

# Records Management Checklist

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The Arizona State Library, Archives and Public Records – Records Management Division offers this Records Management Checklist<sup>1</sup> as a tool for state agencies and political subdivisions to evaluate their records management program. *ARS § 41-1346* requires the head of each state and local agency to establish and maintain an active, continuing program for the economical and efficient management of the public records of the agency.

This checklist is provided to help agencies in making an assessment of the status of their records management programs and in identifying major problems and setting priorities for program improvements regarding records creation, maintenance, and disposition policies and procedures.

Although this checklist provides a basis for measuring the effectiveness of an agency's records management program, agencies that wish to conduct a more in-depth review may add more specific questions. Agencies may also modify or add questions to accommodate specialized records and recordkeeping practices. No checklist developed for state-wide use can replace audit or evaluation activities tailored to the unique organization and operations of each agency.

- Employee Records Management Orientation** – with technology, each employee is now their own records manager of the data on their PC, e-mail, web pages, data bases. etc. They must be trained on proper records creation and maintenance techniques for electronic files that rise to the level of “records.”
- Decentralized Records** – Use of Information Maintenance Plans (File Plans) to manage dispersed and diverse information, the need for training employees on how to use and maintain plans, etc.
- E-mail** – Written directive explaining electronic records management for E-mail, how to identify E-mail messages that are records, how to save them, how to manage them, how to dispose of them, proper use of the E-mail system. Includes mandatory training of all E-mail users.
- Systems Development** – Records management issues must be addressed when designing new electronic systems, including scheduling all system components (inputs, outputs, computer files, documentation), and addressing issues such as privacy, HIPAA, inspection of public records, security, internal access, public access, etc.
- Electronic Records** – Official agency records designation. Need to ensure that all automated systems meet integrity and quality standards prior to use for agency decision making and must be approved as official records.

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<sup>1</sup> This document was adapted from the document, **Checklist of Records Management Requirements for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**, prepared by Pat Day of the National Archives and Records Administration—Rocky Mountain Region, August 2000.



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- Web page development** – disclaimer and privacy statements, records retention, approval process, using the web to redesign work processes (training registration, ordering equipment & supplies, etc.).
- Business Process Reengineering** – before designing new electronic systems – reengineer the process first. Use management systems analysis techniques to treat the “disease” (the record-making process) rather than the “symptoms” (media).
- Skills assessment for Records Managers.** Modern records managers must be more technologically competent than in the past. Not only must they understand the traditional concepts of managing records through the life-cycle, but they must be able to exchange information with Information Technologists and other professionals with whom they interface.
- Co-location of offices** (combined resources) Memorandums of understanding for records management designating the “office of record” and documenting records maintenance and disposition practices in this unique environment.
- Contractor’s records.** State records management requirements must be spelled out in contracts with organizations that receive state funding to carry out various missions and programs for government agencies. State contract audits should include record keeping practices of contractors for those systems of records considered to be “Public Records.”
- Alternate Work Site locations** – records issues.
- Records Disaster Recovery Plans.** Agreed-upon decisions for responding to emergency situations should be written down and provided to all concerned, and include response actions relating to records and information.
- Continuity of Operations Plans.** Agencies must set forth priorities for resuming critical business functions during and after an emergency. This can be accomplished by conducting risk analysis, risk assessment, and a business impact analysis. Continuity plans identify critical information and records needed to help resume business.
- Essential Records Plan.** Emergency Operating records and Legal and Financial Rights records must be identified before disasters and emergencies occur. These ‘essential records’ should account for no more than 7% of all records (in most cases), and they require protection through copying and disbursement.
- Unscheduled records/Unscheduled systems.** All records created by State agencies and political subdivisions are required to be scheduled in a records retention schedule that is authorized by the Arizona State Library, Archives and Public Records. Records that are not scheduled should be described and appraised and the information forwarded to ASLAPR. New automated systems need to be scheduled.



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- Electronic Recordkeeping Systems.** Agencies should begin to “think electronically.” They should find ways to maintain most information solely in electronic form. This can be accomplished by implementing an electronic record keeping system that meets ASLAPR requirements for proper creation, maintenance and use, and disposition of electronic records. Office automation systems, operating system software, and E-mail software, generally do NOT meet these requirements. Commercial Off-the Shelf products are available as are in-house designed solutions.
  
- Records Cleanout campaigns** when moving to new office space.
  
- Exit interviews** – Have detailed instructions and checklists regarding the turnover of records by employees and managers who are separating from the agency. This includes the disposition of records on laptop devices and office workstations connected to Local- and Wide-Area-Networks.
  
- Inspection of public records.** Develop internal procedures and requirements for addressing this activity.

