instructions to staff that affect a member of the public;

(d) Planning policies and goals, and interim and final planning decisions;

(e) Factual staff reports and studies, factual consultant's reports and studies, scientific reports and studies, and any other factual information derived from tests, studies, reports, or surveys, whether conducted by public employees or others; and

(f) Correspondence, and materials referred to therein, by and with the agency relating to any regulatory, supervisory, or enforcement responsibilities of the agency, whereby the agency determines, or opines upon, or is

asked to determine or opine upon, the rights of the state, the public, a subdivision of state government, or of any private party.

(3) An agency need not maintain such an index, if to do so would be unduly burdensome, but it shall in that event:

(a) Issue and publish a formal order specifying the reasons why and the extent to which compliance would unduly burden or interfere with agency operations; and

(b) Make available for public inspection and copying all indexes maintained for agency use.

(4) A public record may be relied on, used, or cited as precedent by an agency against a party other than an agency and it may be invoked by the agency for any other purpose only if—

(a) It has been indexed in an index available to the public; or

(b) Parties affected have timely notice (actual or constructive) of the terms thereof.

(5) This chapter shall not be construed as giving authority to any agency to give, sell or provide access to lists of individuals requested for commercial purposes, and agencies shall not do so unless specifically authorized or directed by law: *Provided, however,* That lists of applicants for professional licenses and of professional licensees shall be made available to those professional associations or educational organizations recognized by their professional licensing or examination board, upon payment of a reasonable charge therefor: *Provided further,* That such recognition may be refused only for a good cause pursuant to a hearing under the provisions of chapter 34.04 RCW. [1975 1st ex.s. c 294 § 14; 1973 c 1 § 26 (Initiative Measure No. 276 § 26).]

**RCW 42.17.270 Facilities for copying—Availability of public records.** Public records shall be available for inspection and copying, and agencies shall, upon request for identifiable public records, make them promptly available to any person. Agency facilities shall be made available to any person for the copying of public records except when and to the extent that this would unreasonably disrupt the operations of the agency. Agencies shall honor requests received by mail for identifiable public records unless exempted by provisions of this chapter. [1975 1st ex.s. c 294 § 15; 1973 c 1 § 27 (Initiative Measure No. 276 § 27).]

**RCW 42.17.280 Times for inspection and copying.** Public records shall be available for inspection and copying during the customary office hours of the agency: *Provided,* That if the agency does not have customary office hours of at least thirty hours per week, the public records shall be available from nine o'clock a.m. to noon and from one o'clock p.m. to four o'clock p.m. Monday through Friday, excluding legal holidays, unless the person making the request and the agency or its representative agree on a different time. [1973 c 1 § 28 (Initiative Measure No. 276 § 28).]



**RCW 42.17.290 Protection of public records—**  
**Public access.** Agencies shall adopt and enforce reasonable rules and regulations, consonant with the intent of this chapter to provide full public access to public records, to protect public records from damage or disorganization, and to prevent excessive interference with other essential functions of the agency. Such rules and regulations shall provide for the fullest assistance to inquirers and the most timely possible action on requests for information. Nothing in this section shall relieve agencies from honoring requests received by mail for copies of identifiable public records. [1975 1st ex.s. c 294 § 16; 1973 c 1 § 29 (Initiative Measure No. 276 § 29).]

**RCW 42.17.295 Destruction of information relating to employee misconduct.** Nothing in this chapter prevents an agency from destroying information relating to employee misconduct or alleged misconduct, in accordance with RCW 41.06.450, to the extent necessary to ensure fairness to the employee. [1982 c 208 § 13.]

**Severability—1982 c 208:** See RCW 42.40.900.

**RCW 42.17.300 Charges for copying.** No fee shall be charged for the inspection of public records. Agencies may impose a reasonable charge for providing copies of public records and for the use by any person of agency equipment to copy public records, which charges shall not exceed the amount necessary to reimburse the agency for its actual costs incident to such copying. [1973 c 1 § 30 (Initiative Measure No. 276 § 30).]

**RCW 42.17.310 Certain personal and other records exempt.** (1) The following shall be exempt from public inspection and copying:

(a) Personal information in any files maintained for students in public schools, patients or clients of public institutions or public health agencies, welfare recipients, prisoners, probationers, or parolees.

(b) Personal information in files maintained for employees, appointees, or elected officials of any public agency to the extent that disclosure would violate their right to privacy.

(c) Information required of any taxpayer in connection with the assessment or collection of any tax if the disclosure of the information to other persons would violate the taxpayer's right to privacy or would result in unfair competitive disadvantage to such taxpayer.

(d) Specific intelligence information and specific investigative records compiled by investigative, law enforcement, and penology agencies, and state agencies vested with the responsibility to discipline members of any profession, the nondisclosure of which is essential to effective law enforcement or for the protection of any person's right to privacy.

(e) Information revealing the identity of persons who file complaints with investigative, law enforcement, or penology agencies, other than the public disclosure commission, if disclosure would endanger any person's life, physical safety, or property: *Provided*, That if at the time the complaint is filed the complainant indicates a desire for disclosure or nondisclosure, such desire shall

govern: *Provided, further*, That all complaints filed with the public disclosure commission about any elected official or candidate for public office must be made in writing and signed by the complainant under oath.

(f) Test questions, scoring keys, and other examination data used to administer a license, employment, or academic examination.

(g) Except as provided by chapter 8.26 RCW, the contents of real estate appraisals, made for or by any agency relative to the acquisition or sale of property, until the project or prospective sale is abandoned or until such time as all of the property has been acquired or the property to which the sale appraisal relates is sold, but in no event shall disclosure be denied for more than three years after the appraisal.

(h) Valuable formulae, designs, drawings, and research data obtained by any agency within five years of the request for disclosure when disclosure would produce private gain and public loss.

(i) Preliminary drafts, notes, recommendations, and intra-agency memorandums in which opinions are expressed or policies formulated or recommended except that a specific record shall not be exempt when publicly cited by an agency in connection with any agency action.

(j) Records which are relevant to a controversy to which an agency is a party but which records would not be available to another party under the rules of pretrial discovery for causes pending in the superior courts.

(k) Records, maps, or other information identifying the location of archaeological sites in order to avoid the looting or depredation of such sites.

(1) Any library record, the primary purpose of which is to maintain control of library materials, or to gain access to information, which discloses or could be used to disclose the identity of a library user.

(2) The exemptions of this section shall be inapplicable to the extent that information, the disclosure of which would violate personal privacy or vital governmental interests, can be deleted from the specific records sought. No exemption shall be construed to permit the nondisclosure of statistical information not descriptive of any readily identifiable person or persons.

(3) Inspection or copying of any specific records, exempt under the provisions of this section, may be permitted if the superior court in the county in which the record is maintained finds, after a hearing with notice thereof to every person in interest and the agency, that the exemption of such records, is clearly unnecessary to protect any individual's right of privacy or any vital governmental function.

(4) Agency responses refusing, in whole or in part, inspection of any public record shall include a statement of the specific exemption authorizing the withholding of the record (or part) and a brief explanation of how the exemption applies to the record withheld. [1982 c 64 § 1; 1977 ex.s. c 314 § 13; 1975-'76 2nd ex.s. c 82 § 5; 1975 1st ex.s. c 294 § 17; 1973 c 1 § 31 (Initiative Measure No. 276 § 31).]

Exemptions from public inspection  
 accounting records of special inquiry judge: RCW 10.29.090.  
 certain criminal records: Chapter 10.97 RCW.



certificate submitted by physically or mentally disabled person seeking a driver's license: RCW 46.20.041.  
 examination reports of the supervisor of banking and supervisor of savings and loan associations: RCW 30.04.075, 31.12.325, 32.04.220, 33.04.110.  
 judicial qualifications commission, records of: RCW 2.64.110.  
 liability reserves of local government joint self-insurance pool: RCW 48.62.110.  
 medical disciplinary board, reports required to be filed with: RCW 18.72.265.  
 organized crime  
 advisory board files: RCW 10.29.030.  
 investigative information: RCW 43.43.856.  
 salary and fringe benefit survey information: RCW 28B.16.110, 41.06.160.  
 sales reports of commercial fertilizers: RCW 15.54.360.

**RCW 42.17.315 Certain records obtained by colleges, universities, libraries or archives exempt.** Notwithstanding the provisions of RCW 42.17.260 through 42.17.340, as now or hereafter amended, no state college, university, library, or archive shall be required by chapter 42.17 RCW to make available for public inspection and copying any records or documents obtained by said college, university, library, or archive through or concerning any gift, grant, conveyance, bequest, or devise, the terms of which restrict or regulate public access to such records or documents: *Provided*, That this section shall not apply to any public records as defined in RCW 40.14.010. [1975 1st ex.s. c 294 § 22.]

**RCW 42.17.320 Prompt responses required.** Responses to requests for public records shall be made promptly by agencies. Denials of requests must be accompanied by a written statement of the specific reasons therefor. Agencies shall establish mechanisms for the most prompt possible review of decisions denying inspection, and such review shall be deemed completed at the end of the second business day following the denial of inspection and shall constitute final agency action for the purposes of judicial review. [1975 1st ex.s. c 294 § 18; 1973 c 1 § 32 (Initiative Measure No. 276 § 32).]

**RCW 42.17.330 Court protection of public records.** The examination of any specific public record may be enjoined if, upon motion and affidavit, the superior court for the county in which the movant resides or in which the record is maintained, finds that such examination would clearly not be in the public interest and would substantially and irreparably damage any person, or would substantially and irreparably damage vital governmental functions. [1975 1st ex.s. c 294 § 19; 1973 c 1 § 33 (Initiative Measure No. 276 § 33).]

**RCW 42.17.340 Judicial review of agency actions.**  
 (1) Upon the motion of any person having been denied an opportunity to inspect or copy a public record by an agency, the superior court in the county in which a record is maintained may require the responsible agency to show cause why it has refused to allow inspection or copying of a specific public record or class of records. The burden of proof shall be on the agency to establish that refusal to permit public inspection and copying is required.

(2) Judicial review of all agency actions taken or challenged under RCW 42.17.250 through 42.17.320 shall be de novo. Courts shall take into account the policy of this chapter that free and open examination of public records is in the public interest, even though such examination may cause inconvenience or embarrassment to public officials or others. Courts may examine any record in camera in any proceeding brought under this section.

(3) Any person who prevails against an agency in any action in the courts seeking the right to inspect or copy any public record shall be awarded all costs, including reasonable attorney fees, incurred in connection with such legal action. In addition, it shall be within the discretion of the court to award such person an amount not to exceed twenty-five dollars for each day that he was denied the right to inspect or copy said public record. [1975 1st ex.s. c 294 § 20; 1973 c 1 § 34 (Initiative Measure No. 276 § 34).]



APPENDIX C

PREPARING A

PUBLIC RECORDS RETENTION SCHEDULE & DESTRUCTION AUTHORIZATION

Form SSA-24

The SSA-24 is a letter size form which should be prepared on a typewriter. Three copies should be submitted to the Local Records Committee. In the process of Local Records Committee review, one copy will be forwarded to the appropriate Regional Archivist, one copy will be retained by the staff of the Local Records Committee and one copy will be returned to the agency. The SSA-24 should be prepared as follows. (Also see Appendix D)

1. AGENCY TITLE: Enter name of parent agency.
2. OFFICE OF RECORD: Enter name of department, division or functional unit.
3. NAME & TITLE OF RESPONSIBLE OFFICER: Enter name of the person who has custody or responsibility for the records on the schedule.
4. PHONE: Enter telephone number of Responsible Officer.
5. DATE OF SUBMITTAL: Enter the date that schedule will be submitted to the Records Officer.
6. NO.: Enter a number for every Records Series listing. Double space between Records Series listings. Subsequent SSA-24s submitted for the same Office of Record should begin with the next number in the sequence established by the original schedule. Revisions to items on previously approved schedules should retain the numbers originally assigned to them.
7. RECORDS SERIES TITLE: Enter the title for each Records Series listing. Should be a brief, concise description of the Records Series. It should clearly identify a functional group of records. A Records Series may be defined as a group of records performing a particular function which is used as a unit, filed as a unit and may be transferred or disposed of as a unit. It may be composed of a single form such as a warrant or a number of different types of documents which work together as in a case or project file.
8. FUNCTION/PURPOSE: Indicate briefly the function, purpose and contents of the Records Series. For example: VOUCHERS Authority for payment to claimant for services or goods. The information in this block is particularly important in the process of Local Records Committee review and approval. Avoid one word descriptions. They are too ambiguous.
9. OPR or OFM: Each Records Series must be classified as either an Official Public Record (OPR) or as Office Files and Memoranda (OFM).

OFFICIAL PUBLIC RECORD (OPR): Applies to Records Series which serve as primary official proof of an action, transaction or agreement by the agency. Includes all original vouchers, receipts, warrants, checks and other official transaction source documents; all original contracts and agreements; all fidelity, surety and performance bonds; all records or documents required by law to be filed with or kept by the agency; all other records determined by the Local Records Committee to be Official Public Records.

OFFICE FILES AND MEMORANDA (OFM): Applies to Records Series which fulfill administrative functions. Includes correspondence, informational reports, working papers and secondary copies of Official Public Records.

10. **INCLUSIVE DATES:** Enter the year the Records Series began in the block "FROM." In the block "TO," enter the word "Present" for Records Series of a continuing nature. For discontinued Records Series enter the year of discontinuance.
11. **LOCATION OF OTHER COPIES:** Enter the names of other known offices having active copies of the same documentation found in the Records Series. Place an asterisk following the name of the office having the official or primary copy. Do not enter State Archives, inactive storage centers or private parties.
12. **VOLUME OF RECORDS:** Enter the current total volume of the Records Series. The volume should be estimated in cubic feet. A legal size file drawer will hold three cubic feet of material. A letter size drawer will hold two cubic feet.
13. **RETENTION PERIOD:** Unless otherwise provided by law, Official Public Records must be retained at least six years after the completion of the action or transaction they document. Retention Periods for Office Files and Memoranda are based on the operational needs of the Office of Record or possible short term audit requirements. Years may be abbreviated as Yrs, months as Mos, weeks as Wks and permanent as Perm.
14. **REMARKS:** Enter appropriate legal citations or indicate the use of microfilm. Otherwise, leave blank for the use of the Local Records Committee. Explanations of amendments or denials made by the committee will be entered in this column. Also, the designations "Archival," "Potentially Archival" or "Selected Files Potentially Archival" will be entered beside Records Series which should be set aside for appraisal and transfer to the nearest regional branch of the State Archives rather than being destroyed once their Retention Periods have passed. A letter explaining this process will be sent to the agency upon the return of its approved SSA-24.
15. **AGENCY APPROVALS - IF REQUIRED:** Obtain the signature(s) of the Records Officer and other individuals designated by the agency to review prepared schedules before submittal to the Local Records Committee.
16. **ACTION BY LOCAL RECORDS COMMITTEE:** The Local Records Committee is chartered by RCW 40.14.070 to review and approve records retention schedules prepared by agencies of local government. It consists of the State Archivist, a representative from the State Auditor's Office and a representative from the State Attorney General's Office. As a result of Local Records Committee action, a Records Retention Schedule submitted on an SSA-24 may be "APPROVED," "APPROVED AS AMMENDED" or remain "UNAPPROVED." Without approval by the Local Records Committee, a Records Retention Schedule cannot be used as authority for the disposition of records. The action taken by the committee will be indicated by an X entered beside one of the terms listed above and confirmed by the signatures of the committee members. Once approved by the Local Records Committee, a Records Retention Schedule will give the agency continuing disposition authority for the Records Series listed thereon.

**SUPERSEDED**



APPENDIX E  
LEGAL STATUS OF MICROFILM

**Chapter 40.20 RCW**  
**REPRODUCED RECORDS FOR GOVERNMENTS AND**  
**BUSINESS**

Sections

- 40.20.010 "Business" defined.  
40.20.020 Reproduction by film or photograph.  
40.20.030 Use as original.

Court records, destruction and reproduction: RCW 36.23.065 through 36.23.070.

Materials specifically authorized to be printed and distributed by secretary of state: RCW 43.07.140.

Photographic recodation of plats and documents: RCW 65.04.040.

Uniform business records as evidence act: Chapter 5.45 RCW.

Uniform photographic copies of business and public records as evidence act: Chapter 5.46 RCW.

**RCW 40.20.010 "Business" defined.** For the purpose of this chapter, the term "business" shall mean and include business, industry, profession, occupation and calling of every kind. [1949 c 223 § 3; Rem. Supp. 1949 § 1257-6.]

**RCW 40.20.020 Reproduction by film or photograph.** The head of any business or the head of any state, county or municipal department, commission, bureau or board may cause any or all records required or authorized by law to be made or kept by such official, department, commission, bureau, board, or business to be photographed, microphotographed, reproduced on film, or photocopied for all purposes of recording documents, plats, files or papers, or copying or reproducing such records. Such film or reproducing material shall be of permanent material and the device used to reproduce such records on such film or material shall be such as to accurately reproduce and perpetuate the original records in all details, and shall be approved for the intended purpose: *Provided*, That the state archivist shall approve such material for state records use: *Provided, further*, That the state auditor shall approve such material for use by local governmental subdivisions. [1981 c 32 § 5; 1973 c 95 § 1; 1949 c 223 § 1; Rem. Supp. 1949 § 1257-4.]

**RCW 40.20.030 Use as original.** Such photostatic copy, photograph, microphotograph or photographic film record, or copy of the original records shall be deemed to be an original record for all purposes, and shall be admissible in evidence in all courts or administrative agencies. A facsimile, exemplification or certified copy thereof shall, for all purposes recited herein, be deemed to be a transcript, exemplification or certified copy of the original. [1949 c 223 § 2; Rem. Supp. 1949 § 1257-5.]

**RCW 5.46.010 Photographic copies of business and public records as evidence.** If any business, institution, member of a profession or calling or any department or agency of government, in the regular course of business or activity has kept or recorded any memorandum, writing, entry, print, representation or combination thereof, of any act, transaction, occurrence or event, and in the regular course of business has caused any or all of the same to be recorded, copied or reproduced by any photographic, photostatic, microfilm, microcard, miniature photographic, or other process which accurately reproduces or forms a durable medium for so reproducing the original, the original may be destroyed in the regular course of business unless the same is an asset or is representative of title to an asset held in a custodial or fiduciary capacity or unless its preservation is required by law. Such reproduction, when satisfactorily identified, is as admissible in evidence as the original itself in any judicial or administrative proceeding whether the original is in existence or not and an enlargement or facsimile of such reproduction is likewise admissible in evidence if the original reproduction is in existence and available for inspection under direction of court. The introduction of a reproduced record, enlargement or facsimile, does not preclude admission of the original. [1959 c 125 § 1; 1953 c 273 § 1. Formerly RCW 5.44.125.]

Photostatic or photographic copies of public or business records admissible in evidence: RCW 40.20.030.



APPENDIX F  
RECORDS DESTRUCTION PAPERWORK

AFFIDAVIT OF DESTRUCTION  
(Sample)

I, \_\_\_\_\_, acting as the agent of (agency) \_\_\_\_\_, (dept or office) \_\_\_\_\_, hereby witness the destruction of the following records according to the provisions of WAC 414-24-070 and WAC 414-24-080.

WARRANTS - 1955-1977 - No 17533-20755  
CONTRACTS - 1935-1977  
CORRESPONDENCE - 1958-1981  
COURT REPORTER'S NOTES (Civil) - 1932-1968

Destruction executed by (method of destruction) \_\_\_\_\_ on this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Agency Witness \_\_\_\_\_

**SUPERSEDED**

DESTRUCTION LOG  
(Sample)

Records Series	Inclusive Dates	Disposition Auth No	Date of Destruction
Warrants	1955-1976	S83-15	8/15/83
Contracts	1935-1976	CC-7	8/15/83
Correspondence	1958-1981	CC-7	8/15/83
Court Reporter's Notes	1932-1967	CC-6	8/15/83

RE: COUNTY CORONER GENERAL RECORDS RETENTION SCHEDULES

With the mailing of the enclosed publication, County Coroner General Records Retention Schedules and Records Disposition Management Guideline, issued by the Washington State Local Records Committee in accord with provisions of Title 40, RCW, hopefully this guideline will contribute to efficient record management practices and provide guidance in matters relative to the disposition of public records held in common by the County Coroner System.

We hope this material is of some help to you. If we can be of any assistance, please advise.

Sincerely,

FOR THE WASHINGTON STATE LOCAL  
RECORDS COMMITTEE

Sidney F. McAlpin  
State Archivist

SFMCA:hm

Enclosure



## COUNTY CORONER GENERAL SCHEDULES

**PURPOSE:** The County Coroner Records Disposition Management Manual has been prepared to provide guidance in matters relative to the disposition of public records held in common by the County Coroner System. Of particular interest are the schedules of retention, disposal and transfer of records. The schedules do not obligate a coroner to destroy any of the records which he/she desires to preserve for longer periods of time than indicated. Rather, they provide recommendations as to the length of time various records should ordinarily be retained, and authority to dispose of the listed records subsequent to the recommended retention.

**SCOPE:** The manual contains information concerning the preservation, retention, disposal, transfer and microfilming of public records. Matters relative to the creation, systems of recording, reproduction, filing systems, selection of durable papers and inks, etc., have not been included. The Division of Archives will, however, assist, advise and/or locate qualified assistance for County Coroners who may have specific problems or questions concerning such matters.

**STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS:** No public record other than Office Files and Memoranda, of any local government agency shall be destroyed until it is either photographed, microphotographed, photostated, or reproduced on film, or until it is seven years old. Except as otherwise provided by law, no public record including Office Files and Memoranda shall be destroyed until approved for destruction by the Local Records Committee. Reference RCW 40.14.070 and WAC 414-24-010.

**AUTHORITY TO ADOPT GENERAL SCHEDULES:** RCW 40.14.070 and WAC 414-24-050 provide that the Local Records Committee may approve and issue Records Retention and Disposition Schedules, which shall constitute authority to dispose of specific records, held commonly by many agencies, after a required retention period on a recurring basis until the Schedule is either amended or revised by the Committee.

**PUBLIC RECORDS DEFINED:** "Public Records" means any paper, correspondence, form, book, photograph, film, sound recording, map drawing, or other document, regardless of physical form or characteristics, and including all copies thereof, that have been made by any agency or received by it in connection with the transaction of public business. RCW 40.14.010 and WAC 414-12-020.

**RECORDS AS PUBLIC PROPERTY:** All public records shall be and remain the property of the agency. They shall be delivered by outgoing officials and employees to their successors and shall be preserved, stored, transferred, destroyed, and otherwise managed, only in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 40.14 RCW and as otherwise provided for by law. WAC 414-12-010.

**AUTHORITY TO TRANSFER RECORDS TO THE STATE ARCHIVES:** In lieu of retention in the Office of Record, records of archival or historical value may be officially transferred to the Washington State Archives or other depository officially designated by the State Archivist. See WAC 414-12-030 for further information concerning records transfer.

**IMPLEMENTATION OF COUNTY CORONER SCHEDULES:** The County Coroner General Records Retention Schedules constitute authority for any County Coroner in the State of Washington to dispose of the records listed thereon after the specified retention, per the General Schedule authority of the Local Records Committee pursuant to Chapter 40.14.070 RCW.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In developing the County Coroner Schedules the  
Washington State Archives  
was particularly fortunate in having the cooperation

of

WASHINGTON STATE CORONER'S ASSOCIATION

**SUPERSEDED**





**GENERAL RECORDS RETENTION SCHEDULE  
& DESTRUCTION AUTHORIZATION**  
REFERENCE: RGW 40.14.050 & WAC 414-24-050

DISPOSITION AUTHORITY NUMBER  
S74-141

Page 1 of 4 Pages

SCHEDULE TITLE: **Coroner's Records**

SCHEDULE APPLICABLE TO: **County Coroner**

EFFECTIVE DATE: **January 1, 1975**

ITEM NO	RECORDS SERIES TITLE & DESCRIPTION	OPR OF OFM	RECORDS LOCATION		RETENTION PERIOD	ARCHIVE?	MICRO-FILM?	DISPOSITION/REMARKS
			PRIMARY COPY	OTHER COPIES				
1.	<p><b>Coroner's Case File</b></p> <p>The case file may normally contain most and/or some of the following forms:</p> <p>A. <u>Cover Sheet</u> Brief synopsis of case - name, date, occupation, marital status, cause of death, remarks.</p> <p>B. <u>Investigation Report</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decedent's name, race, sex, age, birth date, address, place of death, etc. .</li> <li>Attending physician - name, address, diagnosis, medical history etc.</li> <li>Type of death - natural, accidental, unknown, suicide, brief detail if violent. Body found by - name, address. Name and address of person who last saw decedent alive.</li> <li>Name and address of survivors.</li> <li>Personal effects of decedent.</li> <li>Violent death - time and place of injury, how injury occurred.</li> <li>Autopsy - physicians name and address. Blood drawn yes/no, Arterial allowed yes/no, Urine analysis yes/no. Test for alcohol, barbiturate, carbon monoxide, other.</li> <li>Dental identity - name and address of dentist.</li> </ol>	OPR	Coroner's Office	Upon request Prosecuting Attorney Municipal Police County Sheriff	7 Years After Case Closure	NO	NR*	* If there is reasonable suspicion of foul play and the case remains unsolved after 7 years, the case file may be microfilmed in lieu of retaining original.

**SUPERSEDED**

FOR THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: *James M. Locke*

CHIEF EXAMINER OF MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS: *Daniel Russell*

STATE ARCHIVIST: *Robert P. Malloy*



**GENERAL RECORDS RETENTION SCHEDULE  
& DESTRUCTION AUTHORIZATION**  
REFERENCE: RCW 40.14.050 & WAC 414-24-050

DISPOSITION AUTHORITY NUMBER  
*S74-141*

Page *2* of *4* Pages

SCHEDULE TITLE: *Coroner's Records*

SCHEDULE APPLICABLE TO: *County Coroner*

EFFECTIVE DATE: *January 1, 1975*

ITEM NO	RECORDS SERIES TITLE & DESCRIPTION	OPR. or OFM	RECORDS LOCATION		RETENTION PERIOD	ARCHIVE?	MICRO-FILM?	DISPOSITION/REMARKS
			PRIMARY COPY	OTHER COPIES				
9.	Mortuary - address, requested by name.							
10.	Description and position of body							
	A. clothed, partly clothed, unclothed, scars, tattoos, needle marks.							
	B. Rigor - jaw, neck, back, leg(s), etc. .							
	C. Livor - anterior, posterior, etc. .							
	D. Position - back, face down, etc. .							
	F. Pupils - left & right - equal, pinpointed, dilated, up or down.							
11.	Identity of decedent - photo by, name, fingerprinted by, name.							
12.	Narrative summary.							
	<u>C. Personal Property Report</u>							
	1. Date, time, decedent's name, place of death. Services rendered by agency and/or persons attending deceased before coroners arrival - name of.		County Auditor	County Treasurer				
	2. List of personal effects taken from - decedent, car, residence, hospital.			Decedent's Family				
	3. Amount of cash removed from and accounted for in the presence of - name and/or agency.							
	4. Property released to - name, address, relationship to decedent, date, signature of transferring agent.							
	<u>D. Washington State Department of Social and Health Services Bureau of Vital Statistics - Certificate of Death form # DSHS 9-181 (6-73) (HEA 67)</u>		Bureau of Vit. Stat. (Olympia)	Decedent's Family				
	(formerly S.F. 8191)							

**SUPERSEDED**

FOR THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: *James M. Vecho*

CHIEF EXAMINER OF MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS: *Daniel Krume*

STATE ARCHIVIST: *Richard P. Medlin*





## GENERAL RECORDS RETENTION SCHEDULE & DESTRUCTION AUTHORIZATION

REFERENCE: RGW 40.14.050 & WAC 414-24-050

DISPOSITION AUTHORITY NUMBER <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 1.2em;">S74-141</p>	Page <u>3</u> of <u>4</u> Pages
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SCHEDULE TITLE <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 1.1em;">Coroner's Records</p>	SCHEDULE APPLICABLE TO: <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 1.1em;">County Coroner</p>	EFFECTIVE DATE <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 1.1em;">January 1, 1975</p>
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ITEM NO	RECORDS SERIES TITLE & DESCRIPTION	OPR or OFM	RECORDS LOCATION		RETENTION PERIOD	ARCHIVE?	MICRO-FILM?	DISPOSITION/REMARKS
			PRIMARY COPY	OTHER COPIES				
	E. <u>Blood Sample Transmittal Form</u> Drawn by-name, time, date, sample identification-decedents name, date of accident and/or death, age of decedent, test results-alcohol, barbiturate, carbon monoxide. Laboratory-name, address, processed by name, time.							
	F. <u>Crime Laboratory Service Form</u> Name of submitting official and/or agency, date, description of sample and description of requested test, remarks of examiner, results of examination, date.		Crime Lab.					
	G. <u>Washington State Toxicology Laboratory Transmittal Form</u>		State Toxicology Laboratory Dept. Of Pharmacology U. of W.					
2.	General Correspondence File (subject file)	OFM	County Coroner		2 years	NO	NR	
3.	Personnel Folder  A. Active (folders of persons currently employed)	OPR	Personnel Office of Employing Agency		7 years After Employee transfers, terminates retires and/or transfer folder to gaining county agency	NO	M-2	Upon termination and/or retirement transfer to inactive personnel folder file.

SUPERSEDED

FOR THE ATTORNEY GENERAL <p style="font-size: 1.5em; font-family: cursive;">James M. Vacke</p>	CHIEF EXAMINER OF MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS <p style="font-size: 1.5em; font-family: cursive;">Dance Russell</p>	STATE ARCHIVIST <p style="font-size: 1.5em; font-family: cursive;">L. J. Medlin</p>
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**GENERAL RECORDS RETENTION SCHEDULE  
& DESTRUCTION AUTHORIZATION**  
REFERENCE: RGW 40.14.050 & WAC 414-24-050

DISPOSITION AUTHORITY NUMBER  
S74-141

Page 4 of 4 Pages

SCHEDULE TITLE: **Coroner's Records**

SCHEDULE APPLICABLE TO: **County Coroner**

EFFECTIVE DATE: **January 1, 1975**

ITEM NO	RECORDS SERIES TITLE & DESCRIPTION	OPR or OFM	RECORDS LOCATION		RETENTION PERIOD	ARCHIVE?	MICRO-FILM?	DISPOSITION/REMARKS
			PRIMARY COPY	OTHER COPIES				
	B. Inactive (folders of persons who have terminated and/or retired from agency)	OPR	Personnel Office of Agency Which Employed Individual at Time of Termination		7 years After Retirement or Termination	NO	M-2	Record of long term or permanent informational value. May be filmed in lieu of retaining original.
4.	Papers of Executive Direction (papers reflecting advice from superiors and advice from subalterns or dispensed to others; formal issuances, directives and policy statements; briefings or presentation materials; survey data showing how things are done and reports on what could be done to improve).	OPR			Permanent	NO	NR	
5.	General Documentation (Minutes of meetings, agendas, dockets; regulations, procedures, organizational charts, functional statements; narrative reports, reports of subalterns; news releases and news clippings).	OPR			Permanent	No	NR	

**SUPERSEDED**

FOR THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: *James M. Vache*

CHIEF EXAMINER OF MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS: *Daniel Russell*

STATE ARCHIVIST: *Richard J. McAlpin*



PROGRAM AND FUNDING FORMULA OUTLINE  
DISCUSSION PAPER

**SUPERSEDED**

MICROFILM RECOMMENDATIONS: The coded recommendations, on the following General Records Retention Schedules are recommendations, and are not to be interpreted as either a requirement to film or a prohibition against filming any specific records.

#### MICROFILM RECOMMENDATIONS CODE

code

- NR Microfilm Not Recommended/ Destroy record at end of retention period. Record of Temporary Value only.
- M-1 Record may be microfilmed and the film serve as the public record in lieu of retaining the original for the required retention. Original should be retained at least until after audit. CAUTION: Cost comparisons between film program and storage for required retention should be made before electing to film this record. Film should be cost justified, as record is neither essential or of permanent value.
- M-2 Record of long term or permanent informational value. May be filmed in lieu of retaining original.
- M-3 Permanent Record, should be microfilmed for Essential Record security and protection.
- M-4 Non-permanent record, but should be filmed for Essential Records security purposes.

# SUPERSEDED