



COUNTY/LOCAL GOVT. OFFICES

# PUBLIC RECORDS ORIENTATION PACKET



\* ARE YOU NEW TO COUNTY/LOCAL GOVT?

\* WILL YOU DEAL WITH RECORDS  
IN YOUR OFFICE?

\* NEED A REFRESHER ON RETENTION?

This packet is

**What You Need to Know about  
Managing Your Office's  
Public Records**

For information about statutory responsibilities not  
outlined in this packet, please refer to:  
**Indiana Code 5-15-6**



**IN.GOV/IARA**  
**CTY@IARA.IN.GOV**

# IMPORTANCE OF RECORDS & INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

## AS THE RECORDS CUSTODIAN,

Which is defined as any employee of an Indiana county or local governmental entity who has been assigned the responsibility of managing the public records created or received by their office. **Includes elected county offices, cities, towns, & municipalities, public libraries, K-12 schools, law enforcement agencies, township trustees, local health departments, etc.**

## YOUR MISSION IS:

As a records custodian, your mission is to **take care of** government records and **retain them** under the requirements set out by the state of Indiana and federal laws, using records retention schedules developed for you by IARA.



# THREE REASONS

**That every office in Indiana government needs an effective records & information management program:**



## 1 LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY

To perform your legal mandates and responsibilities.



## 2 PHYSICAL COSTS

To minimize the costs of records storage.



## 3 PUBLIC ACCESSIBILITY

To assure public access to government public records.

# DEFINITION

## OF A PUBLIC RECORD

A public record is any piece of recorded information that is:

\* created or received by your office **and**

\* documents the activities of your office



regardless of its format. Public records can exist in various forms of media, such as **physically** on paper or microfilm, **electronically** in file formats such as PDFs, emails, records within electronic software systems, and even data stored on the Cloud.

The definition of a **non-record and/or a nonscheduled record** is in the County/Local Records Custodian Handbook.



## RETENTION SCHEDULES

IARA creates **records retention schedules** to make it as easy as possible for you, listing and describing:

- the **categories** of records commonly created by your office
- **how long** to keep the records in each category
- **what happens** to those records both during and after that time period

Look at your **office-specific** & the **County/Local General (GEN)**

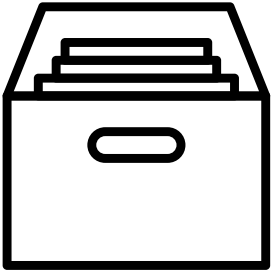
retention schedules to find the retention for public records.



If you can't find records on the office-specific or GEN retention schedules, reach out for help to IARA at [cty@iara.in.gov](mailto:cty@iara.in.gov).



# COUNTY COMMISSION OF PUBLIC RECORDS



Along with YOU as the records custodian and the Indiana Archives & Records Administration, there is a county level partner to help you with records and information management,

## **County Commission of Public Records**

- In accordance with IC 5-15-6-1.
- Commonly referred to as the CCPR or CPR.
- Established in each of Indiana's 92 counties.
- Made up of a Secretary, Chairperson, & seven members.
- Convenes at least once a year, preferably more often.
- Offers guidance & support to county/local government offices.

**See the CCPR webpage, webinar, or in.gov/iara for more information on CCPRs.**



# DANGERS OF COMMITTING A LEVEL 6 FELONY IC 5-15-6-8

A public official or other person who recklessly, knowingly, or intentionally destroys or damages any public record commits a Level 6 felony unless:

- \* (1) the commission (CCPR) shall have given its approval in writing that the public records may be destroyed; **(use the SF30505 - PR-1 A Form)**
- \* (2) the commission (CCPR) shall have entered its approval for destruction of the public records on its own minutes; or
- \* (3) authority for destruction of the records is granted by an approved retention schedule. **(use the SF44905 - Notice of Destruction Form)**



To prevent a *possible* felony charge, it is advisable  
to contact your CCPR and/or IARA in a  
*spirit of caution* before destroying or damaging public records.



**\*\*\* DO NOT SELL OR GIVE AWAY PUBLIC RECORDS \*\*\***

# DESTRUCTION & TRANSFER STATE FORMS



## **44905 (NOD)**

Notice of Destruction

To destroy records in accordance with an approved retention schedule.  
See 4.4 in Handbook.



## **30505 (PR-1A)**

Request for Permission to Destroy Certain Public Records

To destroy nonscheduled public records (*records not found on a retention schedule; p. 4-5 in Handbook; ask IARA.*) or scheduled records ahead of their disposition date due to severe damage.  
See 4.5 in Handbook.



## **57236 (PR-1B)**

Request for Permission to Transfer Certain Public Records

You may be able to transfer public records to the Indiana Archives, or an active genealogical or historical entity of the county.  
See 4.6 in Handbook.

**To destroy  
a public record  
in *any* format,  
you will complete  
a state form.**

For help, email [cty@iara.in.gov](mailto:cty@iara.in.gov).

**CONTACT  
[CTY@IARA.IN.GOV](mailto:CTY@IARA.IN.GOV)**

**BEFORE  
FILLING OUT  
PR-1A OR PR-1B  
FORMS**

**NEED HELP FILLING OUT ANY OF THE FORMS? CONTACT [CTY@IARA.IN.GOV](mailto:CTY@IARA.IN.GOV)**



# ADDITIONAL IARA RESOURCES

\* County/Local Records Custodian Handbook

\* IARA Specific Forms

SF44905 Notice of Destruction

SF30505 PR-1A Destroy Certain Public Records

SF57236 PR-1B Transfer Certain Public Records

\* OCPR Policies 20-01 and 20-02

\* Electronic Records Guidelines

\* Retaining Email Records: A Quick Reference

\* Vendor Qualifications for Converting Public Records

\* Recommended Capabilities for Electronic Recordkeeping Systems

\* A Guide to Responsible Records Destruction for State Agencies & County/Local Offices



**AMY  
CHRISTIENSEN**

Records Management Liaison

[achristiansen@iara.in.gov](mailto:achristiansen@iara.in.gov)  
(812) 929-3882



**MADISON  
YOUNG**

Records Analyst

[mayoung@iara.in.gov](mailto:mayoung@iara.in.gov)  
(317) 522-9072





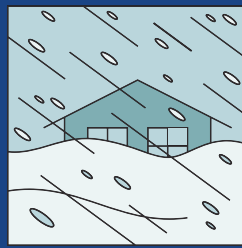
# DISASTER PREVENTION

Tips from Indiana Archives and Records Administration

## AVOID THESE HAZARDS WHEN STORING RECORDS:



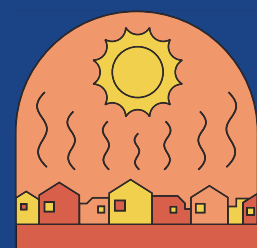
Capacity



Temperature  
& Humidity



Infestation



Light

Avoid storage on the ground. Ensure sufficient floor support to prevent a collapse. Avoid too small spaces, as this can lead to poor ventilation, strain on shelving, and damage when accessing records.

Avoid basements and attics with extreme temperature fluctuations, poor air circulation, and moisture issues (high humidity = mold + mildew, low humidity = brittleness) which cause degradation, particularly on non-paper records.

Avoid kitchens, eating areas, and food storage zones to minimize rodents and insect infestations.

Avoid direct sunlight, exterior windows, or fluorescent light to minimize fading.



[cty@iara.in.gov](mailto:cty@iara.in.gov)



[www.iara.IN.gov](http://www.iara.IN.gov)







# DISASTER PREVENTION

AVOID THESE HAZARDS WHEN STORING RECORDS:



Heat



Electronic  
Records



Water



Security

Avoid radiators, heat sources, or high temperature storage which can cause heat damage or potential fires. Fire-resistant doors or cabinets recommended.

Be sure to migrate electronic records when implementing a new system or hardware. Confirm with vendor that they provide adequate storage for the volume needed.

Avoid placement near potential water sources such as A/C units or pipes to prevent mold and mildew.

Avoid high traffic, public areas and limit access to work needs or records requests. Create internal, network, and cyber security procedures, which ensure the authenticity and integrity of records and reduce the threat of malicious harm.

## other prevention tips

Wash hands before handling records: natural oils from your skin contaminate records.

Keep copies of critical records at a separate location if possible.

Do not tape, paper clip, staple, or fold records

Do not label records in pen. Always use a soft, number two pencil to label the backs of photographs.

Be sure to migrate electronic records when you install new software on your computer.

Avoid dirt and dust, which can cause abrasion.

THE IDEAL CLIMATE FOR RECORDS STORAGE IS BETWEEN 65 AND 70 DEGREES + 35-50% HUMIDITY.



**IARA is here to assist  
county or local government offices  
when disaster strikes!**

If your office finds severely damaged records\*, below are helpful guidelines to reporting those disasters and how to conserve the records.

\*Regardless of the format or media - whether paper, microfilm, or electronic meaning digitized/scanned paper, born-digital, it's a record no matter the format or media.

# Reporting Severely Damaged Records

## Report a severely damaged records disaster:



If the emergency happens during business hours, contact IARA's Records & Information Management division at:

**812-929-3882**  
**cty@iara.in.gov**



If the emergency happens outside of business hours, contact the American Institute for Conservation's National Heritage Responders at:

**202-661-8068**

For non-urgent inquires, email [emergencies@culturalheritage.org](mailto:emergencies@culturalheritage.org).

## What is considered a severely damaged record?

Severely damaged records are defined as:

- 1** a danger to human health, life, or property
- 2** unsalvageable - unusable: unable to be used in any way and/or
- 3** unsalvageable - unconvertible: unable to be reformatted (scanned, digitized, or converted to microfilm).

Severely damaged records that the office and IARA determine to be a danger to human health, life or property may be destroyed immediately by any proposed method that IARA approves.



[www.in.gov/iara/divisions/records-management/](http://www.in.gov/iara/divisions/records-management/)



## What are the procedures when finding severely damaged records?

The first thing you should do is contact IARA at [cty@iara.in.gov](mailto:cty@iara.in.gov) when finding severely damaged records.

Then IARA will ask you to gather an assessment of the damage using the Damaged Records Form.

**IARA will also request image(s) or video(s) of the damage. It helps to have as much information ready as possible before you contact IARA.**



## What if we cannot supply answers to the questions in the Damaged Records Form?

IARA will work with you to obtain the answers. *However, if you cannot supply enough of the information to give IARA a clear picture of the situation, your request to destroy cannot be considered.*

Once IARA requests the information, it will be reviewed and a final decision made. If the request is approved, your office will fill out a PR-1 A form (SF 30505) to be approved by the County Commission of Public Records (CCPR) at their next meeting.

**Contact IARA at [cty@iara.in.gov](mailto:cty@iara.in.gov) before filling out the PR-1 A form (SF30505).** Once it's approved, you may destroy the severely damaged records accordingly.



## How do I destroy severely damaged records?

- 1 Damaged records that the office and IARA determine to be a menace to human health, life or property may be destroyed immediately by any proposed method IARA approves.
- 2 Damaged records that are **confidential** must be destroyed in a confidential manner. Just taking them to a landfill is not sufficient for disposal. **Shredding and/or incineration** are ways to destroy records in a confidential manner. Film, electronic media and paper can all be shredded.
- 3 The safest method of destroying moldy paper records is incineration. If the records are not confidential, you may discard them in the trash. *Do not shred moldy materials.*
- 4 Records must either be destroyed in an authorized location such as government property, or by a vendor that specializes in the destruction of records. *Public records cannot be destroyed in an unauthorized location, such as your home or a similar location.*

