

The
Louisiana State Archives
Records Management
Handbook

Revised 7/16/02

The Louisiana State Archives Records Management Handbook

PART I - INTRODUCTION

This handbook was designed by the Division of Archives, Records Management, and History to assist state agencies and other governmental entities in developing and implementing their Records Management Programs. La. Revised Statute 44 requires the Division of Archives, Records Management, and History to establish guidelines to ensure the state's official records are maintained in an efficient and economical manner.

This handbook provides information on how agencies can more effectively manage the records they create and maintain. Step by step guidelines are also included to assist agency Records Officers in conducting an initial inventory of their records, the subsequent appraisal of those records to determine their retention value, and the development and implementation of the agency's records retention schedule. Legal citations, forms, a question and answer section, and a reference page can also be found in the handbook.

A. Legal Citations

The Division of Archives, Records Management, and History is mandated by the Public Records Act (**La. Revised Statutes, Title 44**) to provide for "...a statewide system of managing and preserving government records which will meet informational requirements and serve the rights and interest of government and its citizens..." by establishing standards and guidelines to ensure the state's official records are created and maintained efficiently, economically, and in a manner that guarantees their public accessibility.

La. Revised Statute 44:411 provides for the establishment of Records Management Programs within state and local agencies. This section requires the chief executive officer of each state agency to designate a Records Officer to work with the Division of Archives, Records Management, and History regarding that agency's records management needs. This section also authorizes the State Archivist to prescribe standards to assist state and local agencies in developing retention schedules for their records based on their administrative, legal, and fiscal values, procedures for the disposal of records that have met their retention requirements, and for identifying records with historical value that should be preserved permanently.

B. What is Records Management?

La. Revised Statute 44:402 defines Records Management as:

"The systematic application of management techniques to the creation, utilization, maintenance, retention, preservation, and disposal of records for the purpose of reducing costs and improving of records keeping. Records Management includes management of filing and microfilming equipment and supplies, filing and information retrieval systems files, correspondence, reports, and forms management; historical documentation; micrographics, retention programming, and vital records protection."

C. Why is Records Management Important?

Records exist in various mediums ranging from paper to digital. Some records are human-eye readable while others can be read only with the assistance of specialized equipment. In fact, many records may exist in multiple formats at the same time. Yet, regardless of the medium, records communicate information vital to the day-to-day operation of an agency or to the preservation of the institutional memory of that agency. Most records possess temporary value. Their value declines with time and at some point they become unnecessary and can be discarded. Examples of some records which typically become unnecessary are:

- Invoices
- Accounts Payable
- Canceled Checks
- General Correspondence
- Bank Statements
- General Memoranda

On the other hand, some records contain information that document ownership, rights or events and decisions that explain the evolution of an agency and are likely to be considered of permanent or archival value. These records normally possess long-term value and should be preserved for administrative, historical and other research purposes. These include but are not limited to:

- Minutes of Meetings
- Financial Journals
- Oaths of Office
- Personnel Records
- Penitentiary Records
- Legislative Bills
- Legislative Acts
- Policy Memoranda
- Old Photographs
- Records Over 50 Years Old

As a general rule, records are valued by the information they contain. Some records are the exception to that rule because they give us a view of past events or the viewpoint of a person or agency considered important to a better understanding of the future. While a record series (a group of records treated as a unit) may typically be considered useful for a short time, extraordinary events or policy changes may warrant that some parts of that series or the series itself can become archival material.

So why is Records Management important? Records Management, aside from being required by law, is important to state and local governments and the public they serve because:

- A good records management program controls the creation and proliferation of records.
- Reduces operating expenses for the agency.
- Improves the agency's efficiency and productivity.
- Enables the agency to assimilate and apply new Records Management technologies.
- Ensures that the agency is in compliance with laws governing the management of its records.
- Protects the agency from unnecessary litigation.
- Enables the agency to identify and to protect records vital to its day-to-day operation.
- Promotes better decision making by management.
- Enables the agency to identify and thus preserve those records essential to the understanding of the agency's history and function.
- Promotes professionalism in the agency's ability to do business.

Accordingly, the objective of an agency's Records Management Program should be the management of agency information to ensure it is accessible, timely, thorough, cost-effective, and accurate. An effective program can achieve this objective through application of appropriate controls during a record's five-stage life cycle. Understanding this life cycle is essential to all archival and records management programs. The stages of a record's life is more thoroughly explained in the book Information and Records Management: Document Based Information Systems by Robek, Brown, and Stephens (P. 7-8):

- The *creation stage*, when information and records are produced in a wide variety of forms and formats using different equipment and technologies.

-The *distribution and use stage*, when information and records are transmitted to those who need them and, upon receipt, are used in the conduct of business.

-The *storage and maintenance stage*, when information and records are filed or stored according to a logical scheme to permit subsequent retrieval, housed in some type of storage device, and protected and maintained so as to safeguard the integrity of the information. During this stage, the information is active; it is frequently referred to and is thus usually stored close to its users.

-The *retention and disposition stage*, when information and records decline in value, become inactive, and are then removed from active storage in prime office space, are destroyed immediately if they have no further value, or are transferred to an inactive storage facility for the duration of their retention life.

-The *archival preservation stage*, when the few records that never lose their value are preserved permanently in an archive for ongoing historical or research purposes.

D. Records Management Programs

As referenced earlier, records management, by its very definition, illustrates that a records management program is a combination of elements, that once combined and integrated, make up a records management program. The key elements of a records management program are the records inventory and retention schedule. These two elements form the foundation for the other elements including:

-Active Files Management (including filing systems and classification schemes.).

-Vital Records Protection

-Disaster Recovery Planning

-Inactive Records Management

-Image Technology for Document Management (Microfilm and Digital Imaging)

-Electronic Records Management

-Archives Management

-Forms Management

-Mail/Message Management

-Reprographics Management

Without these two elements, implementing other elements listed will be harder to achieve and likely to result in less efficiency and effectiveness. While it is not necessary to have every element to have a viable records program, a strong records management program will include many of these elements. Once a program is developed, its maintenance will require communication to employees through use of a Records Management Procedure Manual, which should be reviewed and updated at least once a year

The main focus of this handbook is to assist agencies with a general understanding of records management and to help them in the development of their retention schedules. Some of the other elements are mentioned in this handbook but in less detail. Supplements to this handbook will be developed to address those elements.

E. How Does an Agency Develop a Records Management Program?

La. Revised Statute 44:411 (C) stipulates the chief executive officer of each state agency is to designate a Records Officer to serve as a liaison between that agency and the Division of Archives, Records Management, and History on "...all matters relating to records management." This individual should possess knowledge of the records created by the agency, the function of the agency, and the organizational structure of the agency. The Records Officer must be given the support of upper management and continue to receive their support to ensure the success of the agency's Records Management Program. The Records Officer should form a Records Management Committee comprised of representatives of each of the agency's departments or sections. This Records Management Committee will be responsible for writing the agency's Records Management Manual which would enumerate all policies and procedures governing the creation, maintenance, and disposition of the agency's records. This committee would also conduct an inventory of records series within the agency, research retention requirements for each records series, and write the agency's records retention schedule. The Records Management Committee should also be responsible for periodically reviewing the retention schedule, once established, to accommodate new records series created by the agency.

The Records Officer and members of the Records Management Committee should familiarize themselves with the various Records Management books and publications currently available. Among

the best publications are Information and Records Management: Document-Based Information Systems by Robek, Brown, and Stephens; Records Management: Integrated Information Systems by Wallace, Schubert, Lee, and Thomas; Another helpful publication is F. Gerald Ham's Selecting and Appraising Archives and Manuscripts.

There are a number of web sites where records management information can be found.

PART II - CREATING THE AGENCY'S RECORDS RETENTION SCHEDULE

A. THE RECORDS INVENTORY

The initial step in developing the agency's records retention schedule is the creation of a records inventory (required by La. Revised Statute 44:411). This inventory is a comprehensive listing of all records series within the agency along with all supporting information. As previously discussed, a *records series* is a group of records that serve a similar function in the agency and are usually filed as a unit. These records are normally evaluated as a unit when researching and writing the records retention schedule. The records inventory is usually carried out on a department by department basis by the agency's Records Officer or the Records Management Committee. The Division of Archives, Records Management, and History's **Record Series Inventory Form** can be used for recording information during this inventory of the agency's records.

This inventory is helpful for many reasons.

- It identifies records series maintained by the agency.
- It enables the Records Officer/Records Management Committee to determine the volume of records maintained by the agency.
- It shows where the records are located.
- It provides information on the physical condition of the records.
- It identifies what format in which record series are created and maintained.
- It shows the rate of accumulation of each records series.
- It assists in the initial appraisal of each records series.
- It identifies duplicate records which require valuable storage

space.

B. APPRAISING THE RETENTION VALUE OF RECORDS

Most records possess temporary value. They are used for the day-to-day conduct of business and eventually lose their value and can be discarded. These records can usually be discarded shortly after they are audited or fulfilled their usefulness. A small percentage of records contain historical or archival information that should be maintained long term or for the life of the agency. There are some good sources available to assist agency Records Officers researching the retention value of their records:

Sources for Researching Legal Retention Requirements

In addition to services and publications available for purchase to aid in retention schedule legal research, several sources are available for free or for a minimal charge and are listed below.

Federal:

- Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) from the Office of the Federal Register
- National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) web page www.nara.gov
- Guide to Record Retention Requirements in the Code of the Federal Regulations
CCH, publisher, 4025 W. Peterson Ave., Chicago, IL 60646
1-800-TELL-CCH www.cch.com

Note: The Paperwork Reduction Act now requires agencies to prove the need for requiring retention in excess of three years.

State:

- Louisiana Laws available on line through the Louisiana Legislature
([Http://www.legis.state.la.us](http://www.legis.state.la.us))
- Louisiana Statutes Annotated and General Index by Westlaw

Also look at Statute of Limitations for various activities (that varies from state to state) such as:

- General Contracts (LA -10 years from breach of contract)
- Personal Injury (LA- 10 years from start of injury)

Local:

-Ordinances, Minutes of Meetings, etc.

Westlaw and Lexis are legal subscription-base databases that can be used to conduct searches for both state and federal statutes and regulations.

Appraisal Checklist

The Division of Archives, Records Management, and History has developed an **Appraisal Check List** to help Records Officers when appraising the value of their records. This check list is designed to serve as a guideline so that nothing is overlooked in preparing the records retention schedule. The check list is divided into the following sections:

- Series Identification
- Administrative Value
- Legal Value
- Fiscal Value
- Historical Value
- Disposition Instructions

SERIES IDENTIFICATION

Records Series are documents or records that are normally filed together because they share a similar function or possess similar physical characteristics.

(1) What records comprise this series?

(2) Are there auxiliary files (microfilm, tab cards, printouts, indices) which are part of this series?

-If yes, are these covered in the retention schedule?

-If such files are maintained in another office, are they covered by the retention schedule?

(3) Are all records in this series needed for the same length of time?

(4) Is the series title an accurate description of the records?

ADMINISTRATIVE VALUE

RESEARCH:

(1) Is this series likely to be used in the development or effectiveness of a program or policy?

-If yes, how far into the future?

(2) Will these records provide raw data for research projects?

-If yes, when are these projects expected to occur?

-When will this data become obsolete?

(3) Is this series vital to the function of the office?

-If yes, for how long?

-If the series were lost, could the office carry out its function?

-If not, could the information be recovered from other sources?

-How long would that reconstruction take?

(4) Has any authoritative policy been issued covering the use and/or retention of these files?

-If yes, what policy and by whom?

-What retention?

REFERENCE:

(5) When should the file be cut off?

_____Fiscal Year

_____Audit

_____Calendar Year

_____ Monthly
_____ Occurrence of an Event (Specify)
_____ Other (Specify)

(6) What is the current reference rate for this file?

-Records dated this year? _____ per _____
-Records dated last year? _____ per _____
-Records dated the preceding year? _____ per _____
-Records dated the previous year? _____ per _____

(7) How old are the records when they reach their peak reference rate?

_____ (year) _____ (month) _____ (other)

(8) How long must this file be in the office for day-to-day operations?

(9) When does the reference cease?

_____ (year) _____ (month) _____ (other) _____ (never)

DECISION:

(10) How long is this series needed for the administration of the function?

_____ total years/months

-The file should be cut off each:

_____ Fiscal Year
_____ Audit
_____ Calendar
_____ Month
_____ Other (Specify)

-Where should the file be kept?

_____ years/months in office (See Question 8); then
_____ years/months in Records Center then destroy

____ years/months in local holding area then destroy
____ permanently in Archives
____ destroy

LEGAL VALUE:

FUNCTION:

(1) Does the enabling legislation for the function require the creation of this series?

-If yes, cite _____

(2) Does the agency's enabling legislation prescribe a retention schedule for these records?

-If yes, how long?

(3) Does any Federal legislation control the function and creation of these records?

-If yes, cite _____

(4) Are there any Federal regulations prescribing a retention period for these records?

-If yes, how long?

(5) Do these files control the legal operation of the State's Constitutional duties? (election, commissions, etc.)

(6) Do these files control judicial operations? (dockets, etc)

USE:

(7) Are these files the record of state licenses or regulations?

-If yes, how long are these controls valid?

(8) Will these files prove the State's claims to property?

-If yes, is this the best series to do so?

-Is the best series available?

(9) Are these records necessary for the State to prosecute an action?

-If yes, what is the limitation of these actions?

(10) Are these records necessary for the State to defend against an action?

-If yes, for how long?

(11) Are these records necessary to protect the rights of a citizen?

-If yes, for how long?

FISCAL VALUE:

FUNCTION:

(1) Do these files control or document the generation, expenditure or movement of public funds?

-If yes,

-Are these State funds?

-Are they Federal funds?

If yes, grants? _____ If yes, type grant _____

Revenue-sharing? _____

Other? _____

-Are these Parish funds?

-Are these City funds?

-Are these a combination of funds?

If yes, a combination of which sources?

(2) Do these files document

-Revenues owed the State?

-Obligations of the State?

-Bonds?

(3) How long are these records needed to administer these funds?

(4) What are the audit requirements of the funding authority?

REQUIREMENTS:

(5) Have any regulations been issued covering retention of audited records?

-If yes, what policy and by whom?

-What retention?

DECISION:

(6) How long must these records be kept to meet all fiscal and audit requirements?

_____total years/months

HISTORICAL VALUE

GOVERNMENT:

(1) Does this record series document a specific State program?

-If yes, is this program adequately documented in this office?

-Is this program unique?

-Is this program a departure of previous State policy?

-Is this a new program?

-Will this program affect citizens beyond the immediate future?

(2) Does this series document the activities of an important government official?

(3) Do these files document the formation of public policy?

STATE:

(4) Do these records document the condition of the State or its citizens in detail at a definite point in time?

(5) Does this record series document the life of an important citizen?

(6) Do these records document a trend or move by the citizenry?

(7) Do these files document a significant event?

SOURCE:

(8) Is the information contained in this series available elsewhere?

-If so, which series better captures the historical data?

(9) Are these records contemporary with the activities documented?

-If yes, are these records authoritative?

DECISION:

(10) Do these files contain information of an historical nature?

-If yes, attach a note to retention schedule.

DISPOSITION INSTRUCTIONS

Enter information from all decision blocks:

Administrative	_____ (total years needed)
	_____ (years needed in office)
	_____ (cut-off period)
Fiscal	_____ (total years needed)
Legal	_____ (total years needed)
Historical	_____ (yes; permanent)
	_____ (no)

Select the cut-off period from administrative value; maintain in office as indicated in administrative value; then take the longest total years in the four decision areas for retention period; subtract the office period from total retention and retain for the balance in either Records Center or Archives.

Cut off at end of each _____, then,

Maintain in office _____ years/months for day-to-day operation, then,
Transfer to:
_____ Records Center for _____ years, then destroy
_____ Local holding area for _____ years, then destroy
_____ Archives for permanent retention
_____ Destroy

C. WRITING THE RECORDS RETENTION SCHEDULE

After an agency's records series have been identified, inventoried, and appraised, the Records Officer and/or Records Management Committee can write the formal records retention schedule. This schedule lists all of the agency's records and prescribes how long each records series must be retained. A properly developed records retention schedule can reduce an agency's records keeping costs, will help it in managing the growth of its records, and will provide the agency with a systematic plan for discarding records when their retention requirements are satisfied.

It is recommended the agency Records Officer and/or Records Management Committee use **Form SS ARC 932** to list its records series and their retention requirements. Once the records retention schedule has been written, it is recommended that it be reviewed by the agency's legal department prior to its being sent to the Division of Archives, Records Management, and History for final approval.

Agencies should revise their records retention schedules whenever new records series are created or deleted. It is further recommended that each agency review and update its records retention schedule every five years. Updates and changes to existing retention schedules must be forwarded to the Division of Archives, Records Management, and History for approval.

When writing the records retention schedule, each records series should be written without abbreviations or acronyms and be briefly described and legal citations, if applicable, should be indicated. Secretary of State **Form SS ARC 932** provides space for any special remarks by the form's preparer. The Records Officer, each member of the Records Management Committee, department heads, and others who deal with the agency's records should be provided a copy of the records retention schedule along with the agency's Records Management Manual. At least one updated copy of the retention schedule should be maintained off-site by the agency, in case it is needed during time of a disaster or state of an emergency.

PART III - STATE ARCHIVES IMAGING POLICY

Act 373 of the 1997 Regular Session amended **La. Revised Statute 44:39(A)** relative to the use of electronic imaging. La. Revised Statute 44: 39(A) currently reads (as of July, 1997):

"All persons and public bodies having custody or control of any public records of the state of Louisiana or any of its subdivisions may utilize any appropriate form of the microphotographic process, or an electronic digitizing process capable of reproducing an unalterable image of the original source document, for the recordation, filing, and preservation of all existing public records, forms, and documents or records, forms, and documents hereafter accumulated which pertain to their functions and operations in order to maintain efficient and economical records management programs and to conserve storage space, provided that the use of such microphotographic or electronic digitizing processes are not otherwise prohibited by law and that all microforms produced comply with standards established by the division of archives, records management, and history of the Department of State in accordance with the provisions of R.S. 44:415. However, when electronic digitizing is utilized, the original source document or microfilm of such source document shall be maintained until such time as electronic digitizing is recognized as an acceptable means of records preservation."

This act was enacted to safeguard the access to governmental records that have long term, indefinite, or permanent retention needs or requirements. The policy of the Division of Archives, Records Management and History of the Department of State concerning electronic imaging is :

In accordance with La. Revised Statute 44:410, the State Archivist hereby recognizes electronic digitizing (imaging) as an acceptable means of records preservation for the maintenance of records to be retained for a period of ten years or less. Agencies who utilize imaging for the maintenance of records series with active and inactive retention periods combined totaling less than ten years, may use imaging without maintaining the original or a microfilm copy of the original, provided that (1) the records series has been included on the master retention schedule for that agency and the master schedule has been approved by the State Archivist; (2) proper approval has been secured from the State Archives prior to the destruction of original source documents; (3) records series maintained in such a format are

stored in compliance with the retention requirement (the retentions on the same optical disk or sub directory). The schedule must address what back up and security copy methods and processes are used to ensure the integrity of the data converted to this format.

Agencies who utilize imaging for the maintenance of records series with active and inactive retention periods combined in excess of ten (10) years must maintain the original source document or microfilm of the original source document for the life of the record, as prescribed by La. Revised Statute 44:39(A). If maintaining the original source documents become overly burdensome, Computer Output to Microfilm (COM) conversion for preservation purposes may be recommended.

Any agency seeking an exemption from this policy must secure approval in writing from the State Archivist.

Note: The Division of Archives, Records Management, and History has available a Kodak Archive Writer which can convert information stored on optical disks to microfilm. This service will enable agencies who have or wish to utilize optical imaging to discard their original source documents to conserve space while keeping them in compliance with La. Revised Statute 44:39.

PART IV - THE RECORDS CENTER

La. Revised Statute 44:414 authorizes the Division of Archives, Records Management, and History to maintain a Records Center to store agency records still under retention but records which the agency does not need to maintain for the entire retention period:

" The secretary is authorized to establish an interim records center or centers and, acting through the state archivist and the division, to promulgate policies, rules, and regulations and institute and implement programs for the storage, processing, and servicing of records of state and local agencies pending their deposit in the state archives or the records center for their disposition in any other manner authorized by law; and to establish, maintain, and operate facilities for microfilming, photostating, indexing, deacidification, decontamination, archival lamination and encapsulation and other records repair and rehabilitation services for state and local agencies."

A. PROCEDURES FOR AGENCY USE OF RECORDS CENTER

- Agencies should contact Records Center at (225) 922-1224 to request storage of records.
- The Records Center will establish if agency has a records retention schedule on file with the Division of Archives, Records Management, and History. If agency does not have a records retention schedule, the Records Center will provide agency with informational packet to assist the agency in writing its retention schedule.
- If the agency has an approved records retention schedule on file, the Records Center will provide the agency with a **Record Transmittal and Receipt Form (SSAR 103)** to use in listing those records series it wishes to store in the Records Center.
- Agency should list records with different disposal dates on separate pages.
- It is recommended agencies use boxes provided by the Records Center.
- The following guidelines are to be used to guarantee records are properly packed:
 - Records should be packed in the same order as they are filed in the agency.
 - All records in each box should belong to the same records series and have the same retention requirement.
 - Leave approximately one inch of empty space in each box to facilitate retrieval.
 - Records should not be placed on top of other records in the box.
 - The weight of each box should not exceed 35 pounds.
 - Records should face the long side of the box. Letter size records may face the short end of the box to make use of available space back of the box.
 - Do not mix record media (i.e., microfiche with paper records)
 - Do not write on boxes except to number boxes (example: Box 1 of 10).

-Do not tape the tops of the boxes to be sent for storage.

Several new requirements have been added to aid in the disposal process of the boxes after their retention period has been met. Agencies should:

- Remove contents of hanging files and three-ring binders and place in clearly identified file folders or file pockets.
- Remove records from folders with heavy metal clasps.
- Note on transmittal medium of records.
- Note on transmittal for each box if the contents include confidential information such as medical records or social security numbers.
- Upon receipt of the agency's completed SSAR 103 form, the Records Center will review to determine if records should be immediately discarded, are eligible for storage, or should be archived if they contain historical or archival information.
- When the SSAR 103 form is approved the agency is notified to schedule delivery of records to be stored.
- In January and July disposal notices are sent to agencies storing records in the Records Center. Confidential records slated for destruction will be either burned or shredded and non-confidential records will be recycled (if possible).
- Any records found that may have historical value are transferred to the custody of the Division of Archives, Records Management, and History after the agency is notified that such records exist. Agencies not storing records with the Division must submit (see section on Disposition of Records) a request to the Division to dispose of records.

PART V - DISPOSITION OF RECORDS

La. Revised Statute 44:411 (A)(2) requires agency heads to provide the Division of Archives, Records Management, and History with a list of records that have satisfied their legal retention requirements and can thus be discarded. As previously discussed, it is the responsibility of the agency to develop a records retention schedule which determines the minimum length of time records must be kept before they can be legally destroyed. Records can be destroyed after they have met their legal minimum retention periods, are no longer needed for any purpose, and have been listed and authorized

for destruction on a **Request for Authority to Dispose of Records (SS ARC 930)** form provided by the Division of Archives, Records Management, and History.

The agency must submit this form to the Division prior to the destruction of any records. Upon receipt of the SS ARC 930, the Records Management Section will examine the form to determine if all items listed are accounted for on the agency's records retention schedule. The Records Management Section will then review each records series listed to determine if those records have met their retention requirements.

The Records Management Section will notify the agency if any records series are not eligible for disposition. After the SS ARC 930 form is reviewed by the Records Management Section, it is then routed to the Acquisitions Archivist to determine if any records possess historical value. If such records are identified, it is recommended to the agency that these records be transferred to the custody of the Division of Archives, Records Management, and History.

The Records Management Section and the Acquisitions Archivist must both sign any request for the disposal of records. The approved SS ARC 930 form is either mailed or faxed to the submitting agency when disposition approval is granted.

Agencies should destroy records within a regular time frame whether it be annually, quarterly, or in some other scheduled manner. Each agency should develop a disposition procedure for the following reasons:

- To ensure records that have not met their minimum retention period are not accidentally destroyed.
- To protect records that have satisfied their minimum retention but are needed for other purposes such as litigation or investigations.
- To control the creation of records.
- A disposition policy is economically sound in that it frees valuable office space that otherwise might be used for the storage of records that are no longer useful to the agency.

The Records Management Section will indicate on the SS ARC 930 form approving the agency's request to dispose of records whether a special method of destruction is needed for certain records. Confidential records, for example, must be incinerated, shredded, or macerated to protect sensitive information. **The Division of Archives, Records Management, and History has an industrial shredder it uses to destroy confidential records.** This service is provided free those records stored in the Records Center. A minimal per-pound fee is charged for all other records to be shredded.

Accordingly, agencies should note on their records retention schedules which records series contain confidential information.

The most common methods of destruction are:

- Landfill.** In some areas burial in a landfill is still a destruction option. Confidential records disposed of in this manner should be shredded prior to burial.
- Recycling.** Good method for the disposal of large volumes of records not containing confidential information. Usually, a vendor has to be found who will purchase the paper. The Division of Archives, Records Management, and History can provide agencies with the names of recycling companies.
- Incineration.** Excellent for the destruction of confidential records, but environmental restrictions now limit its use.
- Shredding.** Excellent for confidential records. Office shredders can handle small volumes of paper records. Agencies wanting to destroy large quantities of records should consider utilizing an industrial shredder.
- Maceration.** This method is carried out with the use of chemicals or pulverizers. The use of chemicals softens the paper and destroys the writing. The residue is often sold to paper manufactures.
- Pulverization.** This involves turning paper into dust. This method is good for plastic credit cards, metal binders, microfilm, and computer printouts.

Non-paper records such as microfilm, magnetic tapes and disks, and other media require a specific means of destruction. Magnetic tapes and disks (external and internal) can be erased and reused. It is important all the information has been erased prior to reuse. Software programs can be purchased to ensure that all data is “wiped” from the magnetic media. Microfilm and microfilm reels can be pulverized and some industrial shredders can accommodate microfilm. Disposal of microfilm is generally by burial in a landfill, although silver-based microfilm can be recycled for its silver content. Nitrate-based microfilm should be buried because it is highly combustible.

PART VI - PRESERVATION OF ARCHIVAL RECORDS

The records inventory will enable the agency's Records Officer to identify records that possess historical or archival value and thus require being retained permanently. Many agencies transfer custody of their historical records to the Division of Archives, Records Management, and History after these records have been identified and are no longer of use to their agency. Conversely, some agencies opt to keep their permanent records on site. Accordingly, it is incumbent upon these agencies to ensure their permanent records are maintained in an environment conducive to their long term preservation. Such agencies should develop an archival program to maintain these records. If an agency feels it cannot provide such an environment, strong consideration should be given to transferring these records to the Division of Archives, Records Management, and History.

A. CAUSES OF RECORDS DETERIORATION

A majority of records created are paper based. Those maintaining paper based records with historical value should understand what causes paper to deteriorate. The main reasons are:

- Paper produced prior to 1850 was made from cotton rags and had a life expectancy, with proper storage, of centuries. Most of the paper manufactured since that time has been made of unpurified wood pulp and is sized with harmful agents. This paper can become acidic and it ages and has a life expectancy of only 25 to 30 years.
- Excessive temperatures accelerate paper deterioration. Studies have shown that with every temperature drop of 10 degrees Celsius the useful life of paper doubles.
- High humidity causes the formation of acid in paper and encourages mold growth. Low humidity dries out the paper and causes it to become brittle.
- Mold on documents can severely stain or weaken paper.
- Common pollutants found in a modern industrialized society include ozone, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, and hydrogen sulfide, all of which have a negative effect upon paper. They cause brittleness in paper and powdering in leather bindings. Dirt and dust can scratch paper and attract harmful insects.
- Ultraviolet light in sunlight and in fluorescent lights can cause paper to become brittle. It also causes ink to fade.

- The integrity of paper is also compromised by insects and rodents.
- Paper documents must also be handled carefully. Human skin contains oils, acids, and moisture which damage paper. Care should be taken not to fold or roll documents with historical value as this will cause the paper to become brittle along the fold lines.

B. CARING FOR HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS

The agency Records Officer and/or Records Management Committee can utilize its Records Management Manual to educate agency officials on proper procedures to preserve historical records retained by the agency. Some helpful hints are:

- Remove all staples from documents.
- Use inert plastic or rustproof stainless steel paper clips instead of metal clips.
- Avoid folding documents if possible as crease lines become brittle.
- File documents in acid free folders.
- Do not repair torn documents with pressure sensitive tape.
- Do not use rubber bands to secure documents.
- Consideration may be given to encapsulating records which are frequently handled. This is different from lamination which is non-reversible.
- Oversized documents such as maps should be placed in acid free boxes when possible. They should not be rolled if at all possible.

Records with historical value are normally identified during the inventory phase. This gives the agency's Records Officer the opportunity to develop procedures for the maintenance of these records if they are not transferred to the custody of the Division of Archives, Records Management, and History.

The Records Officer may consider segregating the agency's historical records from its non-permanent records. If this is the case, the environment in which the records are stored will have a major impact on the longevity of these records. The agency will usually designate available space for its "archives" but certain precautions should be taken nevertheless. First of all, access to the agency's

historical records should be restricted to authorized staff. The room should be locked and equipped with smoke detectors, fire alarms, and fire retardant walls if possible.

The room should have a constant temperature of 65 to 68 degrees. Fluctuations of temperature should be avoided since this will accelerate deterioration of records. Temperatures should not vary by more than plus or minus 5 degrees.

The rooms relative humidity level should be kept between 35-45%. As with temperature, rapid fluctuations in humidity levels are harmful to both paper and non-paper records. Humidity fluctuations should not vary by more than a plus or minus 5%.

As previously mentioned, exposure to ultraviolet light is harmful to paper records. Sources of ultraviolet light include sunlight and fluorescent lights. Rooms where an agency's historical records are maintained should be kept dark when not in use. Ideally, the room should be windowless, but placing shades on the windows will help in limiting exposure to light. There are a number of ultraviolet light filtering systems available that can be placed over windows. One such product is Plexiglas UF3. Filtering tubes can also be purchased to cover fluorescent lights. It should be noted all these filters will need to be replaced at regular intervals.

At no time should paper records be left lying in direct sunlight.

The room's air circulating system should have filters to remove harmful dust and dirt from the air. If possible, there should also be a filtration system to eliminate pollutants from the air as well.

Rooms where historical records are kept should be kept as clean as possible. This will help alleviate the threat of rodent and insect infestation. **Food and drink should not be allowed where ver historical records are maintained. In addition, smoking should also be forbidden because it is a fire hazard and because the paper will absorb the smoke.** The room should be vacuumed regularly and a professional exterminator should be contacted if rodent and insect infestation is observed.

Finally, if an agency feels it cannot provide their historical or archival documents with the kind of environment that will ensure their long term preservation, it should consider contacting the Division of Archives, Records Management, and History about transferring these documents to the custody of the latter.

C. PRESERVATION OF NON-PAPER RECORDS

The term "record" should not be construed to mean information recorded solely on paper. To the contrary, considerable information is contained on such mediums as microfilm, magnetic tape, and optical disks. The same care given to paper based records should also be extended to these mediums.

Microfilm, for example, is best maintained at a constant temperature of about 60 degrees. Humidity levels for microfilm should not exceed 40%. The minimum humidity level varies according to the type of film base used for microfilm. Polyester base film should not be stored at less than 30% humidity while cellulose base film can be stored safely in humidity conditions as low as 15%. Microfilm should also be checked regularly for damage.

Magnetic tapes should be stored vertically in closed plastic containers which supports the reel at the hub. The tapes should also be kept in an environment with a constant temperature of 65 degrees and a constant humidity of 45%. Variations in temperature and humidity should also be avoided. Rooms where tapes are stored should be kept as free of dust and dirt as possible. In addition, eating, drinking, and smoking should be prohibited in the room. The same precautions observed for the care of paper, microfilm, and magnetic tapes should be exercised for the long term care of optical disks as well.

D. REPAIRING HISTORICAL RECORDS

More than one historical document has been damaged by someone who was not trained in document conservation. The rule of thumb is not to attempt any preservation work without first consulting a trained conservator. Conservators know which materials and techniques may be safely used for historical records and which may not. The Division of Archives, Records Management, and History has a trained conservator on staff and he is available to assist agencies with any questions they may have concerning document repair and preservation.

PART VII - DISASTER RECOVERY

A. INTRODUCTION

Preparation and prevention are key factors when developing a disaster recovery plan. Policies and procedures formulated with precautionary steps and common sense can aid in preventing major and minor disasters from occurring. When a disaster does occur, a detailed plan of action and a checklist of necessary supplies and equipment to deal with the damage are vital to a successful recovery.

Disasters come in many forms and are caused by various forces. Natural disasters such as fires, floods and earthquakes can be extremely devastating and cannot be prevented. Human disasters, however, usually result from equipment failures, arson, vandalism and carelessness. These situations are often the result of poor planning and poor security.

B. DEVELOPING A DISASTER PLAN

The first step to developing a disaster plan for an office or building is to perform a security and facility audit. This thorough inspection of the records storage and office areas will provide insight into potential hazard areas. Once identified, preventive procedures can be established to reduce the risk of disaster.

The security and facility audit should be conducted by a top-level administrator and should include appropriate members of the staff, such as personnel from maintenance, records storage, and records preservation. Sample questions and guidelines to be considered while conducting the audit are as follows:

- 1) What is the current policy concerning access to the records? Who has access and how is that access controlled?
- 2) What security devices are currently in place to prevent unauthorized access?
- 3) What is the construction and condition of the records storage area?
- 4) Is the location of the records storage area susceptible to natural disaster?
- 5) Does the storage area have a history of water leaks, faulty wiring, or clogged drains?
- 6) Is there periodic inspection of the roof, heating and ventilation equipment, and wiring and mechanical equipment?
- 7) Where are steam and water pipes located? What is their condition?

C. FIRE

Ninety-five percent of all disasters result in water-damaged materials. Fire and water damage are the most preventable types of disasters. Fire can occur at any location in a building and the need for fire detection and suppression devices cannot be overstated. Fire extinguishers can prevent the spread of localized fires, but they must be used properly. Fire departments can review a facility and offer advice on placement of devices and make recommendations on proper fire safety procedures.

Several things can be done to minimize the risk of fire or to maximize the chance of extinguishing a fire quickly. Minimizing the risk of fire is generally cheaper and easier and, of course, preferable to the occurrence of fire.

Simple steps to include in fire prevention include:

- 1) Posting "No Smoking" signs in records storage areas.
- 2) Provide ash trays with sand in the bottom in smoking areas, and discard the contents of desk ash trays in the sand-loaded ash trays only (not into waste baskets)
- 3) Install smoke detectors and inspect and test them regularly
- 4) Provide fire extinguishers and instruct employees on how and where to use them
- 5) Follow all fire, electrical, plumbing, heating and construction codes
- 6) Do not store records with chemicals, cleaning supplies, old newspapers or other combustible items
- 7) Keep records storage area neat and clean

- 8) Do not store records near a furnace, radiator or heater
- 9) Pack files in boxes so that they are perpendicular to the aisle so that files will not fall into the aisle, thus accelerating combustion, should the end of the box burn
- 10) Pack boxes full - densely packed boxes burn slower than sparsely packed ones

D. WATER

To prevent water damage, records should not be stored under water pipes or directly on the floor. Floor drains should be kept open and clear of trash so that water does not back up and rise to the level of the records. Key personnel should be informed of the location of the main building water shutoff locations. Water leaks should be repaired as quickly as possible.

E. THEFT AND SABOTAGE

The possibility of theft can be limited, if not eliminated, by limiting access to the records storage area. By limiting the number of staff who actually handle the records, any theft that occurs should be easier to investigate and chances of apprehending the thief should increase. Caution should always be used when hiring new employees and regular supervision of their activities is advised during their first months of employment. Every attempt should also be made to keep employee satisfaction with the workplace. Disgruntled employees or those who have been let go may be apt to seek some sort of revenge by stealing or damaging valuable documents and records.

F. WEATHER CONDITIONS AND ACTS OF GOD

Natural disasters can be the most devastating type of catastrophe, and can cause the most damage to records. Unfortunately, it is virtually impossible to guard against disasters of this sort. Building according to code if the building is situated in an area prone to natural disasters and having a disaster plan of action are the two most important safeguards against natural disasters.

G. AFTER A DISASTER STRIKES

In a disaster situation, the primary concern must be for human life. Evacuation of the building is of utmost importance. Escape routes from the building should be posted, and practice drills should be held to ensure that all employees know the quickest route to safety. Fire marshals in towns and cities can help employers to review building plans and determine safe escape routes for employees. A system should be devised to determine when all persons have exited the building so that emergency personnel will not have to enter the building unnecessarily.

After the disaster has occurred, the building should not be entered until it has been declared safe by the Fire Marshal or other Civil Defense personnel. There is absolutely no justification for endangering human life to save records.

H. DAMAGE ASSESSMENT

Once the building is declared safe by emergency personnel, a damage assessment team should systematically survey the damage caused to the records by the disaster. This team should consist of records custodian, conservator, maintenance, and administrator. Notes should be taken of the quantity and type of damage and whether any structural damage has occurred. Determination should be made as to the replaceability of the damaged items and records. These notes should be taken with pencil (ink will run in wet conditions) and paper so that nothing will be overlooked. Photographs should also be taken at this time, both for recording of the damage and for insurance purposes. Insurance companies and disaster recovery suppliers should be contacted at this time. Agents will need to survey the damage for their own reasons.

I. STABILIZATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Once surveyed, immediate steps should be taken to stabilize the environment that has been affected. If water damage has occurred, the growth of mold will develop in 48 to 72 hours. The warm, humid environment must be reversed as quickly as possible to forestall any further growth. Ideal conditions to be attained are 70° to 80°F and 35% or less relative humidity. If electricity or generators are available, air circulation should be implemented at the start. Other equipment which may be necessary to monitor conditions include dehumidifiers, pumps, thermometers, hygrometers, and hygrothermographs. Fans can also aid in circulating air throughout the area. Caution should always be a priority if there is any standing water in the area.

J. DISASTER RECOVERY TEAMS

Recovery teams should be made up of available employees. Work crews should be organized and responsibilities should be assigned to each team. This is the time for a plan of action. After the area is surveyed to assess the damage, a priority list should determine which records should be attended to first. At all times, the public should be kept out of the affected areas and teams should be given periodic rest. Food and beverages should also be provided to keep the teams in good condition for the task they face.

K. RESTORATION OF THE DAMAGED AREA

Once the damaged items have been removed to a safe area for restoration, the damaged location itself must be restored. Thorough cleaning of walls, floors, ceilings, furniture, equipment and carpet should be undertaken immediately. Professionals should be called in to repair any structural damage and pest control professionals should handle any fogging for insects that may have infested the area.

For a listing of Disaster Recovery organizations, companies and specialists, contact the Louisiana State Archives Conservation Department at (225) 922-1218.

L. MOLD

To halt further mold growth and to delay the restoration process safely, if necessary, freezing water damaged records is recommended. Freezing should be done within three days until the materials

can be commercially dried. This allows the records to be cleaned and dried in small quantities and will prohibit any further mold and mildew growth. Wet paper records should be stored in plastic milk crates and should be elevated above the floor on wooden pallets to allow greater circulation of air. During the restoration process, materials affected by mold and mildew should be separated from other items to prevent the spread of the fungi. Air should be kept circulating at all times. After the mold has dried, it can often be brushed or vacuumed off of the record. Fumigation should only be performed by professionals.

Photographs, negatives, films and sound recordings should not be frozen. These items should be handled by professionals. Wet microfilm and photographic film can be kept in cool, unchlorinated water up to three days and then should be sent to a professional for restoration.

M. SUPPLIES

Supplies that may be needed as a result of a disaster should be identified before the disaster ever occurs. If possible, certain of those supplies should be kept on hand. Other supplies should be available in a relatively short period of time. Addresses and phone numbers of supply companies should be kept available so that contact can be made quickly in times of disaster. Examples of supplies that may be needed in disaster situations are as follows:

- pallets/forklifts
- plastic milk crates/cardboard boxes
- paper towels
- unprinted newsprint
- chemicals such as fungicides and disinfectants
- freezer wrap
- mylar and pellaon
- portable fans
- dehumidifiers
- hygrometers or sling psychrometers
- portable generators
- portable electric pumps
- heavy-duty extension cords
- freezer trucks
- flashlights
- plastic sheeting

PART VIII - DEVELOPING A VITAL RECORDS PROGRAM

A vital records program should be developed in order to identify those records which are the most "essential" to the operation and existence of the office. These records, once identified, should be duplicated, and the duplicate copies stored off-site. Those records which should be selected for protection in this way include records essential to the continued operation of the agency, records required to protect the rights of individuals and government, and records essential to reconstruction of the office.

One person in the office should be designated to devise a vital records plan and have that plan approved by the appropriate administrative figures. Using retention schedules as well as an on-site survey, it should be determined exactly what records are in the care of the office staff. Each record series listed on the retention schedules should be located. Knowledge of the record series location will aid in speedy retrieval when a disaster occurs. Once a complete survey has been conducted, a decision must be made to determine those records considered most vital to the office. These will usually consist of the records deemed permanent by archival determination and listed so on the retention schedules. However, other records which can aid in the continuation of office operations must also be considered. Once the vital records have been identified, efforts should be made to duplicate these records and store them off-site. This evaluation should be repeated periodically so that future records can be included in the survey.

A vital records program is necessary in that it assists the office in recovering from disasters which affect records, and it aids in preserving vital records from physical deterioration. The only difference in the deterioration of records from natural disasters or physical deterioration is the time in which the destruction takes place. Both situations result in a loss of records.

A. MICROFILM SERVICES

Revised Statute 44:415 authorizes the Microfilm Section of the Division of Archives, Records Management, and History to be the centralized microfilm center for the state. The statute states:

"All state agencies lacking existing internally established micro-filming systems of their own, and those state agencies whose equipment or facilities are no longer adequate to meet the agency's need, shall contract with the division for microfilming services or shall obtain division approval for any such contract with any other vendor."

The Division of Archives, Records Management, and History through its Micrographics Section provides a wide array of micrographic services to state and local agencies. Microfilming is recognized as the best medium for the long term retention of records. In addition, microfilming reduces storage space required for paper by 98 percent. Agencies with restricted storage space for their records with long term or permanent retention requirements are strongly urged to consider conversion of those paper-based records to microfilm. As previously discussed, the Division of Archives, Records Management, and History requires agencies converting records with long term, indefinite, or permanent retention requirements to a digital format must maintain the original source document or a microfilmed

copy of the original source document. Given the premium placed on space in most agencies, it is prudent for those agencies to explore utilization of microfilm for these records.

Agencies desiring information on microfilming can contact the Division of Archives, Records Management, and History for further details.

The Division's microfilming fee entails:

- the pick up of agency records
- the review of these records for documents that do not require microfilming
- preparation of documents for filming
- film, process, and quality control testing and review
- disposal of the original paper records (once film is reviewed and approved by agency)
- maintaining the silver security copy for the agency
- provide agency a diazo (working) copy for office use.

GLOSSARY

Title 44:402 lists several definitions that will assist agency Records Officers in understanding the provisions of Title 44 and in managing their records:

-**SECRETARY** means Secretary of State.

-**STATE ARCHIVIST** means the state archivist and director of the Division of Archives, Records Management and History appointed by the secretary to serve as director of the division and as state archivist.

-**DIVISION** means the Division of Archives, Records Management, and History.

-**RECORDS** means all documents, papers, letters, books, drawings, maps, plats, photographs, magnetic or optical media, microfilm microphotograph, motion picture film, or other document or any other material, regardless of physical form or characteristic, generated or received under law or in connection with the transaction of official business, or preserved by and agency or political subdivision because of other informational or legal value. **This term shall not be construed to include library and museum material developed or acquired and preserved solely for reference or exhibition purposes, extra copies maintained for convenience in reference or stocks of standard publications, or processed documents.**

-**AGENCY** means any state, parish, and municipal office, department, division, board, bureau, commission, authority, or other separate unit of state, parish, or municipal government created or established by the constitution, law, resolution, proclamation, or ordinance.

-**STATE ARCHIVES** means an establishment maintained by the division to administer a program to provide for the preservation of those records and other papers that have been determined by the State Archivist to have sufficient historical, fiscal, or legal value to warrant their continued preservation by the state, whether they have been deposited with the State Archives or are to be maintained in agency custody.

-**RECORDS MANAGEMENT** means the systematic application of management techniques to the creation, utilization, maintenance, retention, preservation, and disposal of records for the purpose of reducing costs and improving efficiency of records keeping. Records management includes filing and microfilming equipment and supplies; filing and information retrieval systems; files, correspondence, reports, and forms management; historical documentation; micrographics, retention programming; and vital records protection.

-**RECORDS CENTER** means an establishment maintained by the division primarily for the economical storage, processing, servicing, and security of inactive records that must be retained for varying periods of time but which need not be held in agency offices for the entire periods.

-RETENTION AND DISPOSAL means a set of disposition instructions prescribing how long, in what location, under what conditions, and in what form records series shall be kept.

-VITAL RECORDS mean any record essential to either or both the resumption or continuation of operations, to verification or re-creation of the legal and financial status of government in the state, or to the protection and fulfillment of obligations to citizens of the state.

-DESTRUCTION means to destroy by shredding, burning, or other suitable means of obliteration.

-DISPOSAL means destruction in any manner approved by the environmental authority; or, transferal into the custody of the repository designated by the State Archivist as most appropriate for continued maintenance.

Other helpful terms are:

-TEMPORARY RECORD. A record with a short term retention value and can be discarded when its usefulness to the agency expires. Examples of these forms of records are invoices, purchase orders, and general correspondence.

-HISTORICAL RECORD. A record that possesses long term research and reference value and should be maintained permanently. These records preserve the history of an institution and the people.

Other glossaries can be found in the more popular books on Records Management that are available. ARMA's (Association of Records Managers and Administrators) *Glossary of Records and Information Management Terms* (ANSI/ARMA-10-1999) developed by the ARMA International Standards Committee Glossary Task Force (available from their web site <http://www.arma.org/Bookstore/default.cfm>). This standard defines and explains more than 300 terms representing common and specialized terminology used in the field of records and information management. It includes a section of abbreviations and acronyms.

Another good glossary is **A Glossary for Archivists, Manuscript Curators, and Records Managers**, which was compiled by Lewis J. Bellardo and Lynn Lady Bellardo. The book is part of the Archival Fundamental Series published by the Society for American Archivists. It can be obtained by writing:

Society of American Archivists
600 South Federal, Suite 504
Chicago, Illinois 60605