Chapter 11 Traffic Engineering Records Management

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11-1 Overview

This chapter describes the guidelines for managing traffic engineering records. A records management system must comply with state and Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) record-keeping rules and provide for record storage in easily accessible locations. Both paper records and electronic records are equally subject to public record laws and the retention rules provided by these guidelines.

11-2 WSDOT's Record Management Guidelines

A. **Originals and Copies –** The office that creates the original document is responsible for the maintenance, retention, and destruction of the document, except:

- When an original document is sent to another office/division/region within WSDOT, the office receiving that original assumes the responsibility for the maintenance, retention, and destruction of the document.
- When the content of a copy is changed, the resultant copy becomes a new original and must be maintained accordingly.

B. **Two Types of Retention Schedules**

1. The Washington Secretary of State's General Records Retention Schedule covers records that represent the operations of all state agencies.
2. The WSDOT Unique Retention Schedule covers records created specifically for WSDOT. This schedule is managed by the department's Records and Information Services Office.

   Public records may not be destroyed until they have been retained for the minimum time period identified in the retention schedule (see Section 11-4).

C. **Paper Record Destruction –** Shred paper records with confidential and/or sensitive information. The Records Destruction Log (WSDOT Form 720-025) must be completed and signed by the Agency Records Manager prior to destruction and can be found at the following link:

- Details are provided at Destroying Records at WSDOT.
- Paper records without confidential and/or sensitive information may be recycled.

11-3 Secretary of State's Office, General Records Retention

The Secretary of State's general records retention schedules identify 47 record series titles, arranged into six functional areas. The six categories cover records relating to audit, contracts and purchasing, general office operations (non-executive), executive level documents, legal files, legislative relations, and administrative material.

Specific items within each category have an assigned retention period and may have special instructions for the items after the retention period has elapsed.

11-4 Traffic Engineering Records Retention

Retention schedules are based on WSDOT and Secretary of State guidelines and must be approved by the Office of Records and Retention, the Secretary of Transportation and the State Records Committee. This section covers records relating to Traffic Operations (Office Number 175) and provides a link to the latest, approved records retention schedule by the Office of Records and Retention, the Secretary of Transportation and the Secretary of State. The Transportation Operations Division (TOD) Office File Plan is intended to be a living document. The latest version of TOD's Office File Plan is at WSDOT - Workforce Development Toolkit - Technical training - Traffic Action Tracking System (TRACTS) (wa.gov), see the first section Overview Trainings, TRACTS Records Retention Training, Office Plan.

11-5 Key Words and Phrases

Active Records – Records that are referenced more than once per month per file drawer are considered active. Active records should be maintained in the office.

Administrative Files – Records documenting the operation, management, and administration of an office; usually distinguished from program records that relate to the office's primary functions.

Decentralized Files – Files created, used, maintained, and controlled in or near the office of record.

Design Documentation – The documents that explain design decisions and the design process followed.

Essential Records – Records used to perform critical operations during a disaster or emergency. These records need to be protected through backup or enhanced storage (RCW 40.10.010).

Non-Essential Records – Records that are not critical for our agency to perform operations during an emergency. The records include information-only copies of documents used for reference or convenience, transmittal memos, copies of memoranda, bulletins, personal e-mails, electronic newsletters, catalogs, published reference materials, and any documents not related to agency business.

File Plan – A list of records sorted by category. The File Plan is a compilation of retention policies specific to a group's needs that includes retention periods pertinent to that category or record type, where it should be stored, descriptions, and disposition action (archival or destroy).

Inactive Records – Records with a reference rate of less than one search per file drawer per month. Such records may be transferred to an inactive records storage center.

Office Files and Memoranda – Records that have solely administrative value and do not fall within the classification of official public record.

Official Public Record – A public records classification established by RCW 40.14.010 (1) for records having legal or fiscal value, such as vouchers, receipts, and other documents, that prove the validity of every transaction relating to the use of public property/income. Legislative records are also official public records.

Permanent Records – Archival records that should be retained without weeding or sampling because of their legal and/or historic value. These records should be transferred to the Washington State Archives via the Records and Information Management Office when retention has been met.

Primary Record Copy – The original or official copy of a record.

Project (Case) Files – Groups of documents that pertain to a particular action, event, person, or place, such as a speed limit change or special event approval.

Sampling – The process of selecting records from a collection, to represent the collection as a whole, and disposing of the remainder of the records.

Weeding – The process of identifying and removing records with no, or limited, administrative, legal, fiscal, or historical value.

Working File – A file of rough notes, calculations, or preliminary drafts that are assembled and used to prepare or analyze other documents. Working files are usually retained in personal desk files or filed separately until project completion. These working files are considered transitory and are shredded after translating the information into a final record that must follow its retention schedule.

11-6 Inventory Record of Site-Specific Traffic Control Device Installations

Some areas have site-specific traffic control device installations to address traffic operational issues. These installations typically exceed the MUTCD, *Design Manual*, or Standard Plans *minimums*, and are intended to be maintained, as installed, until construction projects or other factors eliminate the need for the treatments.

The regional Traffic Offices should maintain an inventory record of these locations to assure that future maintenance activities retain the pattern of the treatments applied. To help assure the desired maintenance level, store the inventory in a server accessible by both regional traffic and maintenance staff and alert maintenance staff when the site- specific treatments are installed.

11-7 Executive Orders, Statutes, and Official Guidelines

A. **WSDOT Executive Order** E 1037, Electronic Records and Document Management – This executive order directs any WSDOT employee who produces, receives, distributes, or forwards an essential electronic record or document to:

1. Create, manage, and store essential electronic records, documents, and information in an easily located format.
2. Keep essential electronic records and documents according to state and department retention guidelines.
3. Delete all non-essential records or place the non-essential records in an electronic file managed by the employee. Employees will delete these files when they become outdated, the purpose of the record is fulfilled, or no longer useful to the employee.

   Store essential records on a shared server so that records are accessible by all the regional Traffic Office staff. Non-essential records may be stored on a server provided for individuals.

B. **Statutes** and **Policies**

1. RCW 40.14 *Preservation and destruction of public records*
2. RCW 42.56 *Public records act*

C. **Electronic Records –** WSDOT Executive Order E 1037 *Electronic Records and Document Management*

D. **Paper Records –** Secretary of State's General Records Retention Schedules

E. Public **Disclosure** of Record

- WSDOT Executive Order E 1041 *E-Discovery and Preserving Evidence*

F. **Other –** WSDOT Executive Order E 1010 *Certification of Documents by Licensed Professionals*