

# Guidelines for Wyoming State Agency Records Officers



WYOMING STATE  
**ARCHIVES**

## **Guidelines for Wyoming State Agencies' Records Officers**

The Wyoming State Archives may revise any information contained in this set of guidelines at any time by changing, adding to, deleting from or otherwise updating this document. Please visit our website for the most current information on how to manage records created by Wyoming's state agencies at <http://wyoarchives.state.wy.us/>

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## **Introduction**

A records management program is a systematic plan for creating, organizing, and using information. It ensures that information is available quickly and efficiently. It encompasses all forms of recorded information -- paper documents, computer files, tapes, and microfilm – and provides for their routine upkeep, preservation, and disposition. Deciding which records are truly valuable, and should be retained, and which records have no value, and should be destroyed, is the number one priority of a sound and comprehensive records management program.

Through records management, state agencies can:

- Promote access to information
- Ensure ongoing operation in case of emergency
- Limit duplication
- Prevent unnecessary accumulation
- Maintain sufficient storage space
- Preserve history

The purpose of this manual is to establish guidelines with respect to the creation, receipt, maintenance, use, retention, and destruction of state records. This manual also establishes the necessary functions and role of the Wyoming State Archives in fulfilling its responsibilities of managing one of the most critical state assets – its recorded information.

## **Responsibilities of Records Officers**

You, as records officer, should be someone who is knowledgeable about the records in your department or agency and who has been authorized to make decisions concerning them. This designated position will work closely with the State Archives in the care, maintenance, scheduling, designation, classification, disposal, and preservation of records. The duties of the records officers are spelled out in Wyoming Statute 9-2-409:

**Each department or agency of the state government shall designate a records officer who shall supervise the departmental records program and who shall represent the office in all departmental matters before the records committee. The records officer and the director shall prepare transfer schedules for the transfer of public records to the records centers or to the archives.**

Records officers play an important role in the records management program. Their efforts are essential in documenting the history of the State of Wyoming. They also contribute to reducing the cost of government by efficiently and effectively managing and maintaining accurate agency records. Records officers also appreciate that maintaining records beyond their approved retention has the potential to influence both audit and litigation.

Main responsibilities of a records officer include:

1. Developing and providing oversight of records management programs in their agency, including training others in their agency to follow established records management guidelines, policies, and retention schedules.
2. Serving as the contact person for the State Archives. Inventorying agency records, developing agency retention schedules, and coordinating agency approvals for new retention schedules and the timely disposal of records stored at the State Records Center.
3. Implementing State Records Committee approved record retention schedules and documenting authorized destructions of obsolete records.

### **Records Retention Schedules**

Applying retention schedules is the process of identifying all records and assigning an appropriate time period for which the records must be kept. It is important to note that all information media regardless of the physical form or characteristics, such as paper, microfilm, and electronic files, are subject to the provisions of legally approved retention schedules.

Retention schedules provide the guidance necessary to prevent unneeded records from consuming valuable file or server space and to assure that vital records and mid to long-term records are preserved until they have served their purpose.

Records retention schedules are prepared by the State Archives' Records Management Unit in consultation with the records officer of the agency of record, and are legally approved by the State Records Committee. [The schedules should also be reviewed periodically](#) to see if legal, administrative, fiscal, or historical values require the retention periods to be changed.

To establish new schedules, update, or change existing retention schedules please contact your assigned Records Analyst at 777-5586.

### **State Records Center**

The Wyoming State Archives administers a State Records Center (SRC) that provides centralized, economical, and controlled storage of inactive and pre-archival paper records. The records center is used for the storage of state agency records which are no longer needed in immediate office space for conducting current business, but which must be kept for legal, administrative, or fiscal reasons. Records must have a disposition number assigned before they are transferred.

While all public records are the property of the state, for the purposes of this manual, records will remain the property of the agency of record during the time they are stored in the records center. If the State Archives determines that the records have permanent value, they will be transferred to and become the property of the State Archives. Accordingly, these records will not be released to another agency or person without written permission from the agency of record. Information from the records is provided the same protection.

## **State Record Center Services:**

1. Emergency Research Requests – *(2 hour response window applicable)*. Emergency requests should be entered into RIMS - <http://rims.state.wy.us/>. To confirm receipt of the emergency request please follow-up with an email or phone, until you reach a State Archives staff member (during business hours):
  - call 307-637-4887 or 307-214-1901
  - email [doug.mewis@wyo.gov](mailto:doug.mewis@wyo.gov) or [beth.miller1@wyo.gov](mailto:beth.miller1@wyo.gov)
  - call Carmen Clayton, Records Management Supervisor, 307-777-5586
  - call 307-777-7826 (General Archives phone number)

Emergency requests will have priority over all other requests. When making the request in RIMS, please specify the request is an emergency.

2. Daily Retrieval Research Requests – *(two business day response window applicable)*. Daily research requests should be entered into RIMS. If the file is not available or cannot be located, the SRC staff will notify the person making the request.
3. Pick-up of Records/Boxes – *(10 business day response window applicable)*. Pick-up requests should be requested for pick-up in RIMS.
4. Interfiles into Existing Boxes. For new items to be interfiled into existing boxes at the SRC, please attach a note to each file containing the agency name, box number, box barcode and shelf number where file should be placed.
5. Orders for Empty Storage Boxes. Please contact Beth Miller at 637-4887 - [beth.miller1@wyo.gov](mailto:beth.miller1@wyo.gov) to arrange for pickup or delivery of empty archive boxes.

## **Transfer of Records to the State Records Center**

If your office is running out of filing space and the records are not being actively used, they are good candidates to be sent to the records center for storage. You may only send those records that have not completed their retention requirements. Records that have already met their retention period will not be accepted. For example, 30-year-old records scheduled for 25 year retention will not be accepted into the State Records Center.

To transfer your records to the records center, you will need specific records center boxes, Avery 5168 or similar gum labels, and access to RIMS/Infolinx. If you have questions or need assistance in transferring your records, please contact [your assigned analyst](#). Your records analyst will also be happy to provide initial or refresher training in using the RIMS online database to enter your boxes and schedule retrievals from or deliveries to the Records Center.

## **Guidelines for Transferring Records:**

- Please do not overload or stuff records into the boxes. The box should be full but manageable. A general rule is to leave the width of your fist empty at the end of the box.

- Organize the records in a logical sequence before boxing them, and then number the boxes in sequence. Please use a unique number for each box you send to the SRC. A unique number may be the last two digits of the current year and the box number in sequence, for example, the first box of the year may be 13-001 and the hundred and tenth box may be 13-110. Whatever numbering system you choose to use, we recommend you insure all agency users of RIMS are aware of the procedure.
- Put records of the same retention period together in a box. Do not mix permanent and non-permanent records in the same box.
- Do not send in non-record material, such as blank forms or duplicate publications.
- The following items are considered contaminants and should not be packed with records:
  - Binders
  - Document Protectors
  - Hanging Folders
  - Plastic Folders
  - Rubber Bands
  - Binder Clips
  - Paper Clips
  - Post-Its
  - Electronic Media (cassettes, VHS Tapes, CDs) Pictures (non-permanent records)
  - Plastic Sleeves on FEDEX and similar mailing envelopes
- RIMS automatically generates a box label for each box you create. Each box prepared for the SRC should have a label on the handle-end side of the box. If reusing a box, make sure any old labels and barcodes are completely crossed out.
- After entering the box into RIMS, you will need to “Request Pick-up” of your files/boxes in RIMS.

## **Records Retrieval**

No one else has access to your records. Therefore, if you wish to provide your records to another agency or individual, you will have to initiate the request. A written authorization from your agency's records officer or administrator will allow access to your records.

Your records may be returned to the SRC through the centralized mail system. If entered in RIMS, we will pick them up at your request.

Each request for records retrieval is electronically recorded by RIMS and printed out for delivery and reporting purposes. A copy of this transaction log may be provided to your agency upon request.

## **Destruction of Records**

When records have completed their life cycle, as prescribed by the legally approved records retention schedules, they may be destroyed. Even though the records are scheduled for

destruction, they may need to be screened for ongoing legal or historical value.

If records are being used in any legal action, they have to be retained until settlement of litigation. All financial records must be kept until they have met all audit requirements and all audit findings have been resolved.

Destruction of records should be documented by preparing a Certificate of Records Destruction form. The Records Management Unit maintains the original of the certificate, and a duplicate may be created and retained by the agency of record. If your agency is going to destroy its records in-house, you may document the destruction using the AR-6 form available on-line at <http://wyoarchives.state.wy.us/index.php/guidelines-forms-2> Use the "For Government Staff" dropdown to find the form.

After obtaining approval of your department head or records officer, State Archives personnel will accomplish disposal of records stored in the records center.

Please keep in mind that a record's retention period begins when the record is cut off - not when it is transferred to the records center. For example, records maintained on a calendar year basis are normally cut off on December 31, and records maintained on a fiscal year basis are normally cut off on June 30. However, records may also be cut off at other times, such as monthly, semi-annually, or upon the occurrence of a certain event, such as the completion of a case.

## **State Imaging Center**

The State Imaging Center scans records from the collections of the State Archives to provide easier access to information. It also offers scanning services to state agencies desiring digital images of their paper or microfilmed records.

### **Preparing Paper Records for Imaging**

Whether you are scanning records in-house or sending them to the State Imaging Center (SIC) for scanning, the records need to be prepared in advance to help the process run smoothly and to avoid damaging scanning equipment. [Pre-scanning preparation](#) also helps ensure the quality of the final product. Records that are to be scanned by the SIC must be prepared by the agency of origin prior to their delivery according to the guidelines below:

- Records sent to the SIC for imaging should not be boxed with records that will not be imaged.
- Remove duplicate files and materials unrelated to the records being scanned.
- Transfer the documents in the order they were maintained by your agency to maintain their integrity.
- Create a complete index of the records to help with creating the metadata needed for tracking and future retrieval of the records. Key field descriptions such as ID number or case number may need to be included for retrieval purposes.
- Remove all fasteners (staples, paper clips, binder clips, etc.).
- Do not include items that cannot pass through imaging equipment, such as CDs, DVDs, cassette tapes, etc.

- Boxes of records being sent to the SIC for scanning should be labeled and numbered. Information on the label should include the name of the agency, title of the record series, and inclusive dates.

Please contact us at 777-5586 - [carmen.clayton@wyo.gov](mailto:carmen.clayton@wyo.gov) or 777-7826 - [wyaarchive@wyo.gov](mailto:wyaarchive@wyo.gov) if you have any questions about preparing records for imaging.

## **Electronic Records**

Electronic records include databases, email, text messages, e-government transactions, and social media, in addition to common office files from spreadsheet and word processing applications. Most are useful for only a short period of time, but some may need to be kept permanently. For those long term storage or permanent records, the Wyoming State Archives has developed and implemented an organized, reliable, secure system for the access, preservation, and retention of electronic records created and held by Wyoming State Government agencies.

The State Archives provides training to agencies on how to deposit records and how to search for and share records in the Digital Archives. We work with agencies to develop templates to facilitate entering search terms and other data about the records into the Digital Archives. As with paper records, the destruction of electronic records is tied to the retention schedules and no record will be destroyed without agency approval. As a records officer, you will be instrumental in the process of deciding which records are included in the Digital Archives, what information is entered about them, and when they are destroyed. For more information about the Digital Archives, please visit our [website](#) or contact the State Archives at 777-7826.

## **Management of Archival Records**

As part of your agency's records retention schedule set with the State Records Committee, some records have been identified for their potential value for ongoing preservation. On the records retention schedule, these records have been identified as "For Archival Review." Archival review is a process by which a group of records are examined to determine their long-term value. Some considerations taken into account during the review include the order and completeness of the records, their condition and the costs required to preserve them in paper or digital format, and if the records are needed to uphold requirements for legal and financial accountability.

Based upon this review, the archives may opt to select all or portions of the records, and weed out duplicates. Agencies will be notified if the Archives chooses to retain portions of the records. Common records often identified for ongoing preservation include meeting minutes, annual reports, the correspondence (including E-mail) of agency directors, and some digital images, among other files.

Unlike records sent to the State Records Center, transfers to the Archives results in a change in custody. This means the public may access these records without contacting the agency, unless statutory restrictions apply. Records transferred to the state's permanent archives are still available to you. Copies of the records can be sent to the transferring agency free of charge if the copy job is small. However, if a copy job is large, or if requests for copies are frequently received, your agency will be charged the State Archives' copying fees. If you anticipate that you may need

to refer to the records on a regular basis, you may wish to transfer these files when they are no longer being actively used.

Please contact us at 777-7826 or [wyarchive@wyo.gov](mailto:wyarchive@wyo.gov) if you have any questions about transferring archival records, and submit the transfer form (AR-9), available online at <http://wyoarchives.state.wy.us/index.php/guidelines-forms-2> Use the “For Government Staff” dropdown to find the form.