

## Using Records Retention Schedules: How to Research Previous Retention Schedules

**Purpose: Provide guidance to state and local government agencies on how to research past records retention schedules at the Archives.**

Previous versions of records retention schedules for State and Local Government Agencies are retained permanently at the Archives. Because retention schedules can change over time, referring to previous versions can be useful in determining when and why certain records might have been destroyed or transferred to the Archives. If you would like to view previous retention schedules for a state or local government agency:

1. Determine the **name or type of agency** and **date or time period** of the retention schedule needed. Clearly communicating what is needed will help the research staff in their search.
2. **Contact the State Archives** with the information noted above so that a member of the research staff can assist you:

<i>Online Form</i>	<a href="#">Ask an Archivist</a>
<i>Email</i>	<a href="mailto:research@sos.wa.gov">research@sos.wa.gov</a>
<i>Telephone</i>	(360) 586-1492

If contacting by email or online form, expect to receive acknowledgment of your request within 1-2 business days. A staff member will get back to you with the results of their search and arrange for you to view any relevant documents.

The complexity of your request will determine how the Archives can provide you access to these records. The Archives may be able to furnish you with electronic copies for smaller research projects, but more complex queries may require that you schedule an appointment to review the records in person at our Olympia Branch public research room.

**Additional advice regarding the management of public records is available from  
Washington State Archives:**

**[www.sos.wa.gov/archives](http://www.sos.wa.gov/archives)  
[recordsmanagement@sos.wa.gov](mailto:recordsmanagement@sos.wa.gov)**