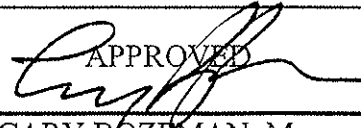


CITY OF BREMERTON		ELECTRONIC RECORDS RETENTION
INDEX Information Management 2-20-06	EFFECTIVE DATE: March 30, 2006 REVISED DATE: March 30, 2006	 APPROVED CARY BOZEMAN, Mayor

REFERENCE	
PURPOSE	<p>The purpose of this policy is to ensure compliance with state law requiring retention of certain public records, Chapter 40.14 RCW, and the Washington State Public Disclosure Act (PDA), 42.56 RCW. It is important that City employees understand and follow the proper record retention policies regarding the various forms of electronic media and services made available for their use, including computers, e-mail, voicemail, fax machines, external electronic bulletin boards, wire services, online services, intranet, Internet and the World Wide Web (“electronic record”). The following guidelines have been established for archiving and storing public records created using the aforementioned electronic media and services. These guidelines are not intended to set forth the specific retention period for various public records.</p>
POLICY	<p>To better serve our citizens and provide our employees with the best tools to perform their jobs, the City of Bremerton (City) makes available to its employees access to one or more forms of electronic media and services, including computers, e-mail, fax machines, external electronic bulletin boards, wire services, online services, intranet, Internet and the World Wide Web. The City encourages the use of these media and associated services because they can make communication more efficient and effective and because they are valuable sources of information about vendors, customers, technology, and new products and services.</p>
PROCEDURE	<p>The following shall serve as guidelines for classification and retention of public records:</p> <p>A. Definitions.</p> <p><u>Electronic Communications.</u> The use of computers in communications. Electronic communications may include the use of electronic mail, the Internet, the City’s intranet, File Transfer Protocol (FTP), Internet Relay Chat (IRC), Telnet, computer networks, and online databases.</p> <p><u>Bulletin Board System (BBS).</u> A computerized version of the bulletin boards found in stores and other public places, where people can leave messages for one another. BBSs are often run by local computer user</p>

groups, and offer software that can be downloaded. Many BBSs have been replaced by web sites.

Public record. As defined in RCW 42.17.020(36), includes any writing containing information relating to the conduct of government or the performance of any governmental or proprietary function prepared, owned, used, or retained by any state or local agency regardless of physical form or characteristics.

Download. To transfer files or data from one computer to another. To download means to receive; to upload means to transmit.

Electronic Media. The hardware, software and network infrastructure used to conduct electronic communications. Typically the method by which data is retained. e.g. disk, tape, computer memory, etc.

Intranet (Cobweb). An internal network providing functions similar to the Internet. These may include organization-wide web sites, file transfer capability, IRC (chat) capability and browser-based applications.

Internet. The Internet is comprised of thousands of interconnected computer networks, reaching millions of people in many different countries.

Online-services. A computer network accessed by modem or Internet connection. Online services generally charge a monthly fee, and offer such services as e-mail, information services, online shopping, news, and games. Examples include: America Online, MSN, and CompuServe.

Upload. To transfer files or data from one computer to another. To download means to receive; to upload means to transmit.

B. Classification of Electronic Records.

In general, electronic records are subject to retention in the same manner as a paper record. *However*, as noted below, storage of electronic records through use of backup tapes is not considered a substitute for a viable records management system utilizing storage and categorization of paper records. In addition, electronic data can be corrupted, lost or destroyed in a variety of ways, including defective media (tapes/discs), improper storage/handling of media, damage to hardware, viruses, power fluctuations, inadequate hardware maintenance and corruption of data.

1. Electronic Records generally requiring retention. The following categories of electronic records (usually e-mail) are *likely* to be considered public records in which case retention is required pursuant to the applicable retention schedule:

- Correspondence or memoranda related to official public business
- Original reports
- Policy and procedure directives
- Agenda and minutes of meetings
- Documents related to legal or audit issues
- Messages documenting agency actions, decisions, operations and responsibilities
- Documents that initiate, authorize or complete a

transaction

- Appointment calendars

See *Local Government Records Retention Schedule*, "Electronic Information".

2. Electronic Records generally not requiring retention. The following categories of electronic records are *not likely* to be public records in which case retention is not required:

- Information down-loaded from bulletin boards or web sites
- Information-only copies of documents that do not relate directly to the functional responsibility of the agency or office that receives them
- Personal messages and announcements not related to official business
- Phone message slips that do not contain public record information

3. Exempt from Disclosure. In addition, just as with paper documents, electronic records that are otherwise public records may still be exempt from disclosure. Employees should consult the City Clerk or their department's Public Records Coordinator before any claim of exemption or denial of access to records is made. If appropriate, the City Clerk or the departmental Public Records Coordinator may consult with the City Attorney's Office regarding a potential claim of an exemption or denial of access to records.

C. Retention of Electronic Records.

Electronic records that contain significant information relating to the transaction of business by the municipality are public records subject to record retention requirements. In general, therefore, employees should not rely on mere storage of electronic records as compliance with record retention requirements. Instead, employees should *print, retain and store one copy* of all electronic records falling within the definition of a public record except for e-mails sent or received using the City's e-mail system.

1. All e-mails that pass the City's security filtering, whether sent or received, whether used for communications within the City or for communication with an agent external to the City government, will be retained in a searchable, retrievable, unalterable form on a secure part of the network. This data capture will be automatic and unavoidable. The e-mail data will be maintained for a fixed period of time as prescribed by the City Clerk. Security backups will be made of this e-mail data storage.

2. In general, other electronic records (e.g., bulletin board discussions, departmental Intranet postings, etc.) should be printed and stored at the time they are created on the computer as follows:

- For bulletin boards or online discussions groups

consisting solely of City employees, the group moderator is responsible printing and storing all postings

- For bulletin boards or online discussion groups originating outside the City, but in which City employees are members or participate, the employee should print and store copies of their postings to the bulletin board or discussion group.

D. Destruction of Electronic Records.

Primary record copies of completed drafts and documents should be filed with the appropriate records series and retained in hard copy or electronic form according to the minimum retention periods approved by the Local Records Committee for those records series. *See Local Government Records Retention Schedule.* Secondary copies should be destroyed when obsolete or superseded. Destruction of primary documents shall be according to the applicable retention schedule. Documentation of record destruction shall be in writing and comply with WAC 434-640. A sample destruction form is attached.

