The Library of Virginia presents

Virginia Public Records Management Manual

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CHAPTER 1: **BASICS OF A RECORDS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM**

The Virginia Public Records Act (VPRA) § 42.1-76 et seq. "establishes a single body of law applicable to all public officers and employees to ensure that the procedures used to manage and preserve public records will be uniform throughout the Commonwealth."

A public records management program is implemented in order to:

- Aid and assist government officials in making informed policy and program judgments.
- Enable citizens to judge the conduct of the government by providing administrative, fiscal, and legal accountability.
- Allow information to be open for observation and access, while safeguarding privacy and confidentiality.
- Assure the documentation of government actions.
- Maintain good business practices.

In addition to being a mandate of the *Code of Virginia,* following sound records management practices is good business. Public officials are legally responsible for creating and maintaining records that document the transactions of government. These records provide evidence of the operations of government and accountability to its citizens. Public officials must maintain this information according to established Records Retention & Disposition Schedules regardless of record format. The content of a document determines whether it is a public record and how it is to be retained.

To have an effective records management program, each agency and locality must implement Library of Virginia–approved Records Retention & Disposition Schedules, document destruction of scheduled records, and disseminate policies and guidelines.

Legal Authority

In addition to the Virginia Public Records Act, the following statutes relate to public records management:

- *Freedom of Information Act* § 2.2-3700 et seq.
- *Government Data Collection and Dissemination Practices Act* § 2.2-3800 et seq.
- *Copies of Originals as Evidence* § 8.01-391

What Is a Public Record?

The VPRA defines a public record as:

> information that documents a transaction or activity by or with any public officer, agency or employee of an agency. Regardless of physical form or characteristic, the recorded information is a public record if it is produced, collected, received or retained in pursuance of law or in connection with the transaction of public business. The medium upon which such information is recorded has no bearing on the determination of whether the recording is a public record. *Code of Virginia* § 42.1-77

Public records, except for those exempt under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, must be available for access throughout their retention period per *Code of Virginia* § 2.1-340 et seq.

Designating a Records Officer

The VPRA § 42.1-85 states that each agency and locality "shall designate as many as appropriate, but at least one, records officer to serve as a liaison to the Library of Virginia for the purposes of implementing

and overseeing a records management program, and coordinating legal disposition, including destruction of obsolete records."

Identify the person or persons who will serve as Records Officer by completing the Records Officer Designation and Responsibilities (RM-25 Form).

Delivery of Records to Successor

At the end of a records custodian's term of office, appointment, or employment, all records should be turned over to his/her successor. In the event that there is no successor, all records should be transferred to the Library of Virginia per *Code of Virginia* § 42.1-88.

Records Management Objectives

Records management is the economical and efficient administrative process for managing information and ensuring access throughout its life cycle, from creation to destruction or preservation.

To create and maintain an effective records management program:

- Develop policies and procedures for records management.
- Conduct a survey or inventory of records in all formats.
- Establish and follow Library of Virginia Records Retention & Disposition Schedules.
- Utilize technology to create, store, and retrieve records.
- Destroy records at the end of their retention period and document destruction.
- Store inactive records in a cost-effective and secure location.
- Identify and preserve vital records.
- Identify and preserve permanent records.
- Develop a disaster preparedness plan to protect and recover records.
- Implement filing and indexing systems.

Benefits

An effective records management program will enable:

- Reduced volume of records stored by destroying records that have reached the end of their retention.
- Improved storage and retrieval systems through files management.
- Increased efficiency of office operations through better retrieval systems.
- Reduced costs for equipment, supplies, space, and personnel.
- Identification and protection of vital records.
- Improved accountability of public funds.
- Reduced liability risks by keeping records according to retention schedules.

Starting a Records Management Program

Follow these steps to establish a records management program:

1. Identify the person(s) who will serve as Records Officer (RO) and lead the records management program. Have this person(s) complete the Records Officer Designation and Responsibilities (RM-25 Form). Submit the RM-25 Form to Records Analysis Services at the Library of Virginia.

Selecting records coordinators may be helpful for larger agencies or localities. These coordinators act as a liaison to divisions within the organization and aid the RO.

2. Develop records management policies and procedures specific to the organization to be disseminated to staff along with LVA retention schedules. The Library provides Digital Imaging Guidelines and Electronic Records Guidelines as well as free training twice a year on-site. Analysts are also available to travel and provide basic records management training to the agency or locality.

3. Create and distribute a disaster plan for protecting and preserving records. The Library provides a free disaster-planning workshop twice a year on-site. State agencies and localities may also take advantage of the free services at dPlan, an online disaster-planning template prepared by Northeast Document Conservation Center (NEDCC).

4. Conduct an annual review of retention schedules and records management program, including a disaster plan critique. If necessary, contact Records Analysis Services to update retention schedules, transfer records to the State Records Center or Archives, and request additional training.

CHAPTER 2: **FILES MANAGEMENT**

Files management is the process of determining how files will be arranged, categorized, accessed, and stored, whether in paper or electronic format. Having good filing practices ensures that the right file can be retrieved quickly at the right time for the lowest possible cost.

Users of the system should be part of the planning process and trained on policies and procedures when the system is implemented. Create a policy and procedure manual to distribute to staff members for easy reference.

Paper Filing Practices

The most common methods of arranging documents are alphabetical, numerical, or alphanumeric. The file arrangement should be based on how the information will be retrieved.

Alphabetical Filing

There are two types of alphabetical filing. **Topical** filing arranges files in straight alphabetical order, such as subject correspondence arranged from A to Z, based on the name of the subject. **Classified** filing arranges related documents under a major subheading, such as customer complaint correspondence filed under the general heading of customer relations.

Advantages of alphabetical filing include:

- avoiding the use of an index
- effective filing if adhered to
- ease of browsing through files

Disadvantages of alphabetical filing are:

- the increased risk of misfiling versus numeric systems
- retrieval problems arising over name changes
- may be inefficient and cumbersome in large systems
- ease with which unauthorized persons can find records

Numerical Filing. Numerical filing by file number, by Social Security number, by date, or by patient or case number is common.

Advantages of numerical filing include:

- quicker comprehension of numerical sequences over alphabetical
- ability to add new files without disturbing existing arrangement
- easy identification of misfiled or out-of-sequence numbers

Disadvantages of numerical filing are:

- necessity of an index since it is an indirect arrangement
- possiblity of numbers being transposed when files are created

Alphanumeric Filing. An alphanumeric arrangement uses a combination of numeric digits and alphabets to create a flexible filing system. An index is required to use the system effectively.

Subjects may be substituted by using alphabetical or numerical codes, such as ADM-001 (Administrative files, Director's Correspondence) and ADM-002 (Administrative files, Assistant Director's correspondence).

Advantages of alphanumberical filing include:

- eliminating the need for long titles through use of codes
- increased file security because users must understand the coding system

Disadvantages of alphanumberical filing include:

- the necessity of consulting an index in order to access the files
- the need to train users on the index

Indexes

An index is a listing used to determine file location. Alphanumeric systems require and numeric could require an index, but alphabetical does not. Most indexes have a heading and the subheading listed alphabetically. The heading is the main class or title of records and the subheading lists records that are derived or related to the main heading.

Create a cross-reference to the indexed topic whenever multiple terms can be applied to the same records. The cross-reference acts as a pointer to redirect the user to another location where the file can be found. For example, patient records can be cross-referenced by patient number, name, and Social Security number.

Tracking Files

When a file is retrieved, a charge-out card should be inserted in the location where the file was removed. Automated tracking systems, with the use of bar code wands, can expedite the check-in and checkout process for large filing systems. By implementing a tracking system, a report can be produced to show what was requested and by whom.

Filing Cutoffs

The file cutoff date is a break or stop in the filing of a current records series, based on a predetermined event. At that date, a new group of file folders is created for the same series. The file cutoff date keeps records relating to the same time frame together.

Many state agencies and localities use the end of the fiscal or calendar year as a cutoff date. Colleges and universities may use the end of the academic year. In some cases, however, such as with case or personnel files, there is no break in filing. This is called continuous filing; individual files are removed from the series after an event. The total time files must be retained is based on the cutoff date, plus the time stipulated on a Records Retention & Disposition Schedule.

Disposal

A key part of filing-system maintenance involves controlling the growth of the system. Records should be reviewed regularly to purge and dispose of records that have expired based on Records Retention & Disposition Schedules. Documents containing confidential, personally identifying, or private information should be confidentially destroyed. A Certificate of Records Destruction (RM-3 Form) must be submitted to the Archival and Records Management Services Division after records have been destroyed.

Audits

Regardless of the type used, filing systems should be audited periodically and updated as necessary to accommodate any changes in the records or needs of the users.

Another aspect of the audit is determining if Records Retention & Disposition Schedules are being applied. Review retention schedules and compare with destruction certificates to see if records are being promptly destroyed when eligible.

CHAPTER 3: **DISASTER PLANNING**

Archives and Records Management Services can assist with disaster preparedness through disaster preparedness–training workshops; consultation in preparing a disaster plan; and advice, including a site visit, if a disaster does strike.

Identifying Vital Records

Vital records are records that an agency or locality needs to operate on a daily basis. Much like an individual needs certain vital records to prove his/her identity or to conduct business, government offices also have records that are necessary to operate and to provide services. Public interest could be adversely affected by unplanned expenditures, lost revenue, lost information and efficiency, and disruption of operation, all of which make a locality vulnerable to litigation. Vital records are often an office's active files, such as personnel records, payroll, and payment vouchers. While some records, such as board minutes, are vital historically, they may not be vital administratively and are not necessary to keep an office running or to provide service to citizens.

Protecting Vital Records

The main protection methods for vital records are duplication and off-site storage. Duplication of information entails photocopying, scanning, or microfilming information that may be needed after a disaster. These duplicate records should be stored away from the office, in another building, or out of the geographical area while still being accessible in a timely manner in case of a disaster. If you choose to store your vital records in the same building your office occupies, it is necessary to take precautions to prevent a disaster from spreading to the areas in which the vital records are stored. If a vital record is in electronic format, then the hardware or software used to create the record also needs to be protected or arrangements made to obtain compatible equipment.

For information on security microfilming as part of a vital records preservation plan, contact Imaging Services at the Library of Virginia for a consultation.

Creating a Disaster Plan

The purpose of a disaster plan is to ensure the safety of personnel; protect against losses and damage to vital records, facilities, and systems; and provide continued delivery of critical and essential functions and services. The plan will allow for quick resumption of operations and enhance personnel awareness of safety and risk. Developing and practicing a disaster plan reduces the possibility that personnel will feel overwhelmed or unprepared in an emergency.

- Identify and list contact information for all personnel, commercial disaster recovery vendors, and emergency services.
- Plan for minor and major weather-related disasters that may affect your geographic area, as well as man-made issues such as leaking pipes, arson, or structural instability.
- Prioritize records to be salvaged first starting with those that are vital to continuing operations.
- Disburse and practice the plan with appropriate personnel.

The Library currently is recommending dPlan, a resource produced by the Northeast Document Conservation Center (NEDCC) and the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC). This resource is a free online disaster-planning tool. dPlan is a tool that allows records officers and coordinators to enter information into a secure database that is backed up by NEDCC and MBLC servers, and can be accessed via the Internet. In the

event of a disaster, it may prove to be more beneficial to have the disaster plan available online on a remote server rather than in printed form.

The Library provides a free disaster-planning workshop twice a year on-site.

Continuity of Operations Plans (COOP)

The federal government and the Commonwealth of Virginia both use an emergency preparedness tool known as a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP). This program is required by Executive Order 44 (2007) to be implemented by every agency to assist in handling disasters and emergencies. It is vital for Records Officers and Coordinators to be aware of whether or not their agency or locality has a working COOP in place and to know which officials in their agency or locality are responsible for producing the plan. COOPs duplicate much of the same information needed in disaster plans, so working with COOP coordinators can greatly reduce the effort needed to produce a good plan.

CHAPTER 4: **RECORDS RETENTION & DISPOSITION SCHEDULES**

Records Retention & Disposition Schedules, also called retention schedules, are the Library of Virginia–approved documents listing descriptions of records grouped by common function, the length of time they must be kept, and the required method of destruction. Retention schedules reflect the length of time that records have historical, administrative, legal, or fiscal value.

Establishing a retention schedule requires appraising the use and value of information, as well as researching regulations that may govern retention. The Virginia Public Records Act authorizes the Library of Virginia, through the Records Analysis Services, to issue retention schedules that govern the records of all state agencies and localities.

Retention schedules are not merely suggestions. Records cannot be destroyed before the stated period, nor can they be retained longer than the stated period unless they are involved in an investigation, litigation, audit, or request for records pursuant to the Virginia Freedom of Information Act. As of July 2006, Virginia is one of the few states that *requires* destruction of records once the retention period has expired. Government agencies must follow schedules or risk being in violation of the *Code of Virginia* § 42.1-86.1. By following a retention schedule, systematic control of information from its creation to final disposition is established.

A Records Survey (RM-19 Form) is used to gather information on records series that should be listed on a schedule. Once an LVA analyst has composed a retention schedule from the RM-19 forms, the agency or locality will review the schedule for accuracy. Once the agency or locality agrees that the schedule meets its needs, the LVA analyst will put it before the Records Oversight Committee (ROC) for final passage. The retention schedule is then ready for use. Implementing records schedules is the most important part of a records management plan.

Retention schedules should be reviewed annually to ensure they remain complete and accurate. Records Analysis Services of the Library of Virginia can help evaluate an agency's specific retention schedules.

General versus Specific Schedules

General Schedules (GS) document records that state agencies and localities have in common, such as fiscal, administrative, and personnel records. All locality/agency records should be covered under the General Schedules.

A Specific Schedule applies to records that are unique to a state agency's operations and mission. The schedules identify records that the agency produces, collects, receives, or retains in carrying out its special functions. Localities usually do not require specific schedules as records created in one locality are also created in another.

Benefits of a Retention Schedule

By implementing a retention schedule, an agency or locality:

- Ensures that an agency or locality is in compliance with the Virginia Public Records Act
- Verifies that records needed for legal, fiscal, or administrative purposes will not be destroyed prematurely
- Allows records that are no longer useful to be destroyed legally
- Helps reduce the space and equipment necessary for filing records in paper or electronic format, thus saving money
- Determines when records may be transferred to inactive storage or to another repository for permanent storage
- Assists with making reformatting decisions
- Provides information for a vital records protection plan

- Ensures the preservation of records with historical value
- May indicate the privacy status of a given records series

Composition of Schedules

A retention schedule includes the following information:

- The signature of the State Records Administrator, indicating that the schedule is authorized
- The Agency Head signature for Specific retention schedules
- Schedule number
- Date effective
- Name of organization
- Name of department
- Records series title
- Description of the contents of the records series
- Retention and disposition
- Legal citations regarding retention requirements
- Method of records disposal or preservation

Building the Schedule

Records Surveys (RM-19 Form) compile data on each records series. This information is used by Records Analysis Services to draft retention schedules. Each valid records series becomes an item on a proposed retention schedule.

Making the Schedule Legal

After Records Analysis Services has drafted a retention schedule with assistance from the submitter of the RM-19 Forms, a draft is submitted for review to the pertinent parties. Changes are negotiated as necessary and inserted into subsequent drafts.

Once the schedule has received approval from the submitter of the RM-19 Form, Records Analysis Services will review the draft. The State Comptroller must approve state agency schedules that list fiscal records.

Once edited and approved by Records Analysis Services, and any resulting questions answered, the final draft is put before the Records Oversight Committee (ROC) at the Library of Virginia. ROC is made up of the State Records Administrator, the State Archivist, records analysts, archivists, public services staff, records center staff, and imaging services staff. If the draft schedule is approved by ROC, the schedule will need to be signed by the necessary officials. Once the signatures are obtained, the schedule becomes legal documentation for the retention and disposition of records.

Applying Retention Schedules

Ensure that you are using the most recent version of the correct Records Retention & Disposition Schedule. The General Schedules change and are updated frequently. Printing and filing a General Schedule for future reference will often result in the use of obsolete and incorrect information. The online versions available on the Library of Virginia's Web site are the official, up-to-date copies of the General Schedules and should be used whenever preparing records for destruction.

The Virginia Public Records Act requires a valid retention schedule before destroying public records. When utilizing the most recent version of the appropriate retention schedule, follow these procedures:

- Identify the records eligible for destruction under the retention schedule.
- List the records on a Certificate of Records Destruction (RM-3 Form) and obtain signatures to approve their disposal. Use a method of destruction appropriate to the records.
- Establish a regular review and disposal period for records, usually at the end of the calendar or fiscal year.
- Review retention schedules periodically and submit changes to Records Analysis Services on an RM-19 Form.

CHAPTER 5: **RECORDS SURVEYS**

In order to compose, update, or revise a Records Retention & Disposition Schedule, an agency or locality must complete a Records Survey (RM-19 Form), which identifies and defines each set of public records it creates and maintains regardless of format.

An RM-19 Form defines the purpose, use, and contents of a record set as well as identifies restrictions to its access, how long the records should be retained, and the method of disposition/destruction.

Please contact your LVA Records Analyst before undertaking the Records Survey process. The RM-19 Form may look complicated but is actually very straightforward and should not take a great deal of time to complete. The Records Analyst will explain the process, ensuring that forms are completed correctly the first time.

Purpose of the Records Survey

A records survey identifies all records series, regardless of format, function, and extent of use. It is a data collection tool. This is not a folder-by-folder or document-by-document individual item inventory; it is an examination of types or groups of records referred to as a records series. For example, records series include correspondence, time sheets, contracts, ordinances, fiscal vouchers, project files, and minutes.

Information from the surveys is used to compile a list of vital records, which are those records immediately necessary to begin recovery of business after a disaster or are essential to protecting the rights and interests of the organization, its employees, and the citizens of the commonwealth. This list is incorporated into an office's disaster preparedness plan to ensure the records are protected.

Surveys are the basis for Records Retention & Disposition Schedules. The retention schedule lists descriptions of records grouped by common function, defines the length of time they must be kept, and the required method of destruction. An RM-19 Form must be completed and submitted to your LVA Records Analyst whenever new records series are created or a current series needs to be revised.

Participants in the Survey Process

Individual

Those familiar with particular office functions and records complete the survey form, allowing them to see the "bigger picture" series effectively. Reviewing the RM-19 Form with the record creators and users beforehand will help make the process easier.

Records Officer and Records Coordinators

If the Records Officer is able to dedicate the time, he or she can complete the surveys with the assistance of those who are familiar with the records. Records Coordinators may be designated to work with the agency's Records Officer by becoming familiar with the survey forms and procedures. The coordinator may then conduct surveys within his or her area.

Records Management Professionals

This method uses records management contractors to visit each department, gather information about an office's function and records, and complete survey forms. These services can be costly.

Approaching the Process

Many staff members will assume that completing a Records Survey (RM-19 Form) will take hours of time that can not be spared from the workweek. Taking the time to speak with your LVA Records Analyst before approaching staff members can allay any such fears. Dropping an RM-19 Form on an employee's desk with a deadline but no guidance will breed resentment and yield a poor product.

Begin with active records and those that are unique to the mission and function of the agency. Identify all records regardless of format or storage location. Define the series as if the person reading the description has no knowledge of the agency/locality function.

Evaluating Records

The retention period for records is based on the value of the information as well as any laws that might govern records retention. Consider when information can be destroyed without hindering the functions of an office or municipality, or denying the rights of citizens.

Retention considerations include:

Historical value

While only a small percentage of the volume of records in an organization have permanent value, these records are especially significant as they document the history of the government or community; contain important information about persons, places, or events; or are valuable because of age or rarity, such as records of the 18th and 19th centuries. Examples include minutes, policies, agency histories, ordinances, plat maps, and annual reports.

Administrative value

These records are necessary for the day-to-day operations of an office, to conduct current or future business functions, or to document the establishment of policy or operations. Examples include correspondence, studies, and reports.

Legal value

These records have a mandated retention by statute or regulation. Determine the legal value of records with assistance from legal counsel. Examples include leases, deeds, student records, medical records, and court case files.

Fiscal value

These records document an office's fiscal responsibilities, such as the receipt, payment, transfer, adjustment, or encumbrance of public funds. Most financial records usually lose value once an audit has been completed. Certain series may be governed by regulations beyond an audit, however, such as federal rules or contract language. Examples include canceled checks, deposit slips, invoices, receipts, and purchase orders.

Completing the RM-19 Form

The Records Survey (RM-19 Form) may be printed out or filled in online. The information needed includes:

1.–3. Agency/Locality, Division/Department, Section/Sub-Unit:

4.–6. Contact Person, Telephone Number and Extension, E-mail Address:

7. Records Series Title: Determine a specific, descriptive title for the records series. Titles should identify the subject and/or function of the records. Please clarify all acronyms on the first usage.

8. Date Range of Records

9. Series Status: Indicate whether the purpose of the records survey is to update an existing records series or to create a new series.

10. Series Still in Use? Indicate whether the series is still in use.

11. Description: Describe the purpose of the records series, indicating what actions are documented by the series, how the actions relate to the office and its operation, who creates the records, and who uses the records.

12. File Arrangement: Describe the organization of the records.

13. Records Cut Off By: To cut off records means to break, or end, them at regular intervals to permit disposal or transfer in complete blocks. Typically, the cutoff is used to separate active from inactive records.

14. Frequency of Use: Determining frequency of use helps to establish when a records series transitions from active to less active or inactive.

15. Are These Vital Records? Vital records contain information required by an agency to function or to reestablish operations immediately in the event of a disaster.

16. Records Medium: A particular records series may include multiple formats such as paper, electronic, or microfilm.

17. Annual Accumulation of Records in All Locations: Provide an estimate of the volume of records created, received, and retained in the course of a year for the series in question.

18. Total Accumulation of Records in All Locations: Provide an estimate of the total volume of records, from the earliest to the most recent, in all storage locations.

19. Cite any authority governing creation, management, retention, and/or disposition of series: Note any agency, state, or federal law, regulation, or policy and attach a copy of the appropriate citation(s).

20. Access to Records: Indicate whether any state or federal regulations restrict access to the records.

21. Recommended Retention and Disposition: Based on the legal, administrative, and financial value of these records, suggest a length of retention and identify the event that triggers the retention countdown.

22. Explanation of Requested Retention and Disposition: Explain the basis of the suggested retention period. Describe any agency or locality work processes that make the requested retention necessary.

23.–24. Survey Conducted By, Date of Survey: Enter the name of the person who completed the survey form and the date it was conducted.

CHAPTER 6: **ELECTRONIC RECORDS**

Although electronic records pose their own unique challenges, digital public records must be scheduled, maintained, and disposed of in the same manner as paper records. According to the Virginia Public Records Act (VPRA) in the *Code of Virginia* § 42.1-85, an agency or locality must

> ensur[e] that its public records are preserved, maintained, and accessible throughout their lifecycle, including converting and migrating electronic records as often as necessary so that information is not lost due to hardware, software, or media obsolescence or deterioration.

Therefore, saving records electronically requires that an organization is able to find, open, and read all files over the lifetime of the record. Virginia state agencies and localities are responsible for ensuring that policies, practices, and systems for the management of electronic records are fully integrated into existing records management programs. The following chapter provides guidance on issues to consider when managing electronic records throughout their entire life cycle by using standard naming conventions and metadata, open file formats where possible, appropriate storage media, and migration and conversion to keep files accessible over time.

The Library of Virginia will consider the transfer of permanent electronic records to the Archives on a case-by-case basis. If an agency or locality chooses to retain custody of permanent electronic records, the agency or locality assumes responsibility for maintaining their reliability, authenticity, integrity, and usability.

File Naming

Consistently named files are easier to find and identify than those that are named randomly. Therefore, it is important to establish an agencywide file-naming policy that complements the organization's electronic records management strategy. A good file naming convention system is descriptive and understandable over time to others besides the creator, is unique, and uses standardized language. Allow for expansion of naming conventions to accommodate the growth of records. If numbering files, it is important to use "placeholder" digits that anticipate future growth; i.e., *01* instead of just *1* accommodates the ability to sort correctly from 1 through 99.

Select naming criteria that is most pertinent to the organization. Some items to consider including are:

- Version number
- Date of creation
- Name of creator
- Description of content
- Name of group associated with the record
- Project number

As an example, a chapter of the Virginia Public Records Management Manual may be saved as Ch7_ ElectronicRecords_Ver3_JonesP.doc indicating the chapter number and title, the version, and the author.

Metadata

According to the National Information Standards Organization (NISO), "Metadata is structured information that describes, explains, locates, or otherwise makes it easier to retrieve, use, or manage an information resource." Metadata is useful for organizing data appropriately and finding data using relevant criteria. It also aids in preserving data by tracking the history of an object, detailing its characteristics, and documenting its function to re-create it on future technology. NISO identifies three main types of metadata:

- *Descriptive* metadata allows for basic identification of a record through title, author, and keywords.
- *Structural* metadata indicates how objects are put together, for example, how pages are ordered to form chapters.
- *Administrative* metadata includes technical information to help manage a document, such as file type, creation date, format, and access restrictions.

Metadata may be stored within a digital object or in a separate database. Embedded metadata within the digital object ensures that metadata will not be lost and that it will be updated along with the document. Storing metadata also removes the need to link between the document and a separate metadata storage file. Not all digital objects allow metadata to be embedded, however. In such cases it is necessary to create a means to store the metadata separately. Storing metadata separately allows for easier manageability, search, and retrieval of metadata. A link must then be created between the digital object and the metadata storage system.

Good metadata has a structured format and a controlled vocabulary. A structured format ensures that the same metadata is created and ordered consistently for each object. For instance, an organization collecting metadata about purchase orders may choose to identify the order number, goods ordered, date of order, and amount spent for each record. A controlled and consistent vocabulary, such as that used in the Dublin Core Metadata Initiative, clarifies the metadata collected. In the purchase order example, $500.00 for filing cabinets is more descriptive than "expensive office supplies" or "big drawers."

File Formats

The longevity of a file format is of primary concern. Using an untried or unproved file format that may quickly become obsolete over one that is more reliable may result in the need to convert or to migrate records earlier than anticipated.

The software in which a file is created usually has a default format, often indicated by a file name suffix or extension. Proprietary file formats, such as WMV and DOC, are controlled and supported by just one software developer. Preservation of records in proprietary file formats depends on the longevity of the software used to create and store the records. Open file formats are supported by more than one developer and can be readily accessed by various software systems. They are the preferred method for long-term preservation and use of electronic records. Examples include:

RTF: Rich-Text Format is ASCII with additional functionality that retains structure. It is a Microsoft format but is compatible with several word-processing programs.

PDF: Portable Document Format is an Adobe product. A PDF preserves the data and structure of a document regardless of the software used to create the original. Newer versions of the software may not be able to make accurate renderings of documents that were created in older versions. PDF is technically a proprietary format but Adobe allows for its use as an open standard as a PDF/A.

PDF/A: Portable Document Format for Archiving "provides a mechanism for representing electronic documents in a manner that preserves their visual appearance over time, independent of the tools and systems used for creating, storing or rending the files." (ISO 19005-1)

XML: eXtensible Markup Language is a standard applicable to word-processing documents, presentations, and spreadsheets that can be implemented by multiple applications on multiple platforms. (ISO 29500)

File format decisions may affect electronic records management in the following ways:

- Accessibility: Find and view the appropriate record.
- Longevity: Supportable throughout the record's entire retention period. Using formats not supported long-term by the developer may result in inaccessible records.
- Flexibility: Meet objectives for sharing and using records immediately and over the entire length of the retention period.

Storage Media

Storage media consist of the physical components on which data is stored. To determine which storage medium is best, start by analyzing the current and projected volume of stored records, along with the size of the files and any associated metadata. Also take into account data access and security requirements.

- Off-line storage: Records are stored on removable media such as magnetic tape or individual optical disks. Because human intervention is necessary, this option provides the slowest access.
- Online storage: Records are available for immediate access and retrieval, and this option provides for the fastest access and regular integrity checks. Online storage devices include mainframe storage and online servers. This option provides the highest cost.
- Nearline storage: Records are stored on media such as optical disks in jukeboxes or tapes in automated libraries or using specialized server arrangements such as Storage Area Neworks (SAN) or Networked attached storage (NAS). Nearline storage provides faster data access than off-line storage at a lower cost than online storage.

The Library of Virginia recommends that vital, long-term, or archival records be stored utilizing online or nearline storage options. The advantages of online and nearline storage include large storage capacities and the opportunity for data replication.

Off-line storage devices are not recommended for record copies of vital, long-term, or archival records, as they are less likely to be routinely accessed and are often overlooked when systems are upgraded and electronic records are migrated to new formats. Off-line storage is a recommended approach for backups or security copies, as the records can be stored off-site.

All storage media have finite life spans that are dependent on a number of factors, including manufacturing quality, age and condition before recording, handling, maintenance, frequency of access, and storage conditions. Studies indicate that under optimal conditions the life expectancy of magnetic media ranges from 10 to 20 years, while optical media may last as long as 30 years. In real life situations, however, most media life expectancies are significantly less. Before purchasing storage, evaluate the following:

- Cost: Consider not only the initial monetary outlay, but also the costs associated with maintaining the media as well as converting and migrating stored records.
- Expansion: Media should accommodate not only the current storage needs, but allow for substantial future growth.
- Longevity: Evaluate the media life span to determine how often migration/conversion will be necessary.
- Speed of access: Some types of records require fast access, while others do not.
- Stability: Assess the potential for damage and rate of expected deterioration.

Migration and Conversion

The most common approach to preserving electronic records involves a combination of two techniques: migration and conversion. Migration is the process of moving files to new media (also known as "refreshing") or computer platforms in order to maintain value. Conversion entails changing files from one format to another and may involve moving from a proprietary format to a nonproprietary one. To avoid losing data and metadata, perform a test migration or conversion to determine the viability of continuing the process. When properly planned and executed, the migration and conversion approach probably represents the easiest and most cost-effective way to preserve electronic records.

There are three basic types of loss that may occur during conversion or migration:

- Data: Loss of data jeopardizes the reliability, accuracy, and integrity of the record.
- Appearance: Loss of structure or layout may be detrimental to understanding the record.
- Relationships: Loss of connecting metadata, spreadsheet cell formulas, or database tables may affect the ability to understand the data as a whole.

E-mail Management

E-mail messages—both sent and received—that provide evidence of a government transaction are considered public records and are subject to the same legal requirements regarding access as other government records. Some examples of e-mail that are considered public records are policies and directives; correspondence or memos pertaining to the organization's business; work schedules and assignments; documents circulated for approval or comment; and any message that initiates, authorizes, or completes a business transaction, final report, or recommendation. Some examples of e-mail that are not considered public records are personal messages or announcements, courtesy or reference copies, phone message reminders, routine chat on e-mail listservs, and announcements of social events.

E-mail is not a records series. It is a format or manner of delivering content. The content of an e-mail determines the retention requirements. Since e-mail is usually considered correspondence, refer to General Schedule 101 for administrative records of state agencies and General Schedule 19 for localities.

Not all e-mail is plain correspondence. For instance, work orders must be retained for three years, regardless if they are sent through e-mail, form, or memo. If you have determined that an e-mail is something other than correspondence, review the appropriate retention schedule to determine the applicable retention period. Just as with all other public records, e-mail must be maintained and accessible throughout the life span of the record.

Because individual employees have direct control over the creation and distribution of e-mail messages, it is important to provide training for employees on e-mail procedures, including how to identify and manage e-mail messages that constitute public records.

E-mails may be printed and maintained in a manual system; all of the information below, however, must be included in the paper copy.

- Names and e-mail addresses of recipients (if an e-mail is sent to a distribution list, include names and addresses of all members of distribution list)
- Name and e-mail address of sender
- Time and date sent
- Subject line that describes the content of the e-mail
- Text
- Attachments, if applicable

Web Site Management

Web sites contain records that document government activity and the use of taxpayer dollars, just as any paper record does. A trustworthy Web site includes not only the content pages but also information about the Web site that relates to the context in which it was created and used. Specific contextual information varies depending on the business, legal, and regulatory requirements of the business activity. Structural information on the organization of the Web site supports its long-term integrity.

Organizations may preserve Web content records by producing a stand-alone copy or snapshot of all content pages on the site at a particular time and accompanying this snapshot with a site map that shows the relationship or directory structure of those pages to each other. A snapshot captures a Web site as it existed at a particular point in time (e.g., by harvesting, exporting to an image format, or simple device backup). As outlined in the State Government Web Site Collection Guideline, the Library of Virginia currently harvests snapshots of many state agency Web sites.

Consider the following as you develop your Web content management policy:

- Determination of records: As you develop your policy, you will need to analyze the content of your Web site to determine which elements constitute public records.
- Complete records: When you capture the record, you must preserve the appropriate content, context, and structure.
- Records series and records retention and disposition schedules: As with other records, you should follow records schedules established by the LVA.
- Version control: Because Web sites are updated frequently by various individuals and groups, you should develop a method for designating and controlling versions. This practice will help ensure the trustworthiness of your Web site content.

CHAPTER 7: **REFORMATTING RECORDS**

Reformatting from paper to another medium is often viewed as a means of saving space and increasing access but it may not be the best or least expensive solution to a record-keeping problem. Before implementing a reformatting plan, ensure files have been purged according to retention schedules and explore alternatives such as using a records center for storage.

When to Reformat

Records should not be reformatted solely for space-saving purposes. An analysis of the records should be completed before any final decision is made. Consider the necessity and practicality of reformatting records that:

- Are historic or otherwise valuable and in bad physical condition
- Have a long retention period
- Have a high retrieval rate
- Are needed by multiple users simultaneously
- Are needed at multiple locations
- Have important research value
- Are oversized and bulky
- Need to be stored separately for security reasons
- Incorporate daily business processes

Reformatting Options

The most common reformatting options are microfilming, photocopying, or optical scanning. Each of these options has advantages and disadvantages depending on the application and anticipated use of the reproduced documents.

Microform
Microform, including microfilm and microfiche, is a reliable storage format for records with long-term or permanent retention. It requires that an indexing and quality control system be developed. The Library of Virginia establishes microfilming standards that are disseminated through the *Virginia Administrative Code* (17VAC15-20-10 et seq.) and the Guidelines for Microfilming Public Records.

Computer Output Microfilm (COM) is a conversion of electronic information to microfilm. COM is one option for those with significant volumes of electronic data requiring long-term storage. The Library of Virginia establishes COM standards that are disseminated through the *Virginia Administrative Code* (17VAC15-50-10 et seq.).

Advantages:

- Reduces need for physical space
- Reduces wear and tear on originals
- Recommended for long-term preservation
- Does not require software or hardware to view
- Follows established standards

Disadvantages:

- Encounters user resistance
- Image quality degenerates in copying
- Limited to one access point

- Reader machines are expensive and large
- Does not allow for full-text searching

Paper
Photocopying records provides access copies while eliminating excessive handling of originals. Photocopies will need to be reproduced over time, however, and too much photocopying degrades the original.

Advantages:
- Reduces wear and tear on originals
- Does not require special technology aside from photocopier
- Inexpensive

Disadvantages:
- Increases need for physical space
- Excessive deterioration of original
- Results in image degradation

Electronic
It is legal to reformat records to an electronic format, but any technical drawings and blueprints should be reproducible to scale. Saving records electronically requires that an organization be able to find, open, and read a record over the length of its retention period. This requires that an indexing and quality control system be developed.

Advantages:
- Reduces need for physical space
- Reduces wear and tear on originals
- Facilitates indexing, searching, and retrieval
- Allows for multiple access points
- Recreates high-quality user copies with no image degradation

Disadvantages:
- Requires software or hardware to access
- Requires continuous monitoring and eventual or periodic migration and conversion
- Faces software and hardware obsolescence
- Necessitates time-consuming metadata creation
- Requires expensive equipment to create and maintain
- Standards are not universally accepted
- Modification or corruption are potential authentication issues

Legality of Reformatted Records

Copies of originals as evidence
Both *Code of Virginia* (§ 8.01-391) and federal laws recognize the legal status of copies made from various sources, including electronic data stored on optical media. The law of evidence allows accurate and authenticated copies produced from originals to be admissible as evidence.

Authenticating records requires having written policies and procedures formalizing the recording, storage, or reproduction of public records. A list of users and their access privileges should be maintained and audited regularly. Also, keep audit trails documenting who scanned or edited images and when this occurred.

Destroying Records after Reformatting

After records are reformatted, inspected, and approved according to established standards, the originals may be destroyed because they are then considered copies. The reformatted version is now the official copy of record. The Library of Virginia does not require a Certificate of Records Destruction (RM-3 Form) for copies. However, any original records with permanent retention or records created before 1913 must be offered in writing to the Library of Virginia before destruction of the originals.

CHAPTER 8: **RECORDS DESTRUCTION**

Destruction of public records is highly regulated and must be documented and reported to the Library of Virginia. A Certificate of Records Destruction (RM-3 Form) must be filled out and submitted to the Library. The agency or locality retains a copy of the RM-3 Form for three years. The Library will retain the submitted original RM-3 Form for 50 years to ensure that any questions arising about records destruction by an agency or locality can be answered.

All records that have not been deemed permanent will eventually need to be destroyed. The Records Retention & Disposition Schedules, whether General or Specific, identify when a set of records has reached the end of its usefulness. A retention schedule may also state whether records are to be reformatted or destroyed in a certain manner. Retention schedules constitute a legal plan for the destruction of records from which state and local agencies must not deviate without consulting Records Analysis Services at the Library.

An RM-3 Form is only required when destroying public records that are the copy of record. A copy of record is the official copy for reference and preservation. It may be an original or reformatted version. Destroying materials that are not public records, such as copies, personal items, and reference materials, does not require reporting on an RM-3 Form. Records may not be destroyed because of lack of space or funding for storage.

Destruction and Reformatting

After records are reformatted, inspected, and approved according to established standards, the originals may be destroyed because they are then considered copies. The reformatted version is now the official copy of a record. The Library of Virginia does not require a Certificate of Records Destruction (RM-3 Form) for copies. However, any original records with permanent retention or records created before 1913 must be offered in writing to the Library of Virginia before destruction of the originals. When the reformatted records have reached the end of the retention period, an RM-3 Form must be submitted documenting the destruction.

Destruction Hold

The exceptions to destroying records in accordance with a retention schedule are audit; litigation, whether pending or active; investigations; or request for records pursuant to the Virginia Freedom of Information Act. If records become part of an audit, litigation, or investigation, the retention period does not change. When the hold is lifted the retention period picks up as if the hold never occurred. Therefore, if a retention period expired while a record was on hold, the record should be destroyed immediately after the hold is lifted.

As of July 2006, Virginia is one of the few states that requires destruction of records once the retention period has expired. Governmental agencies must follow schedules or risk being in violation of the *Code of Virginia* § 42.1-86.1.

Determining Date of Destruction

Ensure that you are using the most recent version of the correct Records Retention & Disposition Schedule. The General retention schedules change and are updated frequently. Printing and filing a General retention schedule for future reference will often result in the use of obsolete and incorrect information. The online versions available on the Library of Virginia's Web site are the official, up-to-date copies of the General retention schedules and should be used whenever preparing records for destruction.

In order to keep destruction practices practical and systematic, it is best to select certain times of the year as designated destruction times, such as the end of a calendar, fiscal, federal fiscal, or school year. To calculate destruction dates:

- Do not count the year in which the record was created.
- Begin counting retention years with the year following the year of creation.
- Count up through the stated number of retention years as outlined on the appropriate retention schedule.
- Records should be retained for the full year of the final year of retention.
- Destroy records at the beginning of the next yearly cycle.

	YEAR CREATED	RETENTION TIME	RETENTION COUNT	DESTRUCTION DATE
CALENDAR YEAR	1986	10 YEARS	1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996	1/1/1997
FISCAL YEAR 7/1/1999–6/30/2000	FY2000	3 YEARS	FY2001 (7/1/2000–6/30/2001), FY2002 (7/1/2001–6/30/2002), FY2003 (7/1/2002–6/30/2003)	7/1/2003
FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 10/1/2006–9/30/2007	FFY2007	2 YEARS	FFY2008 (10/1/2007–9/30/2008), FFY2009 (10/1/2008–9/30/2009)	10/1/2009
SCHOOL YEAR 9/1/2008–8/31/2009	SY2009	1 YEAR	SY2010 (9/1/2009–8/31/2010)	9/1/2010

Destruction Process

The following steps document compliance with legal requirements for destroying public records:

1. Refer to a Library of Virginia–approved Records Retention & Disposition Schedule, whether General or Specific. Records may not be destroyed if they are not listed on **any** retention schedule. If a series is not represented on a schedule, contact Records Analysis Services for more guidance.

2. Ensure that the retention period stated on the schedule has passed. When calculating the destruction date, refer to the last date in the range of files. The year of creation cannot be used in the calculation of years to be retained. A file created in 2000 with a retention period of three years can be destroyed on December 31, 2003, but not before.

   Records must be destroyed in accordance with the filing method. Records filed by calendar, fiscal, or federal fiscal year should be destroyed at the end of a calendar, fiscal, or federal fiscal year.

3. Ensure that all known audits, investigations, or litigations are resolved.

4. Complete a Certificate of Records Destruction (RM-3 Form). Volume of records should be reported in cubic footage or bytes, such as MegaBytes (MB). To estimate cubic footage refer to the Volume Estimation Table, or simply approximate how many files will fit into a cubic foot box (also known as a records center box, 15" x 12" x 10").

5. Obtain necessary signatures. If records are destroyed off-site by a commercial vendor, attach the notification of destruction/receipt from the vendor to the RM-3 Form.

6. Once the records have been destroyed, send the original RM-3 Form with signatures to the Archival and Records Management Services Division of the Library of Virginia. Keep a copy of the form; retain according to GS-19 (for localities) or GS-101 (for state agencies).

Methods of Destruction

The nature of the information in the records, as well as its format, dictates the method by which they should be destroyed. Frequently, disposition by recycling or daily waste pick up is appropriate. However, when records contain identifying information such as social security numbers or proprietary information, they must be destroyed in order to prevent unauthorized access. Such records must be destroyed in compliance with No. 8 on the Records Retention & Disposition Schedule cover page, which calls for the "ultimate destruction" of privacy-protected records. Ultimate destruction is accomplished through shredding, pulping, burning, burying in a landfill, electronic shredding, or magnetic media degaussing. Records that do not contain identifying information may be destroyed by placing in the trash, recycling, or deleting electronic data.

Importance of Documenting Destruction

A completed RM-3 Form serves as evidence of proper disposal when records are subpoenaed as evidence, audited, or investigated. By documenting the disposal of records and submitting the original signed form to Records Analysis Services of the Library of Virginia, the integrity of an agency or locality is protected.

A copy of the RM-3 Form must be retained for three years by the submitting agency (GS-101, series 100365) or locality (GS-19, series 010090) and then be destroyed. The Library retains the submitted form with original signatures for 50 years. Not only is the 50 years valuable in order to back up claims of legal destruction, but it also serves as proof of an agency or locality's ongoing records management program.

CHAPTER 9: **RECORDS PRESERVATION**

Preservation is the act of stabilizing storage environments and records in order to ensure the continued existence, accessibility, and authenticity of documents over time. Preservation should not be confused with conservation, which involves the repair or stabilization of materials through chemical or physical treatment to ensure the records' continued existence in original form. Following are general recommendations and guidelines for preservation. Specific needs may be better addressed by a professional preservationist.

Assessing Environmental Conditions

Evaluate office and storage space for safety, security, stability of temperature and humidity levels, fire detection and suppression, and disaster prevention. A site survey documents areas that need improvement as proper storage environments. Surveys should assess the following:

Temperature and humidity

Maintaining a stable environment is important since fluctuations in temperature and humidity pose more of a threat to records than steady, less-than-ideal temperatures. Stable temperatures around 68° F and a relative humidity of 50 to 55 percent are accepted environmental suggestions for paper records.

Fire and smoke detection

Smoke detectors, fire alarms connected to a 24-hour monitoring station, and sprinkler systems provide a good line of defense against records destruction by fire. A well-trained staff and communication ties with fire department personnel enhance fire safety.

Vulnerable storage locations

Avoid storing records in attics and basements where they may be susceptible to water leaks, pests, and sunlight or ultraviolet rays. Care should be taken in the placement of permanent records for safety and access. Keep records at least three inches off the floor and away from windows and steam or water pipes.

Permanent Paper Preservation

When creating, handling, and storing permanent records consider the following:

- Records should be created using alkaline (acid-free) paper and should be stored or housed in acid-free folders and boxes. Buffering paper neutralizes acidity.
- Never use adhesive tape to repair archival or permanent records. It deteriorates over time, and the adhesive discolors and darkens the paper to which it was attached.
- Use only rustproof or plastic paper clips.
- Remove rubber bands and staples.
- Unfold materials and arrange for flat storage. Remember that folds and creases weaken paper. Do not force the flat filing of fragile documents that have been folded for many years.
- Papers with a high level of acidity, such as newspapers, should be photocopied to preserve the information.

Photographs

Photographs are among the most engaging historical records in an agency or locality and they present unique challenges. Photographs are physically and chemically more complex than paper materials. To extend the life of photographs:

- Hold prints and negatives by the edges in order to avoid touching the emulsion surface.
- Avoid using tape, metal clips, rubber bands, or adhesives.
- Avoid using ballpoint and felt-tip pens for identification purposes. Instead, use a soft pencil on the back of mat pictures with acid-/lignin-free materials.
- Remember color will not last; copy important photographs to black and white.
- Framing can be destructive to photographs if done incorrectly. High-quality frame shops should know the standards and procedures recommended for framing.

Bound Volumes

Bound volumes, such as books, are composed of a variety of materials and can require complex preservation measures. Regular handling and improper storage also causes harm. To slow down the deterioration process:

- Make sure that space is available between volumes. Crowding can cause damage, especially during retrieval.
- Hold the book on either side of the spine when you pull it off the shelf; do not hook your finger over the top of the spine and pull.
- Use flat bookmarks. Never leave a bookmark in a volume permanently.
- Avoid placing heavy items in or on a volume.
- Avoid using metal paper clips, holding a volume together with rubber bands, and turning down the edges of pages.
- Do not use a volume as a surface for writing.
- Photocopying volumes is discouraged, but if it can withstand photocopying do not press the spine against the copier.

Electronic Records

If a copy of record is maintained in electronic format, conversion and migration of the data may be necessary to cover the full retention period. Long-term storage of records held in electronic formats presents numerous challenges.

When storing digital records consider the following:

- Media life span depends on factors such as storage conditions and daily use. Avoid excessive use and handling as well as storage spaces that lack climate control.
- Media begin deteriorating from the date of manufacture, not the date of recording. Do not buy large quantities of media. Buy it only as needed.
- Consider the maintenance of hardware devices that allow access to the data. Even under the best of conditions, hardware becomes obsolete, parts are difficult to locate, and service for the equipment becomes limited.
- Software may be superseded or become obsolete, at which point it may no longer be supported by the developer. Plan to upgrade and migrate data as necessary.

CHAPTER 10: **GUIDELINES FOR RECORDS STORAGE FACILITIES**

An agency or locality needs a reliable on-site records storage area that will house inactive records in a central, secure, low-cost area. This frees valuable office space, saves time in accessing records, and encourages more efficient operations.

Records series that are referred to more than once per month are generally considered active and should be kept in the office, close to where they will be accessed. Records series that are referenced less than once per month are considered inactive and are eligible for transfer to a central storage area.

Selecting an On-site Storage Area

Consider environmental and security concerns when looking for an appropriate storage site within your facility. Ideal environmental conditions are consistent, with minimum fluctuation in temperature and humidity, and include areas that are:

- Temperature maintained in the 65–70° range
- Humidity maintained at 40% +/- 5%
- Protected from fire by the installation of smoke detectors, water sprinklers, and fire extinguishers
- Free of vermin and insects
- Far from water pipes
- Not in a flood zone or other natural disaster area

A secure facility should be locked, have controlled access for select personnel, and provide clear procedures for storing, retrieving, utilizing, and refiling records.

Nonpaper records, such as motion-picture film, audio, and microfilm, will require special storage considerations.

Permanent, historic, and/or vital records have special storage considerations. Ideally, these records are stored in a secure, fire-rated vault or, if appropriate, with the Archives at the Library of Virginia.

Storage Boxes and Shelving

Storage boxes should:

- Be uniform in size, ideally 15" x 12" x 10".
- Have double walls/bottoms so they can be safely stacked and reused.
- Be made of acid-free cardboard if storing permanent/long-term records or if records will eventually be transferred to the Archives at the Library of Virginia. Standard storage boxes, which are less expensive, can be used for nonpermanent records storage.

Shelving units should:

- Be sized to ensure that the weight of the loaded shelves meets the floor-load capacity.
- Be sturdy enough to hold boxes loaded with as much as 50 pounds of paper.
- Have bottom shelves at least three inches off the floor to prevent potential damage from flooding.
- Provide sufficient space for the boxes to be pulled off the shelves easily.
- Be anchored to the floor where possible.
- Be placed so that they do not touch any walls.
- Be accessible by a sturdy and appropriately sized ladder.

Packing and Stacking Boxes

Pack records properly so that they may be safely and efficiently placed on shelves.
When packing and stacking boxes:

- Keep records in the original file folders when placing in boxes unless the records are permanent.
- Permanent records should be placed in acid-free folders and boxes and should not contain hanging folders.
- Fill boxes completely, but do not pack tightly as this could impede file removal. For example, allow space equivalent to the insertion of a hand to ensure ready access.
- Larger records and materials, such as maps and drawings, may need special handling and a separate storage system.
- Place infrequently accessed records on upper or lower shelves.
- Neither records nor boxes should come in contact with a wall or floor.

Security

In order to protect records, the facility should have restricted access. Doors should have locks, and the number of keys should be limited. Only authorized personnel should have access. Ideally, there should be no windows, particularly on ground-floor facilities. If funds are available, alarm systems should be installed.

Access

Procedures for admission to the facility and use of records stored there must detail who may gain admission and check out, add, refile, and dispose of records. Consider how often access to the records will be needed to determine the most strategic location for the storage area.

Determine which records are open to the public and which are restricted per state and federal regulations. Procedures must provide ready, controlled access to stored public records during business hours, while preventing unauthorized access to closed records.

Instruction and training for staff members who will be submitting items for storage, accessing stored records, and checking out and refilling records is crucial. Established guidelines and training will enable staff to provide service, stay organized, and protect records.

Operating an Effective Facility

To maintain the integrity of the records storage system, have the records management program endorsed in writing by the agency head, governing official, or body. Also:

- Develop an index to track records stored in the facility.
- Provide training to personnel to ensure compliance with procedures.
- Disseminate written procedures describing how to use the records storage program and to ensure that it operates in a standard manner.
- Use checkout controls for records removed from the storage area to ensure accurate tracking and proper refiling.
- Periodically review the storage program, as records storage needs may change with time.

Disposition of Records

For ease of destruction, limit records to one year per box when possible. This allows for destruction of an entire box rather than selectively removing folders.

The destruction of records is dictated by a General or Specific Records Retention & Disposition Schedule. Records destruction must be documented on a properly completed Certificate of Records Destruction (RM-3 Form).

Permanent records eligible for transfer to the Archives at the Library of Virginia should be transferred from the facility to the Library when they have reached the end of their administrative usefulness.

Commercial Storage Facilities

When using third-party storage facilities that can store, access, and deliver records, be certain that the facility complies with the guidelines outlined in this chapter. Even when using a commercial storage facility, the agency retains responsibility for its records.

CHAPTER 11: **STATE RECORDS CENTER TRANSFERS AND SERVICES**

The State Records Center (SRC) houses inactive, nonpermanent paper, microform, and electronic media for state agencies and local governments in a secure and environmentally stable location. The records held in the SRC remain the property of, and access is restricted to, the state agency or locality of origin.

The SRC facility also houses Imaging Services, which manages a security microform program, and the Archives Annex, which holds low-reference permanent records. There is also a reading room for viewing archival materials.

Eligibility for State Records Center Storage

Records that have not yet reached the end of their retention period but are rarely referenced are ideal candidates for storage in the SRC. Transferring records to the SRC frees up space in an office for more useful purposes. Often it is more economical to pay for off-site storage then it is to buy more file cabinets and pay office real estate prices.

Eligible microforms must meet the quality standards set in the Virginia Administrative Code (17VAC15-20-10 et seq.) and may include:

- Original and duplicate microfilm reels and microfiche
- Computer output microfiche (COM)
- 16mm and 35mm reels

Electronic records stored on portable media within records center boxes (cubic-foot boxes, 15" x 12" x 10") may be transferred to the SRC as well. However, the SRC is only responsible for maintaining the media itself, not the data contained on the media. Examples of portable media include:

- Magnetic tape
- Floppy disks
- Hard drives
- CD/DVDs

All records to be transferred must be listed on an approved General or Specific Records Retention & Disposition Schedule. The SRC will not accept any records that:

- Are not on a Records Retention & Disposition Schedule
- Have reached the end of their retention period, except those on a destruction hold
- Do not belong to a state or local governmental agency
- Are permanent

Permanent records should be transferred to the Archives at the Library of Virginia.

Access and Ownership

Each agency retains ownership of its own records when they are stored in the SRC. Access to the records is strictly controlled so that no individual, agency, or office may access records without specific authorization from the record owner. State Records Center staff members will only access records at the request of the owner and are required to sign a Confidentiality Agreement treating all information as classified. The Confidentiality Agreement also bars staff members from disclosing information in the records to unauthorized individuals.

Storage Fees and Service Charges

There is a full-service, flat-rate fee for storage of records at the SRC charged on a monthly basis. This fee applies for any unit of records stored for any portion of the month. Fees are subject to change with 90 days' notice prior to the end of the fiscal year. The storage rate includes all normal pickups, retrievals, and deliveries within the SRC's Richmond Service Area. Accessioning, refiling, bar coding, and removal of boxes from shelves at the end of their retention period is also included in the storage fee. Additional fees apply for storage of odd-size records units, shredding, copying, and emergency retrievals.

Transfer Procedures for Nonpermanent Records

1. *Identify the appropriate schedule and series number*
   Records must be listed on an approved retention schedule, with a finite disposal date, to be eligible for transfer and storage in the SRC.

2. *Determine the volume of records*
   To make sure the correct number of boxes is on hand and to prepare for packing, estimate the amount of cubic footage to be transferred. To estimate cubic footage refer to the Volume Estimation Table, or simply approximate how many files will fit into a cubic-foot box (also known as a records center box, 15" x 12" x 10").

3. *Order boxes*
   Only containers meeting certain specifications may be used in the SRC. The standard size of these boxes can hold 14 inches of letter-size files or 11 inches of legal-size files.

4. *Pack the boxes*
   - Carefully pack boxes so that files and materials can be easily removed and replaced, leaving about one inch of free space.
   - Materials must fit in the box without causing it to bulge and lids must fit correctly.
   - Do not send damaged boxes, such as those that are crushed or have ripped handles.
   - Boxes should weigh about 30 pounds or less.
   - Files should be placed in the box in neat, logical order, as if they were in a file drawer.
   - File names or numbers must be visible.
   - Document the files placed in each box and keep a copy for reference.

5. *Submit a preliminary Records Transfer List and Receipt (RM-17 Form) for review*
   The Records Transfer List and Receipt (RM-17 Form) is used to document the transfer of records to the State Records Center. Fill out the form, leaving blank column #17, SRC Bar Code Number. The agency/locality Records Officer must sign and approve this submission of the RM-17 Form. Fax or e-mail a copy to the State Records Center supervisor for review, retaining the original.

6. *Label and bar code the boxes*
   When the transfer is approved by the SRC supervisor, bar code labels are sent to the Records Officer. Apply the SRC-supplied bar codes to a 12" side of the box, in the bottom left-hand corner, approximately 1" from the bottom and 1" from the left side. No other information is required on the outside of the box. Refer also to the Instructions for Completing Preprinted Label on White Records Center Boxes.

   Note: The issued bar codes are unique and used for tracking purposes within the SRC. Boxes in a transfer, however, may already bear an agency or locality's internal numbering system. In order to reference such a system, boxes should be numbered consecutively, without repeat of any number used on a previous transfer.

7. *Resubmit the Records Transfer List and Receipt (RM-17 Form)*
   Enter the bar code numbers in, or affix the smaller bar code sticker to, the RM-17 Form, column #17. Fax or mail the completed and signed RM-17 Form to the SRC. The SRC will call or e-mail to arrange for a records pickup. The original RM-17 Form must accompany the boxes to the SRC.

8. *Assemble records for pickup*
   Only the boxes preapproved by the SRC staff will be transferred. The SRC staff member picking up the records will sign and date the original RM-17 Form indicating receipt of the records at the time of pickup. Agencies and localities outside the Richmond Service Area may contact the SRC manager for a records pickup service quote or have the records delivered to the SRC. All deliveries must be scheduled.

Requesting Records

The agency or locality should keep a copy of the final RM-17 Form listing the records with the bar code identification numbers as a receipt. This receipt should be used to reference the bar code numbers when requesting records. The bar code number is the key to accessing and obtaining records and should be available only to authorized people within the agency or locality. If there is a separate file listing within each box, keep a copy with the RM-17 Form.

Requests for files or boxes stored at the SRC can be submitted by fax or mail using the Records Center Retrieval Request (RM-18 Form). Requested records are either delivered or shipped to the requester the following day.

Returning Records

Call the SRC when ready to return records to the facility. Records will be picked up and promptly returned to the appropriate place in the SRC. There is no charge for refiling records. Customers outside the Richmond Service Area may use a preferred delivery company to return the records.

Destruction of Records

Records stored at the SRC will not be destroyed without the agency or locality's written permission. When records are eligible for destruction, the SRC will send a Certificate of Records Destruction (RM-3 Form) identifying the volume of records and method of disposal to the Records Officer for signature. After return of the signed RM-3 Form to the SRC, the records will be destroyed promptly. A copy of the completed RM-3 Form will be forwarded to the agency or locality after destruction.

The method of destruction depends on criteria laid out in the Records Retention & Disposition Schedule. Those that are deemed confidential, private, or sensitive will be shredded for a fee by the SRC to ensure the information is protected. Records not requiring confidential destruction are either picked up by a paper recycler or sent to the landfill. Any records may be confidentially destroyed on request.

Records shredding services are also available for offices not using the SRC storage services. The agency or locality is responsible for filling out the RM-3 Form and then contacting the SRC to pick up the records. After destruction, a copy of the RM-3 Form will be returned to the Records Officer.

Pest Eradication Chamber

Occasionally, records stored in poor conditions require pest eradication of the materials. The Pest Eradication Chamber is a custom-built blast freezer that freezes records at -40° F so as to destroy insects and vermin. The records then are gradually brought back to room temperature.

The chamber can also be used in an emergency to stabilize water-damaged records and stop the growth of mold until professional document restorers can provide specialized treatment. The maximum load for emergency stabilization is 600 cubic feet of records. Remember, it is important to freeze water-damaged records within the first 48 to 72 hours to avoid an outbreak of mold. Contact the SRC for help with a records emergency at 804.236.3705. Off-hours emergency contact information will be contained in the voice mail message.

CHAPTER 12: **ARCHIVAL TRANSFERS AND PROCEDURES**

Virginia public records with enduring administrative, fiscal, historical, or legal value are considered archival and many are scheduled for transfer to the Archives at the Library of Virginia for permanent retention. It is the objective of the LVA to preserve these archival records and make them accessible to the public and to state and local employees. The transfer process is one part of an effective records management program and plays an integral role in supporting the LVA in meeting its goals of preservation and access.

It is important to review the General and Specific Records Retention & Disposition Schedules in order to identify which records are permanent and may ultimately be transferred to the LVA. As part of good records management, these records should receive proper care and attention prior to their eventual transfer to the Archives.

When a transfer of permanent records to the Archives is scheduled, certain transfer procedures for boxing, labeling, and listing contents must be followed to ensure that a uniform and useful transfer occurs. Transfer archival records on a regular basis to avoid large accumulations.

Caring for Archival Records During Their Active Life Cycle

Records that are classified as archival should receive proper care and attention while used and stored in the agency or locality prior to their eventual transfer to the Archives. Permanent records should be kept in clean and safe storage areas with appropriate environmental conditions, should be kept orderly, and should be clearly labeled. It is best for file names to be written directly on folders, rather than using adhesive labels which often fall off over time. In keeping with preservation maintenance practices, these records should be printed on acid-free paper and kept in acid-free folders whenever possible.

Preparing to Transfer Records

Questions about identifying permanent records, creating/editing retention schedules, or following procedures for transferring the records to the Library of Virginia should be directed to Records Analysis Services.

1. *Identify appropriate schedule and series number*
   Find the appropriate General and Specific Records Retention & Disposition Schedules and locate the series for the records. The schedule will indicate which records series have been chosen for permanent retention and may be or are required to be transferred to the Archives.

2. *Determine volume of records*
   To make sure the correct number of boxes is on hand for packing, determine the volume of the records to be transferred and how they will fit in the box. One cubic-foot-sized box will hold 14 inches of letter-size files or 11 inches of legal-size files.

3. *Order boxes*
   Box specifications for records being transferred to the Archives require a standard, acid-free 15" x 12" x 10" box. These boxes can hold either letter- or legal-size documents. Before transferring odd-sized records, such as maps or plats, please consult with the Archives or Records Analysis Services.

4. *Pack the boxes*
   Pack files into boxes in the same order in which they were kept in the office. Maintaining the original order of the files is an underlying principle of archival management and will accurately reflect the actual administrative use of the records. When boxing permanent records:

- Pack files in acid-free boxes with different records series boxed separately.
- Place files upright in the box in the same logical order in which they were kept in the file drawer.
- Make sure file names or numbers are visible.
- Avoid overpacking or underpacking boxes to prevent damage to records. Carefully pack boxes so files and materials can be easily removed and replaced, leaving about one inch of free space. Materials must fit without causing the box to bulge and the lids must fit.
- Do not send damaged boxes, such as those that are crushed, have ripped handles, or have water damage.
- Boxes should weigh about 30 pounds or less.

5. *Label the boxes*
   As the Library of Virginia handles a large amount of archival material, it is crucial that the exterior of all boxes be properly labeled.

   - Do not put the label on the box lid.
   - Label each box on the short end and include
     - name of the agency or locality
     - administrative subdivision, if applicable
     - records series title and dates
     - contents of the box, meaning the name or number of the first and last files in the box
     - box number
   - Labels can be handwritten directly onto the box or typed adhesive labels can be used.
   - Boxes should be numbered consecutively for each transfer. Do not duplicate box numbers within a single records series transfer.

6. *Submit a Records Transfer List and Receipt (RM-17 Form)*
   After the records have been boxed and labeled a Records Transfer List and Receipt (RM-17 Form) must be completed, signed by the agency or locality Records Officer, and sent to Records Analysis Services for review and approval before the records can be transferred to the Archives at LVA. The box content section should include folder range for each box, such as Anderson–Jones, or 2765–2852.

   The RM-17 Form provides a notice of intent, a receipt, and a descriptive list of the boxes to be transferred. The RM-17 Form may be faxed or e-mailed to the assigned LVA Records Analyst for initial review. The original RM-17 Form must be mailed to the LVA after approval for the transfer is given or must accompany the records themselves when they are picked up.

7. *Create a folder listing*
   The folder listing is a separate and distinct document from the RM-17 Form, which only lists the beginning and end files in each box. A detailed box and folder listing should accompany each transfer and should list each folder contained in each box. Please send a copy of the folder listing to the assigned Records Analyst or attach to the RM-17 Form.

   This folder listing will act as a finding aid or guide, allowing for intellectual control and access to records until the time that they are officially processed. The more detailed and accurate the folder listing, the greater benefit it will be in locating files and preserving the records since less handling will be needed to locate specific materials. Please keep a copy of this listing for reference.

8. *Physical transfer of records*
   Once the RM-17 Form is reviewed by a Records Analyst and the transfer request is approved, a staff member will arrange for the pickup of the records being transferred to the Archives. After the transfer is complete, a

copy of the RM-17 Form will be provided that includes a unique accession number assigned by Archives. As a matter of convenience, retaining a copy of the RM-17 Form with the box listing as the accession number on the form will be the easiest way to locate the records.

Records in the Archives

After permanent records have been transferred to the Archives, they are accessioned in order to gain initial physical control of the records. After accessioning, boxes are bar coded and box-content information is entered into a database for locating and searching purposes. Records are stored in stack areas with proper temperature and humidity levels for preservation purposes. Archivists will then process, organize, and arrange the records, and carry out appropriate preservation measures as needed. Finally, archivists will provide intellectual access to the archival records by creating detailed descriptive tools, including finding aids and catalog records. Unless records are restricted by law, public records housed in the Archives are available to the public through the Library of Virginia's Archives Research Services.

Accessing Records in the Archives after Transfer

Once records have been transferred to the Archives for permanent retention they cannot leave the LVA for return to the agency, but are accessible at the LVA Manuscript Room or the Reading Room at the State Records Center.

CHAPTER 13: **MICROFORM TRANSFERS AND PROCEDURES**

Imaging Services at the Library of Virginia manages a security microform program for the Library's collection, state agencies, and localities and offers advice to state and local government agencies in accordance with the Virginia Public Records Act. Security microforms stored through this program are not used for reference purposes and are available only to the originating agency or locality. Paper records at the Library of Virginia are not available for public use once they have been microfilmed.

Caring for Microform Records

As part of a good record-keeping routine, permanent microfilmed records should receive proper care and attention prior to the eventual transfer to Imaging Services. Permanent microform should be kept in clean and safe storage areas with appropriate environmental conditions and should be kept orderly and be clearly labeled. Microfiche should be inserted in individual sleeves. In keeping with preservation maintenance practices, these microforms should be kept in acid-/lignin-free microfilm boxes and microfiche envelopes.

Preparing to Transfer Microforms

In order to capture the most secure and accurate information about the records being stored, follow the Guidelines for Accepting Microfilm, Microfiche, or Optical Media for Security Storage at the Library of Virginia. Transfers not meeting these requirements will be returned to the records custodian for correction or additional information.

1. *Identify appropriate schedule and series number*
   Find the appropriate General and Specific Records Retention & Disposition Schedule and locate the series for the records on microform. The schedule will indicate which records series have been listed for permanent retention and may be eligible or are required to be transferred to Imaging Services.

2. *Order boxes and microfiche envelopes*
   All microfilm sent to LVA for storage must be placed in acid-/lignin-free boxes. This ensures long-term storage of the film. For microfiche, use acid-/lignin-free envelopes and fiche boxes. LVA will not accept containers that do not meet this reqOuirement.

3. *Pack the boxes*
   Arrange and pack reels into boxes by records series, volume/file number, and reel number. Insert the microfiche into an individual acid-/lignin-free envelope by records series, volume/file number, and fiche number.

4. *Label the microfilm boxes*
   It is crucial that the exterior of all boxes be properly labeled. The minimum labeling required on a microfilm box consists of:

   - Locality/Agency name
     - Craig County
     - Virginia Retirement System
     - City of Norfolk
   - Records series/Volumes and dates
     - Deed Book #19, 1995–1996
     - Land Records, 07002338 to 07002348
     - name and/or number of the first and last files on the roll of microfilm

- Producer of microfilm
  - Business Records
  - Logan Systems
  - LVA
- Write or stamp “silver master” or “silver copy”
- Negative or Positive (neg or pos)
- Reel Number. Number consecutively for each reel. Do not duplicate reel numbers within a single records series.

5. *Submit a Records Transfer List and Receipt (RM-17 Form)*
   After the microforms have been boxed and labeled, the original Records Transfer List and Receipt (RM-17 Form) must be completed, signed by the agency or locality Records Officer, and sent to the Imaging Services with the transfer.

6. *Physical transfer of microforms*
   There are several options for transferring microforms to Imaging Services. The media can be sent by United Parcel Service, Federal Express, or other courier service that provides shipment tracking and receipt. It can also be hand-delivered to the LVA or included as part of the shipment of the original documents. A copy of the RM-17 Form will be provided after the microforms are inspected for adherence to the established guidelines.

Requesting Records

The agency or locality should keep a copy of the final RM-17 Form as a receipt. This receipt should be used as a reference when requesting records. Requests for microforms can be submitted by e-mail, fax, mail, or by using the Records Center Retrieval Request (RM-18 Form).

CHAPTER 14: THE ROLE OF ARCHIVAL AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT SERVICES

Under the guidance of the State Archivist and in accordance with the Virginia Public Records Act, Archival and Records Management Services (ARMS) supports the efficient and economical management of state agency and locality government records.

Records Analysis Services (RAS)

Records Analysts provide state agencies and local government offices with consulting services for establishing and maintaining effective public records management programs. Analysts give assistance with managing records throughout their life cycle by developing retention schedules, addressing reformatting and preservation issues, and determining the proper methods of disposition for confidential and privacy-protected records. RAS provides:

- Advice on implementing public records management programs.
- Training through a series of six workshops presented regionally and on-site.
- Records management guidelines, standards, and manuals.
- Records Retention & Disposition Schedules for all public records, regardless of format.
- Assistance with disaster planning.
- Assistance in identifying archival and vital records.
- Assistance in identifying and transferring permanent records to the Archives at the Library of Virginia.
- Assistance in identifying and transferring nonpermanent, noncurrent records to the State Records Center.
- Web content including publications, forms, and links to records management resources.

State Records Center (SRC)

The State Records Center provides a secure and economical facility to house inactive public records. Noncurrent, nonpermanent state agency and locality records can be housed at the SRC until their retention periods have elapsed. Ownership of the records is maintained by the agency/locality while records are housed in the SRC. Records may only be accessed with specific authorization from the creating organization.

Imaging Services

Imaging Services ensures the preservation and security of archival and vital records by reformatting the Library of Virginia's collections to microform. Imaging Services provides basic quality control of incoming locality and state agency security microfilm containing permanent records, as well as the creation of duplicate reels of security microfilm.

Circuit Court Records Preservation Program (CCRP)

The Circuit Court Records Preservation Program preserves and makes accessible the documentary heritage of Virginia's circuit courts. The statewide program of assistance and grants focuses on preserving the records of Virginia's 120 circuit court clerks' offices. Funding is generated from a fee on land transactions and judgments recorded in the clerks' offices. The program initiatives include:

- Funding for records preservation grants, education, and consultation for the clerks.
- Storage, processing, and reformatting of court records transferred to the Library of Virginia.
- Inspecting and maintaining the security microfilm collection housed at the Library of Virginia.
- Updating and modifying a database used to track security microfilm.
- Making media copies of circuit court records.
- Providing inventory reports.
- Consulting on imaging systems and reformatting standards.

Description Services

Description Services is charged with the protection and preservation of the documentary heritage of official public records and private collections determined to have enduring value as well as promoting research through enhanced accessibility. Description Services appraises, analyzes, arranges, and describes state agency records and private collections housed in the Archives. Accessioning Archivists create and maintain the documentation for incoming records, receive and describe incoming collections, and assign records a permanent unique accession or identification number. The division creates online catalog records for access to the Archives materials and publishes the Report of Archival Accessions. Archivists also compile electronic guides and finding aids that are available as attachments to catalog records.

Archives Research Services

Archives Research Services provides reference services for the records of state agencies and localities, as well as private individuals or institutions of significance in Virginia history. Once the records of an agency have been transferred to the Archives they become the property of LVA. In order to access these records, agency personnel must use the Archives like any other patron. Reference and retrieval procedures are designed to ensure the security and preservation of the records and their availability when requested.

All records deposited in the Archives that are made confidential by law may be opened to public access 75 years after the date of creation per *Code of Virginia* § 42.1-78.

GLOSSARY

access
Right to use information within legally established restrictions of privacy and confidentiality

accession
Process of taking permanent legal and physical custody of a group of records

accession number
Unique number or code assigned to identify a group of records for the purpose of control and classification

acid free
Material with a pH value of 7.0 or above, with no natural acid content, or that has had the acid content removed. May not retain alkalinity over time due to external acid absorption.

active record
Record that is used to fill the need for which it was originally produced or acquired

Administrative Code, Virginia (VAC)
See *Virginia Administrative Code*

administrative records
Records that concern the routine operation of any office, common to any agency or locality

administrative value
Value of a record based on a continuing need or usefulness of it for conducting business

agency
Any department or division of the executive, judicial, or legislative branches of state government. As used in the Virginia Public Records Act, also means locality offices.

agency Records Manager
See *Records Officer*

agency schedule
See *Specific Schedule*

alkaline permanent paper
Paper that has a pH of 7.0 or higher, with an alkaline reserve of at least 2 percent, containing a buffering agent to counteract any increase in acidity resulting from aging or interaction with the environment

alphabetical filing
Arrangement of records in the order of the alphabet, regardless of file content

alphanumeric filing
Filing system using alphabetic and numeric symbols as codes for classifying information

appraisal
Process of determining the length of time records should be retained based on historical, administrative, legal, and fiscal value

archival quality
Having exceptional permanence or durability when kept in controlled conditions

archival records
Materials created or received in the conduct of affairs that are preserved because of the enduring historical value or as evidence of the roles and responsibilities of the creator

archival value
See *historical value*

archive
To transfer records to a repository, physical or electronic, in order to preserve and provide access to those records

archives
Repository specifically designed for preservation, storage, and use of archival records

Archives and Records Management Services (ARMS)
Division of the Library of Virginia responsible for state and local archival records, micrographics and electronic media, and records management guidance and education

Archivist
Individual responsible for collecting and managing records of enduring value in order to protect the materials' authenticity and context

arrangement
Organizing materials to protect context and to maintain physical or intellectual control over the materials

audit
Independent or internal review of records and activities to ensure compliance with policies or standards and any resulting recommendations for changes in procedures

backup
To create a copy of records as a safeguard against the loss or damage of the original material

bar code
Printed horizontal strip of vertical lines that represents electronic numbers that can be read by a laser or an optical scanner. In records management, bar codes are used for indexing, tracking, and retrieval purposes.

blast freezer
See *pest eradication chamber*

buffered paper
Alkaline paper with 2–3 percent alkaline additives that is buffered to protect against acid absorption and has a 2–3 percent reserve of an alkaline additive such as calcium carbonate. These additives serve to ward off the damaging effects of air pollution and contact with adjacent acidic paper by neutralizing acids. Buffered papers are not recommended for use with photographic materials or textiles.

business recovery plan
See *disaster plan*

CD (compact disc)
Standard optical medium for storage of electronic data in machine-readable form

centralized files
Consolidation of files from several divisions in one location

Certificate of Records Destruction (RM-3 Form)
Library of Virginia form that documents that public records were destroyed properly and in accordance with the *Virginia Public Records Act*

charge-out
To remove material from a home location for use

Circuit Court Records Preservation Program (CCRP)
Funded through a recordation fee, the CCRP provides grants to the commonwealth's circuit court clerks to help preserve the historically valuable records in their courthouses and those that have been transferred to the Library's archives for safekeeping

closed records
Records or information requiring safeguards against unauthorized disclosure because of privacy protection requirements, Freedom of Information Act exemptions, or other law or regulation

Code of Virginia
Statutory law of the Commonwealth of Virginia consisting of the codified legislation of the Virginia General Assembly

compression
Process that reduces the space necessary for electronic data to be stored or transmitted

confidential record
Records restricted from disclosure by statute, court order, or legally adopted rules and regulations

conservation
Repair or stabilization of materials through chemical or physical treatment to ensure the records' continued existence in original form

contingency planning
See *disaster planning*

continuous files
Files that are not cut off or closed on a regular basis but are purged regularly in the course of routine business

convenience copy
Nonrecord copies of documents kept solely for ease of access and reference

copy of record
Document designated as the official copy to be retained, whether an original, copy, or reformatted version

courtesy copy
See c*onvenience copy*

creator of record
Individual, group, or organization initially responsible for producing a record

cubic foot (c.f.)
Standard measure of volume equaling 15" L x 12" W x 10" H.
To determine cubic footage $\frac{\text{L" x W" x H"}}{1728}$

current record
See *active record*

custodian
See *records custodian*

cutoff date
Date at which files should be closed to further additions, done at regular intervals, usually at the close of a fiscal or calendar year, to permit disposal or transfer

data dictionary
Documentation of the structure of a software application or database, including size and type, where and how it is used, and its relationship to other data

data element
Smallest and simplest unit of data that imparts meaningful information, typically corresponding to a field in a database record or printed form

data mining
Analyzing relationships in large amounts of data to identify previously unknown patterns by examining large amounts of data

data warehouse
Integrated repository of data collected from a variety of sources and linked to a single relational database for purposes of sharing information and analyzing trends

database
Organized body of related information that has been structured and stored so that it can be manipulated and extracted for various purposes

date range
Period of time covered by records in a file or records series

decentralized files
Records that are generated and used by a single organizational unit and maintained and controlled at the point of origin

defunct series
Record series that is no longer created or that identifies records that have been reclassified under a different series

delete
Electronic removal from memory of a file's index, not the file itself. Deleted records may remain on storage media in whole or in part until overwritten and may be restored with complete accuracy.

density
In micrographics, a measure of the opacity of a microfilmed image based on its light absorbing quality as measured by a densitometer

Description Services
Section of the Archival and Records Management Services of the Library of Virginia that accepts, preserves, protects, describes, and enhances accessibility of archival collections

Designated Records Manager
See *Records Officer*

destruction hold
Process to preserve a record or records series of relevant information when litigation, investigation, audit, or FOIA request is reasonably anticipated, regardless of retention and destruction time frames

diazo
Photographic film containing one or more photosensitive layers of diazonium salts, which react with couplers to produce an eye-readable image

digital image
Image composed of discrete pixels set in rows and columns to form a composite eye-readable format

digitized records
Record created or converted into a digital image

direct access filing
System that permits access to files without reference to an index

disaster plan
Policies, procedures, and information to direct necessary actions needed to recover from and lessen the impact of an unexpected interruption of business, whether natural or man-made

discovery
Legal process to obtain information or records relevant to a court case

disposal
See *records destruction*

disposition
Action to be taken on a records series at a specified time that could entail destruction, reformatting, transfer, or permanent retention

document
See *record*

DVD (digital versatile disc)
Standard optical medium for storage of electronic data in machine-readable form with a greater storage capacity than CDs

ECM (Electronic Content Management)
Software application that captures, organizes, controls, and retrieves files at the document level

Electronic Document Management System (EDMS)
See *Electronic Content Management (ECM)*

electronic shredding
See *overwrite*

Federal Rules of Civil Procedure (FRCP)
Regulations specifying procedures for federal civil suits in the United States. The 2006 revision deals with the legal discovery of electronic records.

filing system
Set of policies, procedures, and methods used for organizing and identifying records to increase ease of retrieval, use, and disposition

fiscal value
Value of a record based on continuing usefulness for verifying financial information that is necessary for conducting business

fiscal year (FY)
Twelve-month period on which a budget is designed, usually not coinciding with a calendar year

FOIA
See *Freedom of Information Act* and *Virginia Freedom of Information Act*

folder list
List prepared by the creating office or an archives detailing the various contents contained in one or more records center boxes, file drawers, or other storage container

format
Media that serves as a carrier for information

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)
Federal statute making federal records available to the public except for those records exempt under nine designated categories

General Schedule (GS)
Retention and disposition schedule that applies to records state agencies or localities all create, such as personnel, fiscal, administrative

Government Data Collection and Dissemination Practices Act
State law governing the collection, maintenance, use, and dissemination of personal information, formerly known as the "Privacy Protection Act of 1976"

historical value
Value of a record based on its uniqueness, age, or exceptional significance

hold order
See *destruction hold*

holdings
Total volume of records stored in a depository

imaging
Process of copying an image and storing it in another format

Imaging Services
Library of Virginia unit responsible for support of imaging programs in the commonwealth

inactive record
Record that has exceeded its active lifespan but must be retained for a defined period based on continuing value

inclusive dates
See *date range*

index
Detailed list used to aid retrieval, use, and disposition of specific information

indirect access filing
System that requires reference to an index to access materials

Internet
Worldwide, linked series of computer networks designed to transmit data using standard internet protocols

intranet
Private network that functions like the Internet but links services only within an organization

inventory
See *records inventory*

legal value
Value of a record based on its documentation and protection of the state and the rights of its citizens or to provide legal proof of a transaction

Librarian of Virginia
Individual appointed by the Library Board to direct and manage the operations of the Library of Virginia

Library Board, The
Board established by the General Assembly and appointed by the governor to set collection policies; promote library science, history, and archival education; and control the state's records management function

Library of Virginia (LVA)
Reference library at the seat of government in Virginia, which also certifies libraries, distributes state and federal

funds to public libraries, manages the archives of the Commonwealth, and acts as agent for the Library Board in establishing standards, policies, and procedures for the management of public records

life cycle
Creation, use, maintenance, and disposition phases of a public record

lignin
Substance that binds wood cellulose fibers together and may cause paper to be acidic

listserv
Automated electronic mail distribution system designed to disseminate information to a common use group. See also *VA-ROL*

locality
Any city, county, or town and its attendant departments, regional or combined authorities, and commissions or offices

LVA
See *Library of Virginia*

machine-readable record
Record that cannot be viewed without the assistance of some mechanical device

magnetic storage
Method of storing electronic information on computer drives, discs, or tapes by magnetizing particles imbedded in the material

medium
See *format*

metadata
Data describing the context, content, and structure of records and their management through time

methylene blue
Chemical test that is used to determine the amount of residual thiosulfate (fixer) left on microfilm after processing. This test must be done within two weeks of processing for the film to be accurate.

microfiche
Approximately 4" x 6" or 3" x 5" sheet of film containing images laid out in a grid and having an eye-readable heading

microfilm
Transparent film used to capture and view highly reduced images of documents

microform
Term for any form containing micro images

nonrecord
Convenience, courtesy, or information-only copy of a record, such as a reading file or duplicate copies that are disposed of after use

numeric filing system
Filing system that relies on the use of coded numbers and an index

optical character recognition (OCR)
Process used to capture, recognize, and translate printed alphanumeric characters into machine-readable text

optical disc
Laser-readable, plastic-coated disk used to store information digitally, which cannot be rewritten

overwrite
To write new electronic data on top of existing electronic data and thus erase the previously existing data

personal papers
Private papers related solely to an individual's own affairs

pest eradication chamber
Room or facility dedicated to destroying insects and vermin and inhibiting the growth of mold on water-damaged records

pH value
Measure of the acidity or alkalinity of any material ranging from 0, the most acidic, to 14, the most alkaline, with 7 equaling neutral

photostat
Photographic reproduction of a document, usually seen as a negative Photostat with white print on a black background

policy
Outlines the course of action to be followed by an organization, unit, or department in conducting its activities

preservation
Act of stabilizing storage environments and records in order to ensure the continued existence, accessibility, and authenticity of documents over time

privacy-protected record
Record containing personally identifying information safeguarded from disclosure by the *Government Data Collection and Dissemination Practices Act*

Privacy Protection Act of 1976
See *Government Data Collection and Dissemination Practices Act*

public record
See *record*

Public Records Act, Virginia (VPRA)
See *Virginia Public Records Act*

pulping
Means of destruction whereby documents are soaked in water and then churned or chopped into a pulp

purge
Process of examining records to eliminate outdated, superseded, or duplicate material

record
Any record created or accumulated during the course of public business, including paper, microfilm, electronic, photographic, audio, motion picture, or video recordings

record copy
See *copy of record*

Records Analysis Services
Section of the Archival and Records Management Services (ARMS) Division of the Library of Virginia directly responsible for records management consultation, developing records retention and disposition schedules, records management training, and the records management Web site

Records Analyst
Member of Records Analysis Services of the ARMS division of the Library of Virginia responsible for coordinating with agency and locality Records Officers to ensure compliance with records management policies and procedures, create schedules, and provide training

records appraisal
See *appraisal*

records center
Facility used for low-cost, temporary storage of inactive, nonpermanent records

records center box
Standardized storage container specifically designed to house either letter- or legal-size files on a standard shelving unit. The carton is approximately one cubic foot in volume or 15" x 12" x 10" in size.

Records Center Retrieval Request (RM-18 Form)
Library of Virginia form used by originating agencies or localities to retrieve files or boxes stored in the State Records Center

Records Coordinator
Individual in an agency or locality who assists the organization's or department's Records Officer in implementing a records management program

Records Custodian
Supervisor in an agency or locality having physical possession and control of records

records destruction
Act of eliminating or disposing of records

records disposition
Final action carried out on a record, either destruction or transfer to archives

records inventory or survey
Process of locating and identifying records series

Records Manager
See *Records Officer*

records management
Efficient and effective management and control of the creation, maintenance, use, and disposal of records

Records Officer
Required by the *Code of Virginia,* the agency or locality employee designated to monitor and control the creation, use, storage, transfer, and destruction of records

Records Officer Designation and Responsibilities (RM-25 Form)
Library of Virginia form used to verify that designated records officers in localities and state agencies are aware of their responsibilities in records management

Records Retention & Disposition Schedule
Library of Virginia–approved timetable stating the length of time a record must be kept and its required disposition. Also called a *retention schedule*.

records series
Group of identical or related records that are normally filed together and document a particular function, transaction, or activity

Records Survey (RM-19 Form)
Library of Virginia form used to document a series of records to determine future retention and disposition actions

records transfer
See *transfer*

Records Transfer List and Receipt (RM-17 Form)
Library of Virginia form used to request transfer of records to the Library of Virginia and acknowledge receipt of records after transfer is completed

reformat
To create a copy in a different format or medium from the original, especially for preservation or access needs

refreshing records
Act of recopying or reproducing electronic information with the aim of extending the useful storage life of the information

removable media
Any portable computer storage device that can be easily removed from a computer and stored or transported separately, including, but not limited to, flash drive, floppy disks, DAT tapes, cartridges, and Zip disks

resolution
Ability of an optical system to render visible the fine detail of an object; a measure of sharpness of an image

restricted records
Records with limits on access and use

retention period
Length of time a record is held before disposal takes

retention schedule
See *Records Retention & Disposition Schedule*

retrieval system
Any system designed to index, locate, retrieve, and deliver records for use

RM-2 Form
See *Records Retention & Disposition Schedule*

RM-3 Form
See *Certificate of Records Destruction*

RM-17 Form
See *Records Transfer List and Receipt*

RM-18 Form
See *Records Center Retrieval Request*

RM-19 Form
See *Records Survey*

RM-25 Form
See *Records Officer Designation and Responsibilities*

scanning
Process used to capture a digital signal that can be stored, transmitted, and reconstructed for display as an electronic image

schedule
See *Records Retention & Disposition Schedule*

schedule number
Unique number assigned to identify an individual retention schedule

sealed records
Records protected by a court order that cannot be accessed or unsealed without another court order

security backup
See *backup*

security microfilm
Microfilm specifically created as backup of the original records in order to protect against accidental disposal, fire, theft, or other disasters

series
See r*ecords series*

series number
Number assigned to designate a specific records series

shredding
Means of destroying paper records by mechanical cutting

silver halide
Photographic film in which the photosensitive layer is composed of silver halides. When developed, the image is formed either by metallic silver (black and white film) or by dyes (color film).

Specific Schedule
Retention and disposition schedule that applies to a particular agency

standards
Uniform rule or measure that controls the quality or acceptability of a specific output

State Archivist
Person appointed by the Librarian of Virginia to manage the archival collections of the Library of Virginia

State Librarian
See *Librarian of Virginia*

State Library Board
See *Library Board, The*

State Records Administrator
Person appointed by the Librarian of Virginia to administer the state records management function and enforce compliance with the *Virginia Public Records Act*

State Records Center (SRC)
Building operated by the Library of Virginia that houses the inactive nonarchival records, inactive archival records, a media storage vault, and Imaging Services

suspension
See *destruction hold*

transfer
Physical relocation of records to another location

VA-ROL (Virginia Records Officer Listserv)
Electronic mailing list for discussion of records management topics by the Records Officers of Virginia's local and state governments and the Records Analysts at the Library of Virginia

Virginia Administrative Code (VAC)
Set of regulations that compile and codify all of the administrative laws of state agencies

Virginia Freedom of Information Act
State statute making state records available for public inspection minus those that are exempt based on *Code of Virginia* § 2.2-3705.1

Virginia Public Records Act (VPRA)
Code of Virginia § 42.1-76 et seq., which grants authority to the Library of Virginia to ensure uniformity in the practice of records management throughout the Commonwealth, its agencies, and localities

vital records
Records immediately necessary to begin recovery of business after a disaster or essential to protecting the rights and interests of the organization, its employees, and the citizens of the commonwealth

wiping
See *overwrite*

workflow
Automation of a business process, especially to monitor the creation, distribution, and retrieval of documents