

CF PAMPHLET  
NO. 15-1

STATE OF FLORIDA  
DEPARTMENT OF  
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES  
TALLAHASSEE, August 29, 1997

Documentation Management

BASICS OF RECORDS MANAGEMENT

This pamphlet allows employees of the Department of Children and Families and its contract providers an opportunity to become familiar with the basics of records management, and provides employees and contract providers the basic requirements for disposal and storage of records, and who to contact for assistance if there is a problem or question concerning records.

Questions concerning specific areas of records management that are not addressed in this pamphlet should be directed to the appropriate district or central office records management liaison officer (RMLO). The RMLO is usually an employee in the district or central general services office.

The RMLO serves as the principal contact and liaison with the department's records management officer (RMO) who is located in the office of general services support at central office.

BY DIRECTION OF THE SECRETARY:

*(Signed original copy on file)*

DENNIS L. CROFT  
Assistant Secretary for  
Administration

SUMMARY OF REVISED, ADDED, OR DELETED MATERIAL

This pamphlet has been updated to include the most current information about records storage and disposal.

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## BASICS OF RECORDS MANAGEMENT

### What is records management?

Records management is an efficient, effective, and ongoing program which provides for the organization, maintenance, retrieval, and disposition of records.

### Why does the Department of Children and Families have a records management program?

The Department of Children and Families has a records management program because Chapter 267, F.S., requires that every city, county, state or other governmental agency establish a records management program. Chapter 267 also requires that such agencies be granted approval for the disposition of public records by the Department of State's Bureau of Archives and Records Management.

### What is a record?

All documents, including papers, films, photographs, sound recordings, etc., are defined as public records according to Chapter 119, Florida Statutes (FS). Essentially, everything that crosses your desk that enables you to do your job and provide services is a public record, although some public records you work with may be confidential and not open for public inspection.

### What could happen if records are destroyed without prior authorization?

Any person who willfully and knowingly violates Florida's Public Records Law will be guilty of a misdemeanor in the first degree and subject to a fine of not more than \$1,000 or incarceration for not more than one year, or both.

### For assistance with district or central office records, who should be contacted?

For assistance with district records, contact the district records management liaison officer (RMLO), who is usually located in the district general services office. For central office, contact the RMLO, who is located in the office of central support services (ASGCS).

### How do you know who is your RMLO?

Call your district or central general services office or you may call the RMO for the department at (904) 487-1950/SC 277-1950.

### What do the following terms mean?

Agency - any governmental unit created or established by law and any other public or private agency acting on behalf of any public agency.

Authorized signators for the disposition of records - employees of the Department of Children and Families who may be appointed (senior management service) to their positions or who may be select-exempt employees, and who are authorized to sign Records Disposition Requests for submission through the RMLO to the Department of State.

Authorized signators for the establishment of retention schedules - employees of the Department of Children and Families who are appointed (senior management service) to their positions and who are authorized to sign Records Retention Schedules which request the establishment of retention periods for agency records.

Confidential public records - public records which are declared confidential by applicable law and which are not available for public inspection except in those instances specified by applicable law.

Department records management officer (RMO) - the individual delegated authority by the Records Custodian (Secretary of the Department of Children and Families) to monitor the department's records management program, and provide technical assistance as needed. This responsibility is delegated to an individual in the office of general services support (ASGGS) at central office in Tallahassee. This person serves as the department's principal contact and liaison with the RMLOs; the Florida Department of State, Bureau of Archives and Records Management; and other state and federal agencies.

District or Central Office Records Management Liaison Officer (RMLO) - the individual, usually in the district or central general services office, who is responsible for implementing the department's records management program at the district or central office level, and for developing district or central office operating procedures and guidelines pertaining to records management.

Micrographics - the process of creating or storing miniaturized photographic images or information on media as a storage (retention) method (film, fiche, disk, computer tape, video disk, etc.).

Powerfile equipment - electro-mechanical equipment containing shelves which rotate or move within a cabinet or as a unit and deliver the desired files to a user.

Public records - all documents, papers, letters, maps, books, tapes, photographs, forms (to which information has been added), sound recordings, or other material (excluding blank forms and library books), regardless of physical form or characteristics, made or received in connection with the transaction of official business by the department.

Record series - a group of related documents arranged under a single filing system, or kept together as a unit, because the documents consist of the same form, relate to the same subject, result from the same activity, or have certain similar physical characteristics, for example, maps or blueprints. A record series may contain both forms and correspondence.

Records custodian - the elected or appointed state, county, or municipal officer or officers charged by law with the responsibility for maintaining the office (or organizational unit) having the public records (Section 119.021, F.S.). The records custodian for the Department of Children and Families is the Secretary.

Retention - the minimum amount of time a record series will be maintained whether in original paper form, microfilm or electronic media.

## RECORDS RETENTION SCHEDULE

### What is a records retention schedule?

A records retention schedule lists and describes a group of records of an organization, tells which office will have custody of the record copy for audit purposes, and tells the minimum amount of time the records will be

maintained by the department. A Records Retention Schedule (Form 105), when approved by the Florida Department of State's Bureau of Archives and Records Management, officially establishes the minimum length of time records must be retained.

When is it necessary to complete a records retention schedule?

It is necessary to complete a records retention schedule only if a retention schedule is not in existence or if a substantial change to the contents of the record series has been made.

Do all records need a retention schedule?

Yes, all records need a retention schedule. Records cannot be placed in a Children and Families records storage facility, microfilmed, or destroyed unless a retention schedule is in effect.

Is there an index to approved retention schedules?

Yes, there is an index to approved departmental retention schedules for records unique to the Department of Children and Families. There also is a General Records Schedule (GS1) for State and Local Government Records for records generally found at any state agency, including the Department of Children and Families. To find out if a retention schedule has been written for a certain record series, contact your RMLO.

Once the retention schedule has been approved by the Bureau of Archives and Records Management, can the records listed on that schedule be destroyed?

Even though a retention schedule has been established for a record series, it is ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY to file a Records Disposition Request, Form 107, through your RMLO, EACH TIME records need to be disposed of. To not do so is a violation of Chapter 119, F.S.

For assistance in obtaining and completing a retention schedule, who should be contacted?

The RMLO should be contacted for assistance in obtaining and completing a retention schedule or for determining if a schedule already has been approved for a specific record series.

## DISPOSAL OF RECORDS

What is a records disposition request?

A records disposition request (Form 107), formerly called a notice of destruction or 107, is the form used by the department to request permission from the Bureau of Archives and Records Management to dispose of scheduled records. The records disposition request must be submitted first to the RMLO who will review the request prior to submitting it to the Bureau.

Can records for which there are no retention schedules in effect be destroyed?

No.

Can "duplicate" records (or other records with an OSA retention) be destroyed without submitting a records disposition request (Form 107)?

No (unless the district or central office has written procedures that authorize such destruction).

What happens if records are destroyed without the Bureau of Archives and Records Management's permission?

We are required by law (Section 119.041, F.S.) to have the Bureau of Archives and Records Management's permission to dispose of any records maintained by the department. Any willful or knowing violation is a misdemeanor of the first degree carrying a fine upon conviction of not more than \$1,000 or incarceration for not more than one year, or both.

What methods are used for disposal of records?

Public records may be disposed of by burning, shredding, recycling, or using a landfill. The RMLO is encouraged to use reputable, bonded recycling companies or landfills that are fenced or supervised.

Confidential public records may be disposed of by burning, shredding, recycling, or using a landfill. If confidential public records are recycled, the records should be picked up by a reputable (preferably bonded) company and shredded. If confidential public records are placed in a landfill, the records must be immediately protected (usually bulldozed over or shredded) to safeguard against accidental (wind) or deliberate (scavengers) misuse of the record. In any event, regardless of the disposal method used for confidential public records, the RMLO or departmental employee in charge of disposing of the records must be sure safeguards are taken to prevent the accidental or deliberate misuse of such records.

Removal of paper clips, staples, rubber bands, etc. from records prior to disposal will be necessary only if required by the company that accepts the records for shredding or recycling.

Once a records disposition request is approved for a certain record series, is it necessary to complete a request in the future?

Each time records need to be disposed of, a records disposition request must be submitted and approved before actual disposal. (Example: If a request is submitted on 1/5/97 requesting permission to destroy reading files for 1/1/94 - 6/30/95, then it is absolutely necessary to submit another request when reading files for 7/1/96 -12/31/96 need to be destroyed.)

For assistance in obtaining or completing a records disposition request form, who should be contacted?

The RMLO should be contacted for assistance in obtaining or completing a request.

## STORAGE OF RECORDS

### What is a Children and Families records storage facility?

A Children and Families records storage facility (including facilities leased by a district or central office and facilities under contract with a district or central office) is a facility where inactive records are stored until the minimum required retention periods have been met. The use of office space for storage of inactive records should be avoided because of fire/safety issues and cost. Office space may not be used for the bulk storage of inactive records without the approval of your district or central general services office.

### What is the State Records Center?

The State Records Center is a records storage facility located in Tallahassee and operated by the Department of State, Bureau of Archives and Records Management. Any state agency (including any district or central office) may store records at the State Records Center, provided the center has space available and the district or central office has funds available to pay the fees for storage, disposal, retrieval and delivery.

### What is Archives?

Archives is an office within the Bureau of Archives and Records Management at the Department of State that is concerned with the preservation of historical documents. Archives is not a storage facility for active or inactive records.

### Where are Children and Families records stored?

The majority of inactive records are stored in Children and Families storage facilities in each district or in private facilities with which the district has contracted. For central office, records are stored at the State Records Center, provided space is available. Districts may also store records at the State Records Center. In those districts with inadequate storage, records are kept in the offices. This practice is discouraged, however, because it is open to criticism from both the Department of Management Services and the State Fire Marshal.

### Is it mandatory that written, established retention schedules be in effect before records can be maintained or stored.

Yes! Sooner or later the records will need to be destroyed. The Bureau of Archives and Records Management will not approve destruction if there is no retention schedule in place.

### Do records for storage need to be placed in special containers?

Yes! Scheduled records for storage **MUST** be placed in a standard Records Storage Carton which is a one-piece construction, 10x12x15. A Records Storage Carton Label, form CF 734, **MUST BE GLUED** to each carton to identify the records contained therein. (Records sent to the State Records Center must be placed in a standard Records Storage Carton, and must be labeled with the approved Bureau of Archives and Records Management carton label; contact your RMLO for assistance.) Each label has a gummed backing which must be moistened with water before the label is affixed (glued) to the narrow end of the records storage carton. Tape, regardless of the type, must not be used to affix labels. Records with different retention periods (for example: FY 75-76 and CY 80) must not be placed in the same carton.

### What happens if records are not boxed or labeled properly?



If records are not boxed or labeled according to the instructions on the back of the label or according to the RMLO, the records will NOT BE ACCEPTED for storage. Records sent to the State Records Center must be placed in a standard Records Storage Carton, and labeled with the approved Bureau of Archives and Records Management carton label.

In addition to boxing and labeling records for storage, is it necessary to complete any other forms?

Yes. Form CF 1443, Records Storage/Transfer Request, must accompany any records that are transferred to a Children and Families records storage facility. (The standard records transfer form approved by the Bureau of Archives and Records Management must accompany any records transferred to the State Records Center.) In addition, it is recommended that the office that sends the records to storage retain a list of the contents of each box, and attach that list to the copy of the transfer form which is retained by the sending office. (NOTE: If records are stored at a private facility under contract, the private facility may require that different, or additional, forms be completed depending on the terms of the contract.)

For assistance in obtaining or completing any forms, boxes, or labels, who should be contacted?

Records management forms and labels may be ordered from the Forms Warehouse in Jacksonville. The preferred--and most economical--records storage carton is a one-piece construction, 10x12x15, which can be ordered in bundles of 25 cartons per bundle from Pride of Florida, Lowell, Florida (commodity number 10434). The RMLO should be contacted for assistance in completing any forms, boxes, or labels, or for transferring records to the State Records Center.

## RECORDS REFERENCE REQUEST

How are records retrieved from storage?

Form CF 1445, Records Reference Request, is used when an office needs to retrieve records from a Children and Families storage facility. Requests for such records usually will be processed as quickly as possible but may take as long as a week. The standard records reference request form approved by the Bureau of Archives and Records Management must be used to retrieve records from the State Records Center.

Are records retrieved on a file-by-file basis or by carton?

As a general rule individual files will not be retrieved; records will be retrieved by referencing the entire storage carton. If the RMLO prefers to retrieve individual files from a Children and Families storage facility, that is his/her prerogative. Records must be retrieved from the State Records Center by the carton only.

For assistance in obtaining or completing any forms with respect to retrieving records from records storage, who should be contacted?

The RMLO should be contacted for assistance in obtaining or completing any forms with respect to retrieving records from a storage facility.

## ELECTRONIC MAIL AND ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS

### How should cc:Mail messages and the documents attached to cc:Mail messages be handled?

Retention periods are based on a public record's informational content, not its format. Whether the record is a paper copy or an electronic file, the record must be retained for the retention period specified by the applicable retention schedule. The requirements for retaining and disposing of electronic records is the same as the requirements for retaining and disposing of paper records.

There is not one retention schedule that covers all cc:Mail messages and the documents attached to those messages. There is a retention schedule for "transitory messages," but that retention schedule does not cover all cc:Mail messages and attached documents. Each cc:Mail message and the attached documents, if any, must be examined to determine which retention schedule(s) applies.

For cc:Mail messages and attached documents, you can comply with retention requirements by doing one of the following: print the electronic documents and store the hard copy in the relevant subject matter file(s) just like any other paper copy (the cc:Mail message can then be deleted from the system); or, electronically store cc:Mail messages and attached documents in appropriate computer archive files. To store messages and documents electronically, an archive file must be established for each record series to which records will be electronically stored. Each cc:Mail message and attached document must be stored in the applicable archive file for the record series to which the message and document belong. Since most systems periodically delete cc:Mail messages as part of ongoing network maintenance, contact your district management systems staff for assistance in establishing, and backing up, archive files. Storing messages and documents electronically may not be possible unless your district has sufficient support staff and storage capacity.

## MICROFILMING

### Are inactive records that have a permanent retention period microfilmed?

Inactive records that have a permanent retention period may be stored in a Children and Families records storage facility, although microfilming the records is preferred. Requests, including requests from districts and institutions, for microfilming records must be submitted through the RML0 to the RMO (ASGGS) in Tallahassee for coordination and approval before records are filmed by an outside vendor. It usually is not cost-effective to microfilm records that must be retained less than 15 years.

Sometimes, central offices will request that certain district records (e.g., adoptions, terminated personnel records, etc.) be sent to Tallahassee for microfilming. Districts will send records to Tallahassee following the instructions provided by central office. Each time a district sends records, the district will complete a Records Storage/Transfer Request and send the completed form along with the records to be microfilmed.

### What is micrographics?

Micrographics is the process of or storing miniaturized photographic images or information on media (film, fiche, disk, computer tape, video disk, etc.). The image area of a copy can be reduced up to one forty-eighth of its original size; yet the image retains nearly original clarity. The information may then be retrieved by projecting the film onto a screen using a reader or by making prints on paper using a reader/printer.

### Who prepares the records for microfilming and how long does the preparation take?

Records that need to be microfilmed must be prepared for filming by office that has possession of the records. Preparation, which usually takes two to three hours per cubic foot (box), includes the removal of paper clips and staples, the mending of torn pages, and the removal of unnecessary and obsolete papers and correspondence.

Does Children and Families have a central microfilming unit?

No; however, requests for microfilming records, including requests from districts and institutions, must be submitted through the RMLO to the RMO (ASGGS) for coordination and approval before records are filmed.

Can any office or employee of the Department of Children and Families purchase microfilm equipment, services, or supplies and film his or her own records?

The purchase or lease of microfilm equipment, services (for example, the filming of records by a service bureau), or supplies must be approved by the RMLO and RMO before the purchase requisition is submitted to the purchasing office. A statement describing the equipment or service desired and justification for the purchase or lease must accompany the request.

Why is it necessary for the RMLO and RMO to authorize the purchase or lease of microfilm equipment, services, or supplies?

It is necessary for the RMLO and the RMO to authorize the purchase or lease of microfilm equipment, services, or supplies because they know the various resources available, and can ensure compatibility department-wide.

For assistance with the purchase or lease of microfilm equipment, services, or supplies, who should be contacted?

The RMLO should be contacted for assistance with micrographic needs. He or she will forward the request to the RMO in Tallahassee for approval before final submission to the purchasing office.

## FILING EQUIPMENT

What are the requirements for purchasing or leasing filing equipment?

Requests to lease or purchase filing equipment (including file cabinets, open-shelf filing units, and/or powerfile equipment), regardless of design or type, must be approved by the RMLO.

Why is it necessary for the RMLO to authorize the purchase or lease of filing equipment?

It is necessary for the RMLO to authorize the purchase or lease of filing equipment to ensure that when existing cabinets are filled to capacity, all eligible records have been transferred to a storage facility or destroyed. Often, this process will provide a surplus of filing cabinets. If, however, filing cabinets are filled to capacity and the records are still active, the RMLO may approve the request for additional filing cabinets. A statement describing the equipment and justification for the purchase or lease must accompany the request for the equipment.

## PAPER SHREDDERS

Can any office or employee of the Department of Children and Families purchase a paper shredder and shred records for his/her office?

The purchase or lease of a paper shredder must be approved by the RMLO before the purchase requisition is submitted to the purchasing office. A statement justifying the purchase or lease of a paper shredder must accompany the request.

Approval by the RMLO is required because the acquisition and use of paper shredders must be closely monitored to ensure that records are not improperly destroyed. Records may not be shredded until a records disposition request has been approved by the Bureau of Archives and Records Management.

The majority of the department's client records are confidential; however, it is not cost-effective for staff to shred records unless there is substantial justification (e.g., abuse information). The RMLO should monitor the use of any shredder to ensure that the Bureau of Archives and Records Management has approved the records disposition request before the records are shredded.

