



Disposing of Electronic Records

For many years it was common practice for offices to simply buy additional computer servers as quickly as workers filled up the existing ones. Because the initial cost of computer storage was relatively inexpensive, there was little incentive for managing and disposing of electronic information in a logical way. This has led to the situation in which we find ourselves today. We are overwhelmed by bloated database systems designed without purge functions to remove unneeded data and an enormous amount of unmanaged documents located in hundreds of individual and shared network drives.

It is a problem that can simply no longer be ignored. Consider the following:

- Information that documents City functions, provides evidence of City business transactions, or that is needed to provide information on actions related to City projects and activities is considered a government record and must be retained and managed in compliance with State record retention laws. This is true regardless of the format of the information.
- According to Strategic Research Corporation, for every \$1 per megabyte (MB) spent on disk storage, the total spent in managing that storage space ranges from \$3 - \$8 per megabyte per year.
- Neglected and unmanaged electronic information is a dangerous legal liability. Responding to electronic discovery orders can become extremely costly and burdensome when information cannot be easily identified and retrieved.

The solution is to know the retention requirements that apply to the electronic records in your custody and to dispose of the records according to those requirements in a systematic way. The following steps will help get you started.

Step 1: Get to know your records schedule.

The City has two types of records retention schedules: the Citywide General Records Retention Schedule (CGRRS) and the Department Specific Records Retention Schedules.

The CGRRS contains retention requirements for records that are commonly found throughout City offices. Examples of the types of records that can be located on this schedule include: accounting and financial; contracts, grants and agreements; facility and property management; general office management; personnel; payroll; etc. The CGRRS is located on the City Records Management Inweb page at <http://inweb/clerk/RecordsManagement/GeneralSchedule.htm>

Department Specific Records Retention Schedules contain records that are unique to an individual City department. The City Records Management Program works directly with department staff to develop these schedules. Copies of Department Specific Records Retention Schedules can be obtained from the City Records Management Program.

The City Records Management Program can assist with determining the appropriate records retention schedule to use for City records. Contact Records Management via email at Leg_CRMP@seattle.gov or by telephone at 684-8154.

Step 2: Organize electronic records so they can be identified and disposed of easily.

For electronic documents kept in your user controlled network accounts, this means using the Windows operating system to create a file structure that mirrors your hard copy filing system and is based on the records retention schedule that applies to the records

For systems that are supported by IT, this means that database or document management systems are equipped with a purge mechanism that can identify expired data and carry out its disposal on a regular basis.

Step 3: Conduct regularly scheduled purge days.

One way to apply the retention schedules to your electronic records is to conduct an annual purge day. This could be a office-wide event or simply some time you set aside for yourself. During this day, review the electronic records in your custody, including those on network servers and on portable media such as diskettes and CDs, and destroy all records that are eligible for disposal.

Use the following checklist to ensure you are disposing of records the right way.

Checklist for Records Disposal

- The records are eligible for destruction according to a State approved records retention schedule.
- The records are not need to support current or imminent litigation actions, government investigations, audits or public disclosure requests
- The records are **not** designated as “Archival” or “Potentially Archival” on the records retention schedule
- Documentation of the disposal was filed and retained in the appropriate file and includes the date the records were disposed of, a description of the records (including their dates, official titles, retention period, etc....)

The following table will help you determine which disposal method to use.

| Media Type | Confidentiality Status | Approved Disposal Method(s) | Contact Information |
|---|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| Electronic – Hard Drives | Confidential/Not Confidential | Surplus | Fleets & Facilities: Warehousing Services Contact: Mike Wong Phone: 206-684-0824 |
| Electronic – Diskettes, CD, DVD-Data, Magnetic Tape | Not Confidential | Recycling | GreenDisk, Inc. Contact: Joan Beschen Phone: 425-883-9165 http://www.greendisk.com/gdsite/Default.aspx Alternative Community Training (ACT) Contact: Jim Williams Phone: 800-359-4607 http://www.actrecycling.org/ |
| | | Garbage | |
| | Confidential | Shredding Pulverizing | City Shredding Vendors: Confidential Data Disposal, Inc. Contract ID 0000002289 Vendor Contact: James Santerelli TEL 425-827-5566 cddshredding@msn.com Data Base Records Destruction, LLC Contract ID 0000002116 Vendor Contact: Chip Daly TEL 425-296-4571 cdaly@db-rd.com Pacific Northwest Shredding, Inc Contract ID 0000002166 Vendor Contact: Mark Guarin Mamon TEL 206-322-8461 markus@pacificnwrecycle.com Recall Secure Destruction Services, Inc Contract ID 0000001558 Contact: Alicia VandenOever TEL 1-509-744-8579 alicia.vandenoever@recall.com |

| Media Type | Confidentiality Status | Approved Disposal Method(s) | Contact Information |
|--|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| Digital Photographs /Slides PLEASE NOTE: All photographs and slides are archival and must be reviewed by Municipal Photo Archives staff prior to disposal | ALL PHOTOGRAPHS/ SLIDES | Archival Review | Municipal Photo Archives Contact: Julie Viggiano, Assistant City Archivist Phone: 206-233-5160 |
| | Not Archival/Not Confidential | Garbage | |
| | Not Archival /Confidential | Shredding Pulverizing | City Shredding Vendors: <i>see above</i> |
| Film/VHS/DVD-Video PLEASE NOTE: All film, video tapes, and DVD containing moving images are potentially archival and must be reviewed by Municipal Archives staff prior to disposal. | DVD-VIDEO | Archival Review | Municipal Archives Contact: Scott Cline, City Archivist Phone: 206-684-8353 |
| | Not Archival/Not Confidential | Surplus – VHS Tapes | Fleets & Facilities: Warehousing Services Contact: Mike Wong Phone: 206-684-0824 |
| | | Recycling – VHS Tapes | GreenDisk, Inc. Contact: Joan Beschen Phone: 425 883-9165 http://www.greendisk.com/gdsite/Default.aspx Alternative Community Training (ACT) Contact: Jim Williams Phone: 800-359-4607 http://www.actrecycling.org/ |
| | | Garbage – VHS Tapes & Film | |
| | Not Archival / Confidential | Shredding Pulverizing | City Shredding Vendors: <i>see above</i> |
| Microfilm/Microfiche | Not Confidential | Garbage | |
| | Confidential | Shredding Pulverizing | City Shredding Vendors: <i>see above</i> |

Remember! The City Records Management Program can help you determine which retention periods apply to your electronic records, develop plans to organize them, help coordinate purge days, and provide training related to electronic records management. Contact the City Records Management Program at 684-8154 for assistance.