

Records Management Policy

Preface

The Records Management Division of the Department of General Services is charged with the responsibility of developing, implementing and maintaining a County Records Management Program. The County Records Management Program is designed to provide economy and efficiency in the creation, organization, maintenance, use, and disposition of county records.

The Polk County Standards and Procedures Manual contain the standards, procedures, and guidelines established by the Board of Supervisors and administered by the Department of General Services to implement the County Records Management Program.

The Polk County Standards and Procedures Manual is available to all County agencies, and should be utilized to achieve compliance with its provisions.

Access to Public Records and Documents

I. Responsibilities:

It is the responsibility of the head of each County office or department to provide for the maintenance, protection, and security of public records and documents, and to assure compliance with all provisions of the Code of Iowa.

II. Procedures:

A. Right to Examine Records

1. Every citizen has the right to examine all public records and to copy such records, and the news media may publish records, unless a provision of the code expressly limits that right or requires certain public record to be kept secret or confidential.
 - a. All examination and copying of public records will be done under the supervision of the lawful custodian of the records, or an authorized deputy.
 - b. The lawful custodian of the records, or an authorized deputy, may charge a reasonable fee to recover costs incurred for the services, including reproduction costs.
2. In accordance with the rules of Civil Procedure, a district court may grant an injunction restraining the examination (including copying) of a specific public record, if the petition supported by affidavit shows and if the court finds that such examination would clearly not be in the public interest and would substantially and irreparably injure any person or persons.
3. Original records and documents will not be released from a County office or department unless so ordered by a court or by the lawful custodian of the records, or an authorized deputy; a certified copy of a document will be retained by the department if the original record or document is released. Certain exceptions to this procedure may be authorized at the discretion of the office holder or department head.

B. Confidential Records

1. The Code of Iowa stipulates that certain public records will be kept confidential unless otherwise ordered by a court, or by the lawful custodian of records or an authorized deputy.
2. The head of each office or department is responsible for noting applicable Code sections defining certain records as confidential.
3. In the event that records classified as confidential are released to a service bureau for microfilming, it is the responsibility of the lawful custodian of the records to assure that the service bureau implements appropriate measures to preserve the confidentiality of those records.
4. The micrographics sections of the Recorder's Office is responsible for maintaining confidentiality of records which are in its custody during the microfilming process.

General Responsibilities: County Offices and Departments

I. Responsibilities:

It is the responsibility of the head of each office or department to establish and maintain a program for the economical and efficient management of its records, in cooperation with the Director of the Department of General Services and the Records Management Division.

II. Procedures:

A. Polk County Records Officers

1. The head of each office or department will designate an employee to function as Records Officer, in addition to that person's regularly assigned responsibilities.
 - a. The Records Officer will be a permanent, full-time employee knowledgeable in the overall programs and functions of that office, and the related records required to document those programs and functions.
 - b. The Records Officer will be delegated the authority to act on behalf of the department head in routine decisions regarding the retention and disposition of that office's record and files.
2. The Records Officer will maintain liaison with the Records Management Division of the Department of General Services.
 - a. At the time a department Records Officer ceases to be employed in that capacity, the head of that office will designate another individual to act as the officer.
 - b. The Records Management Division of the General Services Department will maintain a current list of Records Officers and is to be notified by the department head when a new person is designated.

B. County Office Records and Files

1. The head of each office or department will submit to the Records Management Division of the General Services Department, a complete listing of records in the custody of that office and will submit an update of those records in January of each year thereafter.
 - a. Records Inventory forms will be provided by the Records Management Division of the General Services Department.
2. The head of each office or department will submit to the Records Management Division of the General Services Department a complete listing of records in the custody of that office deemed vital.
 - a. Vital Records Inventory forms will be provided by the Records Management Division of the General Services Department.
3. The Records Management Division of the General Services Department will consult with the Records Officer or the department head to establish the approved record retention and disposition schedules of all records.

C. Department Records Management Programs

1. The head of each County office or department will establish and maintain an office records management program.
 - a. The departmental program will provide for effective controls over the creation, maintenance, and the use of records to conduct official business.
 - b. The program also will provide for coordination with the Director of the Department of General Services and the Records Management Division in developing and implementing techniques to provide for the maintenance and security of records and to facilitate the disposal of records no longer required to be preserved.
2. The office records management programs will be compatible with the objectives and procedures of

the Department of General Services Records Management Program.

- D. Departmental Acquisition of Records Storage, Duplicating and Micrographics Equipment, Supplies, and Services.
 1. The head of each County office or department will insure that all proposed purchases of records storage, duplicating, and micrographics equipment, supplies, or services to be used for preservation of records are reviewed by the records Management Division of the General Services Department and approved by the Director of General Services prior to the expenditures for the same. There is created a Records Technical Advisory Committee who shall provide technical guidance and expertise and shall review for cost effectiveness, appropriateness all request for services affected by their section. This committee is composed of the Directors of Information Services and General Service, or their designee, the County Recorder and the staff of the Records Management Division of the General Services Department.
 2. Leases or rentals of records storage, duplicating, and micrographics equipment, supplies, or services also will be subject to the same review process.

General Responsibilities: Records Management Division

I. Responsibilities:

It is the responsibility of the Records Management Division of the General Services Department to supervise and coordinate all records management activities of County offices and departments, and to function in an administrative capacity on behalf of Polk County.

II. Procedures

A. County Records Standards and Procedures

1. The Records Management Division will furnish a copy of Polk County Standards and Procedures to all County offices and departments.

B. Assistance to County Offices and Departments

1. The Records Management Division of the Department of General Services, at the request of an office holder or department head, will assist other Polk County offices in reviewing and improving records management programs and activities.
 - a. Assistance will be provided on a time-available basis, and will be limited to the system studies and recommendations, and the training of office personnel in records management techniques. The Records Management Division will not purge records and files or physically convert files from one system to another.
 - b. The Records Management Division will maintain liaison with vendors and consultants in the field of records and filing equipment and services (including micrographics and equipment and services) and will coordinate contacts between offices and vendors or consultants as deemed appropriate by the Director of the Department of General Services.

RECORDS ORGANIZATION AND EVALUATION

Retention and Disposition

I. Responsibilities:

County Offices and Departments:

It is the responsibility of the head of each office or department to determine a retention period and final disposition for all records in the custody of that office.

Records Management Division:

It is the responsibility of the Records Management Division of the General Service Department, to establish uniform standards and procedures for the retention and final disposition of County records, and to assure that such standards and procedures are in accordance with applicable state and federal statutes, rules and regulations.

II. Procedures:

A. Records Retention

1. The head of each office or department will identify the records in the custody of that office, and will determine the minimum retention requirements in accordance with the operational needs of the office.
 - a. Statutory retention requirements will be noted where applicable.
 - b. Recommendations for final disposition or destruction of the records also will be determined by each office or department.
 - c. The listing of records, and proposed retention and disposition schedules, will be submitted to the Records Management Division of the General Services Department.
2. The Records Management Division will review the proposed schedules against criteria for administrative, legal, fiscal, and historical value:
 - a. Administrative value is determined by the minimum length of time requires to have the records available in the office for the conduct of day-to-day operations. Generally, this requirement will be through program or project completion, or the completion of a business transaction.
 - b. Legal value is determined by statutory provisions. The statute of limitations for various claims against the county also will be considered.
 - c. Fiscal value is determined by State, Federal or County audit requirements. Generally, records subject to State or County audit will be retained three years, then destroyed; records subject to Federal audit will be retained five years subsequent to the end of the grant period of final report.
 - d. Historical value is determined by the long term usefulness of a record containing adequate and authentic evidence of an office organization, policies, decisions, procedures, operations, or other activities; or significant information about people, places and events.
3. The Records Management Division of the General Services Department will assist offices in determining the length of time the records should be retained in the office; and whether the records finally should be deposited in Archives or destroyed.

B. Records Disposition

4. At termination of the required length of time for retention of the records in the immediate office, the department will provide for transfer of the records to Archives, or for destruction of the records.
5. Transfer of records to Archives requires the completion of a Request for Record Action Forms. (See exhibit D).
 - a. Inactive records control section provides detailed instructions for preparation of material to be transferred to Archives.
 - b. The Buildings and Grounds Division of the Department of General Services will provide pick-up and delivery service to transfer records from County offices to Archives. A representative from the originating office should accompany the records to assure placement in the proper area.
6. At the termination of the required length of time for retention of records in Archives, the Records Management Division of the General Services Department will provide for destruction of the records.
 - a. Destruction of records in the physical custody of Archives requires the preparation of a Request for Record Action Form from the office or department having legal custody of the records.
7. Records to be destroyed should be processed according to final disposition requirements:
 - a. Records that are of a confidential nature will be shredded under the supervision of Buildings and Grounds personnel or office representative, or may be removed for recycling by a paper disposal

contractor.

- b. Records that are not classified as confidential will be disposed of as waste paper, or taken to the land fill.
- c. The Records Management Division and the Buildings and Ground Division of the General Services Department will coordinate large volume disposal requirement.

Vital Records Protection

I. Responsibilities:

County Offices and Departments:

It is the responsibility of the County office or department to provide to the Records Management Division of the Department of General Services, a listing of all office records defined as vital records.

Records Management Division:

It is the responsibility of the Records Management Division to establish standards and procedures for the preservation and protection of vital records, and to assure that such standards and procedures are implemented by the respective offices.

II. Procedures:

A. Identification of Vital Records

1. The head of each County office or department will identify vital records in its custody and furnish the Records Management Division of the General Services Department with a copy of the vital records list.
2. Vital records will be identified according to generally accepted standards and criteria, those documents necessary for:
 - a. The resumption or continuation of operations.
 - b. The reconstruction of the legal and financial status of the office.
 - c. The receipt of payments due to the County from outside sources.
 - d. The fulfillment of financial obligations to County employees and outside sources.
3. Factors to be considered in determining the designation of record series as —vitalll include:
 - a. The extent to which destruction of those records would jeopardize the general public interest.
 - b. The extent to which unavailability of particular records would delay recovery of monies with which to replace buildings and equipment.
 - c. The extent to which unavailability of records would delay restoration of operations and services.
 - d. The relative difficulty with which records could be replaced if destroyed.
4. Vital records generally represent approximately one percent of an organizational unit's total records.
5. The Records Management Division of the Department of General Services will retain a composite listing of vital records from each County office or department for emergency and post emergency operations.
 - a. The Records Management Division of the Department of General Services will coordinate its vital records program with the Polk County Disaster Recovery Team Managers.

B. Protection and Preservation of Vital Records

1. The Records Management Division of the Department of General Services, in consultation with the head of each County office or department and the Records Technical Advisory Committee, will determine the appropriate method for providing vital records copies.

- a. Copies of vital records are classified as preservation duplicates, and as such have the same force and effect for all purposes as the original records
 - b. Copying (duplication) may require either the preparation of extra copies of the record at the time of its origination, or scheduled reproduction of existing records.
 - c. Copies most commonly prepared will include carbons, photo copies, and microfilm (including Computer Output Microfilm)
2. Vital records copies will be protected in the most economical and efficient manner deemed appropriate by the Records Management Division of the General Services Department and the head of each County office or department, according to the function of the records in day-to-day operations.
 3. Security storage or relocation of vital records will be in accordance with the Director of General Services.

ACTIVE RECORDS CONTROL

File Maintenance Procedures:

I. Responsibilities:

County Offices and Departments:

It is the responsibility of the head of each County office or department to provide for efficient and economical maintenance of office records and files required to conduct current business and operations.

Records Management Division:

It is the responsibility of the Records Management Division of the Department of General Services to recommend basic standards and procedures relating to maintenance of County office files, and to assist County departments in reviewing and improving specific problem areas in file maintenance.

II. Procedures: A. File Control

1. Office file control may be maintained through the implementation of a file system recognizing the following ten basic file groups to classify records:
 - a. General correspondence: consists of letters, memos, telegrams, enclosures, reports, and miscellaneous materials relating to a subject or function. General correspondence should be filed in separate folders under an appropriate subject heading, and should be purged at least annually (generally non-record by definition).
 - b. Transitory Correspondence: consists of routine requests for the information or publications, routine data to other offices; also convenience copy files and read files. Transitory correspondence also should be filed in separate folders under the appropriate subject heading, and flagged for semi-annual purging and destruction (generally non-record by definition).
 - c. Case files or Project Files: Contains material relating to a specific action, event, person, organization, location, or product. Common examples include contracts, investigations research projects and construction projects. Case files and project files should be filed intact, insofar as possible, under the appropriate subject. Related —general correspondence files may be placed immediately preceding or following the case or project file, but should be kept separate to facilitate purging (case files are generally records by definition).
 - d. Technical Reference Materials: printed reports, periodicals, technical manuals articles, clippings, sales catalogs, and special studies. Technical reference to case files and project files as necessary and appropriate (generally non-record by definition).
 - e. Audio-visual: Graphic images, such as positive and negative prints; electronic or other mechanical reproductions of sound or coded information, such as tape recordings; magnetic and paper tapes; x-ray films; and similar material. Audio-visual materials should be filed separately due to physical characteristics (record or non-record by definition, accordingly to content).
 - f. Cartographic Material: maps, charts, aerial photographs, physiographic diagrams, graphic map indexes, field survey notes, geodetic surveys, and similar material. Cartographic materials should be filed separately, due to physical characteristics and cross-referenced to the case files or project files (generally records definition, although

some material may be referenced).

- g. Engineered Drawings: Original drawings (tracings) of plans for structures, vehicles, vessels, or other objects; full-sized reproductions of original drawings such as blueprints and blueines; microfilms of engineering drawings; or paper reproductions of microfilmed drawings made on microfilm reader/ printers. Engineering drawings may be interfiled in case or project files, although separate files are recommended in situations where too much bulk may otherwise exist (generally records by definitions).
- h. Cards: index cards, IBM cards, aperture, etc. Card files should be maintained separately according to size and format and cross-referenced as appropriate (record or non-record by definition according to content).
- i. Machine Language Records: Magnetic tapes, discs, or drums; and paper tapes. Such records should be filed separately (generally records filed by definition).
- j. Microfilms: all miniaturized records, including roll film, microfiche and computer output microfilm (COM). Microforms normally should be filed separately and cross-referenced to case or project files; interfiling paper records and microfilms may lead to loss of or damage to the microforms. (generally records by definition).

B. File Maintenance

1. Exhibit C lists several common filing problems and recommended solutions to those problems.

C. Space Planning

1. Office layouts should be designed to facilitate efficient paper flow in relation to operational requirements.
2. The Records Management Division of the General Services Department, at the request of an office head, will provide assistance to County offices or departments in designing office layouts to achieve maximum utilization of space in relation to paperwork requirements.

Common Filing Problems

Too many filing places	Centralized filing of records of common interest in one location under one supervisor. File specialized records in offices where handled, but follow established handling procedure.
Everybody a File Clerk	Centralize authority with responsibility allow only designated persons to use files except in emergencies.
Files disordered; show no particular plan or arrangement	Utilize the Uniform File System, expanding and adapting it to meet unique agency subject areas.
System doesn't fit the way material is called for	Study the possibilities of using subject, geographic, or numeric filing as well as alphabetic filing, for certain specialized materials.
Filing decisions erratic	Start filing procedure manual based on the Uniform File System and then USE It! Don't depend on snap judgment or the opinions of others. When a problem arises, make a ruling, then write it down.
Takes too long to find a folder	Have an index guide for each inch of active drawer space or each six to eight folders. Twenty-five guides per drawer provides the best efficiency.
Same Trouble with file cards	Have no more than thirty cards to a guide in an average reference file; no more than twenty in an

	active or growing one, and definitely no more than ten to fifteen to a guide in a posted record file, such as a ledger.
Drawers jammed too tight	Allow 3 to 4 inches of working space in letter files, 1 to 2 inches in card files.
Bulging folders slow down filing speed	Have no more than twenty-five sheets per folder for best efficiency; do not exceed fifty.
Papers pile up in the miscellaneous	Create a file for a subject after the sixth folder letter on that subject. If that doesn't work a larger number of divisions are needed in the index.
Individual folder too full	Make a special guide for the individual or subject, then put a set of period or chronological folders back of the guide.
Guides in bad condition	Replace broken guides. Use reinforced tabs in the active file. Use angular tabs for easier reading. Use the tab inserts for greater versatility and less expansion.
Folder tabs difficult to read	Use gummed labels; they strengthen and add legibility. Use the reinforced tabs when reference is frequent. Use a good grade of material for active files.
Folders out of sight	Use stiffer folders. Use scored or below folders for better expansion.
Folders wear out to soon	Use at least an 11-point folder for frequent use out of the file; 14 point or pressboard for heavy use. Save space yet add strength with double tabbed folders.
Old correspondence slowing up filing of current records	Transfer or destroy old material at least once a year See if some types of correspondence need to be filed at all.
File storage using up valuable floor space	Check use of five-drawer cabinets. Check shelf filing for certain records. Establish a definite destruction plan for all types of papers you file. Consolidation of files might help.
Trouble finding material called for before it is filed	Use sorting devices to completely arrange the papers.
Getting papers into the folders takes too long	Use sorting devices to completely arrange the papers.
Work is tiring	Use filing shelf to free both hands for filing. The stool is another handy device to ease fatigue.
Trouble finding missing papers or cards	Keep track of removed papers and cards without guides or folders.

Adapted from a report prepared by the National Office Products Association, as Reprinted in Maedke, Robek, and Brown Information and Records Management, Glencoe Press, Beverly Hills, 1974, pp. 158-160

INACTIVE RECORDS CONTROL

Archival Areas

I. Responsibilities:

County Offices and Departments:

It is the responsibility of the head of each County office or department to transfer records to a designated archival area in accordance with the procedures set forth by the Records Management Division of the General Services Department.

Records Management Division:

It is the responsibility of the Records Management Division of the Department of General Services to establish and maintain Archival Areas for the purpose of providing the most efficient and economical means of records storage to Polk County offices.

II. Procedures:

A. Archival Areas

1. Records Management Division of the Department of General Services will determine current and projected records storage space requirements in consultation with County Records Officers.
2. The Records Management Division will take necessary security Precautions to include:
 - a. Fire Protection-provision of fire extinguishers and fire hose connections; —no-smoking enforcement.
 - b. Water protection-adequate controls against dampness, mildew or possible flooding.
 - c. Vandalism protection-limited access to archival areas and control against unauthorized employees or other persons gaining entrance to the areas.

B. Design of Archival Areas

1. The Records Management Division of the General Services Department will design the layout of Archival Areas to provide for ample records storage.
2. Steel shelving will be used to achieve maximum efficiency in the available space whenever possible.

C. Criteria for Records Transfer

1. A request for Record Action Form must be in effect or pending approval; records for which a request has not been established will not be accepted for transfer to Archival Areas.
2. Records are normally transferred shortly after the end of a fiscal or calendar year, or when the reference activity becomes less than once per month per file drawer.

D. Preparing Records for Transfer

1. Standardized records storage cartons must be used for the storage of records in Archival Areas; exceptions require prior approval from the Records Management Division of the General Services Department.
 - a. The standard letter/legal carton (10 1/2 x 12 1/2 x 15 1/2) holds either letter or legal sized documents and may be obtained through the Central Stores Division of General Services.
 - b. A microfilm/check size carton will accommodate smaller material such as cards, receipts, cartridges, and so forth. (approval must be obtained from the Records Management Department prior to the use of such boxes).
2. Packing Records in Storage Cartons:
 - a. Purge files in so far as is practicable to remove miscellaneous correspondence of no further value.

- b. Remove all ring binders and file index guides (and file Folders, if feasible).
 - c. Pack the records in the same order they are filed in the office.
 - d. Leave at least one inch clearance in each box to facilitate reference.
 - e. Leave additional space for expansion of records are to be interfiled at a future date.
 - f. Face letter sized records toward the 12ll end of the box.
 - g. Face legal size records towards the 15ll end of the box.
 - h. DO NOT PLACE RECORDS WITH DIFFERENT RETENTION PERIODS IN THE SAME BOX.
 - i. Fill in the information on our standard red self-adhesive label completely (type or print) and affix to lower left-hand corner of front 12ll end of carton.
 - j. Maintain a list of all records in archives by box number in your office.
3. Complete a request for Record Action Form. Submit the white copy to the records Management Division of the General Services Department for review and approval.
- a. The Records Management Division will contact the Buildings and Grounds Division to assist with the transfer of cartons to the Archival Area.
 - b. A representative from the office whose records are being transferred should accompany records so as to insure placement in the proper area.

E. Final Disposition

- 1. At the expiration of the established retention period, records in the physical custody of archival areas shall be destroyed. A Request for Record Action Form, originating from the office or department having legal custody of the records will be sent to the Records Management Division of the Department of General Services to implement the destruction process.
- 2. The Building and Grounds Division of the Department of General Services will notify the County office or department having legal custody of the records as to the exact time of record destruction.
- 3. Upon completion of the destruction process, the Building and Grounds Division will notate the work order number on the white copy of the Request for Records Action form and return it to the Records Management Division for documentation purposes.
 - a. The originating office or department will retain the Pink copy of the Request for Record Action form for its record.

Micrographics and Reproduction

Microfilming Operations

I. Responsibilities:

County Offices and Departments:

It is the responsibility of the head of each County office or department to assure that Departmental records designated to be microfilmed, either by the Polk County Recorders Office or an outside service bureau, are properly maintained and prepared for the Microfilming process.

Records Management Division:

It is the responsibility of the Records Management Division of the Department of General Services working with the Records Technical Advisory Committee, to establish and maintain standards relating to microfilm produced by and for county offices or Departments; and to coordinate all micrographics services through vendors.

II. Procedures:

A. Priority of Records to be microfilmed

1. The Polk County Records Office being primary County microfilming agency, will accept microfilming projects from other County offices or departments as assigned by the Records Management Division of the department of General Services, These projects will be worked on daily but only after their in-house records have been microfilmed.
 - a. The Records Management Division will coordinate these projects with the assistance of the Records Technical Advisory Committee, and with the Polk County Recorder's Office and County agency whose records are being microfilmed.

B. Records Design

1. Records which have been or may be designated for microfilming should be prepared on white or light pastel shades of paper; dark colors do not film well.
2. Black or dark blue ink should be used to provide sharp contrast to background paper; pencil markings are more difficult to film. Red markings should be avoided as much as possible.

C. Records Maintenance

1. Records which have been or may be designated for microfilming should be handled carefully to avoid folding, creasing, tearing, etc.
2. Staples or other fasteners should be located in the same position (upper left hand corner) for all files within a record series to facilitate rapid removal.

D. Preparation of Records for Microfilming

1. Records which have been designated for microfilming will be made —camera-readyll by the office or department responsible for maintaining the records.
 - a. All staples, paperclips and other fasteners will be removed if possible.
 - b. All tears will be mended, creases flattened out, etc., whenever possible.
2. Records will be arranged in the proper sequence for filming, and all extraneous papers, notes and other non-record material will be removed from the files.
 - a. Indexing instructions will be prepared to identify the records and record series.
3. A list identifying all record series that are defined as vital records will be prepared and forwarded to the Records Management Division of the Department of General Services.
4. Records will be packaged for transfer to the Polk County Recorder's Office or to a services bureau.
 - a. The Records Management Division will arrange the transfer procedures with the office or department at the time the microfilming project is accepted.
 - b. Instructions as to final disposition of the records after Microfilming will be included (—return original documents to department or destroy records after microfilmingll).

Records Management Future Objectives

A. Immediate

1. Present information to the records committee concerning the proposed purchase of a paper shredder.
2. Provide for restoration of archival books of historical value not on microfilm.
3. Explore archival restoration and procedures for the use of archives.
4. Provide off-site storage for existing microfilm.
5. Duplicate or preserve all card files used as an index.
6. Determine which indexes need to be protected (by duplication/microfilming, computer, etc.)

B. Intermediate

1. Provide off-site storage and or microfilming of all vital records.
2. Determine the best and most appropriate storage system for all archival records.
3. Prioritize records storage needs.
4. Provide or locate space to house records before and after they have been microfilmed and before disposal of paper.
5. Work with Information Services Department to expand the use of computer output microfilm.
6. Train the departmental Records Officers in proper standards and procedures.

C. Secondary

1. Monitor all existing microfilm functions for quality and standards and procedures.
2. Conduct training sessions with all department Records Officers in the following areas:
 - a. use of record forms
 - b. use of archives
 - c. use of General Services in record keeping
 - d. microfilming and how to use it
 - e. their responsibility
 - f. my assistance to them.
3. Establish a reference room within the Records Division of General Services where Record Officers may come to reference records periodicals and books.

Contact: General Services
515-286-3215
Adopted: 6/28/88