



TARRANT COUNTY

RECORDS MANAGEMENT POLICY

I. POLICY STATEMENT

The Tarrant County Commissioners Court, being the policy development and budgetary control unit of county government, has established an active and continuing records management program in compliance with Title 6, Subtitle C of the Local Government Code, also known as the Local Government Records Act. The Commissioners Court further desires to prescribe policies and procedures consistent with the Local Government Records Act and in the interest of cost-effective and efficient recordkeeping.

It is the policy of Tarrant County to provide for efficient, economical, and effective controls over the creation, distribution, use, maintenance, retention, preservation, protection, and disposition of all County records through a comprehensive system of integrated procedures for the management of records from their creation to their ultimate disposition, consistent with the requirements of the Texas Local Government Code and accepted records management practices.

II. DEFINITIONS

County records include all documents, papers, letters, books, maps, photographs, sound or video recordings, microfilm, magnetic tape, electronic media, or other information recording media, regardless of physical form or characteristic and regardless of whether public access is open or restricted under the laws of the State of Texas, created or received by Tarrant County or any of its officers or employees pursuant to law or in the transaction of public business. This definition of county records does not include:

- extra identical copies of documents created only for the convenience of reference or research;
- notes, journals, appointment books, diaries, day calendars, and similar documents an employee may use for personal convenience;
- reference notes and preliminary drafts compiled in preparation of a record;
- blank forms;
- stocks of publications;

- correspondence, messages and documents of a personal or professional nature that an employee or official may keep in his or her office which do not document public business; or
- reference material, including books and information files that do not document official actions.

Department head shall refer to an appointed or participating elected official who is in charge of a department of Tarrant County that creates or receives records.

Records custodian shall mean the appointed or elected public official who is in charge of a Tarrant County office that creates or receives Tarrant County records.

Vital record shall mean any record of Tarrant County necessary to resume or continue operations of the County in the event of an emergency or disaster, to recreate the legal and financial status of Tarrant County, or to protect and fulfill the County's obligation to its citizens.

Permanent record shall mean any record of the County for which the retention period on a records retention and disposition schedule is given as permanent.

Records retention and disposition schedule shall mean a document prepared by or under the authority of the Records Management Officer listing the records maintained by the County, their retention periods, and other records disposition information that may be required by the records management program.

Records management shall mean the application of management techniques to the creation, use, maintenance, retention, preservation, protection, and disposition of records for the purposes of reducing the costs and improving the efficiency of record keeping. The term includes the development of records retention and disposition schedules, the management of filing and information retrieval systems, the protection of vital and permanent records, the economical and space-effective storage of inactive records, control over the creation and distribution of forms, reports and correspondence, and the management of micrographics, electronic or other records storage systems.

Retention period shall mean the minimum time that must pass after the creation, recording, or receipt of a record, or the fulfillment of certain actions associated with a record, before it is eligible for destruction or another form of disposal.

Records series shall mean a group of identical or related records that are normally used and filed as a unit and that permit evaluation as a unit for records retention scheduling purposes.

III. POLICY GUIDELINES

A. This policy is applicable to all appointed County officials and their employees and all elected County officials who have elected, or will elect, to participate in the County program as is permitted by 203.005(g) of the Local Government Code.

B. All Tarrant County records are hereby declared to be the property of Tarrant County and shall be created, maintained and disposed of in accordance with the provisions of this policy or procedures authorized by it and in no other manner. No County official or employee has, by virtue of his or her position, any personal or property right to such records even though he or she may have developed or compiled them. The unauthorized destruction, removal from files, or use of such records is prohibited.

C. Designation of Records Management Officer. The Senior Manager of Records Information Management ~~or Information Technology Resource Supervisor~~, or ~~its~~ subsequent classification titles, in the Information Technology Department, and the successive holders of the position, shall serve as Records Management Officer (RMO) for Tarrant County. The Information Technology Resource Supervisor shall serve as the default RMO. However, the Senior Manager of Records Information Management may take over the position of RMO at his or her discretion. As provided by State law, each successive holder of the position shall file their name with the Director and Librarian of the Texas State Library within thirty (30) days of their initial designation.

D. Establishment of Records Management Committee.

1. A Records Management Committee is established and the committee shall consist of:

- County Records Management Officer (RMO);
- County Administrator or his or her designated representative;
- District Attorney or his or her designated representative;
- County Auditor or his or her designated representative;
- Chief Information Officer or his or her representative;

The following officials, or their designated representatives, shall join the committee if the official elects to participate in the County records management program in whole or in part as specified in 203.005 of the Local Government Code, or through an existing Service Level Agreements approved by Commissioners Court or court order.

- District Clerk;
- County Clerk;
- Tax Assessor/Collector;

- Sheriff;
- Justices of the Peace representative.

The Records Management Officer (RMO) shall serve as chairman of the Records Management Committee.

2. The committee shall:

- (a) Review and approve records retention and disposition schedules before their submission to the Texas State Library.
- (b) Review and approve all destruction of records whether in accordance with an approved records retention and disposition schedule or in accordance with 203.045 of the Local Government Code.

E. Designation of Records Liaison Officers. Each department head shall designate in writing a member of their staff to serve as Records Liaison Officer for the implementation of the records management program in the department. Department heads may serve as their own Records Liaison Officer and may appoint more than one Records Liaison Officer for different sections of their office. Persons acting as Records Liaison Officers shall be thoroughly familiar with all records created and maintained by the department or departmental section for which they serve as Records Liaison Officer and shall have full access to all County records maintained by the department or departmental section. In the event of resignation, retirement, dismissal or removal by action of the department head of a person designated as a Records Liaison Officer, the department head shall promptly designate another person in writing to be the Records Liaison Officer.

F. Records retention and disposition schedules to be developed, approved and filed with State.

- 1. The Records Management Officer (RMO), in cooperation with department heads and Records Liaison Officers, shall prepare records retention and disposition schedules for each department listing all records created or received by the department and the retention period for each record series. Records retention and disposition schedules shall also contain such information regarding the disposition of records as may facilitate good records management practices.
- 2. Each records retention and disposition schedule shall be monitored and amended as needed by the Records Management Officer on a regular basis to ensure that it is in compliance with records retention schedules issued by the State and that it continues to reflect the recordkeeping

procedures and needs of the department and the records management program of Tarrant County.

3. Before its adoption, a records retention and disposition schedule, or amended schedule, for a department under an appointed official must be approved by the department head, the members of the Records Management Committee and the Commissioners Court.
4. Before its adoption, a records retention and disposition schedule, or amended schedule, for a department under an elected official participating in this plan must be approved by the elected official and informational copies must be sent to the Records Management Committee and the Commissioners Court.
5. Before its adoption, a records retention and disposition schedule, or amended schedule, must be submitted to and accepted for filing by the Director and Librarian of the Texas State Library as provided by State law. If a schedule is not accepted for filing, the schedule shall be amended to make it acceptable for filing. The Records Management Officer shall submit the records retention and disposition schedules to the Director and Librarian as the executive and administrative officer of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission.

G. Implementation of records retention and disposition schedules and destruction of records under schedule.

1. A records retention and disposition schedule, or amended schedule, which has been approved and adopted shall be implemented by department heads and Records Liaison Officers according to the policies and procedures of the records management plan.
2. A record whose retention period has expired on a records retention and disposition schedule shall be destroyed unless an open records request is pending on the record, the subject of the record is pertinent to a pending law suit, the record has permanent historical and/or research value, or the department head requests in writing to the Records Management Committee that the record be retained for an additional period. Such requests by a department head shall include a written justification as to why the record be retained for an additional period of time.
3. Prior to the destruction of a record under an approved records retention and disposition schedule, authorization for the destruction must be obtained by the Records Management Committee.

H. Destruction of unscheduled records. A record that has not been listed on an approved records retention and disposition schedules may be destroyed if its

destruction has been approved in the same manner as a record destroyed under an approved schedule and the Records Management Officer (RMO) has submitted to and received back from the Director and Librarian of the Texas State Library an approved destruction authorization request.

- I. Records Center. The Tarrant County Records Center shall be under the direct control and supervision of the Records Management Officer (RMO) who shall develop policies and procedures regulating the operations and use of the Records Center.
- J. Imaging. In order to insure that the acquisition or enhancement of any imaging equipment or service, or any equipment or service whose ultimate use would be in connection with imaging equipment or service, is compatible with Tarrant County's records management function, all such acquisitions or enhancements by any department or officer of Tarrant County through purchase, donation, forfeiture or any other means shall be reviewed and approved by the County's Records Management Officer (RMO) and the Chief Information Officer for review and approval prior to the inauguration of any new or enhanced system. All imaging services shall be consistent with such rules and regulations as may be adopted by the state and with accepted records management practices.

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES

- A. Duties of the County records management officer (RMO). The Records Management Officer (RMO) shall:
 - 1. Administer the County records management program and provide assistance to departments in its implementation.
 - 2. Plan, formulate, and prescribe records disposition policies, systems, standards, and procedures.
 - 3. In cooperation with department heads, Office of Emergency Management and Budget and Risk Management Department, identify vital records and establish a disaster plan for each County office and department for which he or she serves as the Records Management Officer (RMO) to ensure maximum availability of the records in order to re-establish operations quickly and with minimum disruption and expense in the event of a disaster.
 - 4. Develop procedures to ensure the permanent preservation of the historically valuable records of the County.
 - 5. Establish standards for filing and storage equipment and for recordkeeping supplies.

6. Provide records management advice and assistance to all departments by preparation of a policy and procedure manual and by on-site consultation.
7. Monitor records retention schedules and administrative rules issued by the Texas State Library and Archives Commission to determine if the records management program and the County's records retention and disposition schedules are in compliance with State regulations.
8. As needed, provide to the Commissioners Court and department heads information concerning State laws and administrative rules relating to local government records.
9. Instruct Records Liaison Officers and other personnel in the policies and procedures of the records management plan and their duties in the records management program.
10. Direct the Records Liaison Officers or other personnel in the conducting of records inventories in preparation for the development of records retention and disposition schedules as required by State law and this order.
11. Ensure that the maintenance, preservation, protection, microfilming, imaging, destruction or other disposition of County records is carried out in accordance with the policies and procedures of the records management program and the requirements of state law.
12. Maintain records on the volume of records destroyed under approved records retention and disposition schedules, the volume of records microfilmed and/or stored electronically, and the estimated cost and space savings as the result of such disposal or disposition.
13. Report periodically to the Commissioners Court on the implementation of the records plan in each department of the County.
14. Bring to the attention of the Commissioners Court non-compliance by department heads or other County personnel with the policies and procedures of the records management program as established by State law and this policy.
15. Oversee the operations of the Tarrant County Records Center;
16. Oversee the operations of the imaging center as part records management function.

- 1 17. Serve as records custodian for those records for which the office of origin
2 cannot be determined and also for records of defunct offices unless
3 those records have been transferred to the custody of another County
4 office or to the State.

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6 B. Duties and responsibilities of department heads. Department heads shall:

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8 1. Cooperate with the Records Management Officer (RMO) in carrying out
9 the policies and procedures established in Tarrant County for the
10 efficient and economic management of records and in carrying out the
11 requirements of this order.
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13 2. Adequately document the transaction of government business and the
14 services, programs, and duties for which the department head and his or
15 her staff are responsible.
16
17 3. Maintain the records in their care and carry out their preservation,
18 protection, microfilming, imaging, destruction and other disposition only
19 in accordance with the policies and procedures of the records
20 management program of Tarrant County and the requirements of this
21 policy.
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23 C. Duties and responsibilities of Records Liaison Officers. Records Liaison
24 Officers shall:

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26 1. Assist the Records Management Officer (RMO) in the development of
27 records retention and disposition schedules.
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29 2. In cooperation with the Records Management Officer (RMO) coordinate
30 and implement the policies and procedures of the records management
31 program in their departments.
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33 3. Serve as point of contact within their department for the dissemination of
34 information concerning the records management program from the
35 Records Management Officer (RMO).
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37 4. Disseminate information to department staff concerning the records
38 management program.
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42 Adopted: Court Order 67489 (July 21, 1992)

43 Amended: Court Order 105327 (April 14, 2009)