Records Management Guidance for Transitioning Employees

For More Information: http://publicrecordsboard.wi.gov or Contact Your Agency Records Officer

Records Management and Transitioning Employees *

* Changing positions, transferring to another agency, leaving state employment, moving office locations.

What are Employee Responsibilities?

Basic obligations regarding state records:

- Know how to identify public records and how long to retain them according to the appropriate General Records Schedule or program area Records Disposition Authorization (RDA).
- Manage paper and electronic records created as part of your job duties.
- File e-records (including email) according to a filing plan in a shared drive location.
- Dispose of information that is not a record.

When to Review?

Review electronic and paper files for official department records:

- When employees change positions, transfer or terminate.
- When office locations change.
- During monthly or annual cleanup events.

What is a Record?

Wis. Stat. § 16.61(2)(b) defines “public records” for the purposes of records retention and disposition. A record is a final form of information (not work in process), in any medium, preserved because it is:

- Created in the course of business
- Received for action
- Mandated by statute or regulation

Wisconsin Public Records Board (PRB): Protecting the legal, financial and historical interests of the state in public records.

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Recommended Steps Before Transitioning

1. Review materials on your desk, items in boxes, file cabinets and binders.
    - If you have records that should be transferred to the State Records Center or the Wisconsin Historical Society, contact the agency Records Officer for assistance.
    - For paper that has met its retention requirements or is no longer needed, there should be containers in the area for recyclable, garbage, and confidential. Put confidential documents or documents with personally identifiable information in the properly marked containers or shred them. Contact the agency Records Officer prior to disposing of records to ensure proper procedures are followed.
2. Review all computer, cloud and network drives you routinely work with.
    - Move department e-records to a shared drive or records repository subject folders that are backed up so the information can be accessed by anyone who might need it.
    - For e-records which have met their retention requirements or are no longer needed, delete or transfer to the Wisconsin Historical Society as appropriate. Contact the agency Records Officer prior to deleting records to ensure proper procedures are followed.
3. Work with supervisor, Records Officer or department Security Officer to determine where agency confidential records should be retained.
4. Check with supervisor or Records Officer on how email records should be retained for the agency.
    - Empty email mailbox, saving records and deleting non-record and short-term record messages as appropriate (see Short-Term Record examples below).
5. Check with supervisor if you wish to obtain copies of any of the department's files for use in your new job, such as examples of your work.

Retention Requirements

To find retention policies for your business area, contact the agency Records Officer for assistance. Agency RDAs and statewide General Records Schedules provide requirements on the length of time an office must keep particular records.

NOTE FOR ALL EVENTS: Dispose of records that have met the requirements of an approved, non-expired, RDA that are not currently subject to litigation, audit, or open records request. Dispose of any non-records such as copies or duplicative files kept for convenience purposes only. See the list of common short-term records examples. The list is not exhaustive, contact the agency Records Officer if you need assistance determining if something is a record.

Short-Term Record Examples:

- Personal information not related to business.
- Unsolicited emails not related to agency business.
- System-generated messages such as automated reminders.
- Computer-generated responses or confirmations.
- Correspondence that does not set policy, establish guidelines or document a transaction.
- Routine requests for information or agency communications.
- Mail transmittals that add nothing of substance to the enclosures (e.g., "FYI").
- Communications or announcements from distribution groups or listservs that:
    - Don't direct action or require compliance.
    - Don't relate to recipients' work project or decision making.
    - Are used for reference purposes only.