

## Using Records Retention Schedules: Impact of Public Records Requests on Records Retention

**Purpose:** Provide guidance to state and local government agencies on applying retention to records that are subject to an open public records request.

### During a Public Records Request – Do NOT Destroy

Records responsive (or potentially responsive) to a public records request must be placed on a destruction hold as soon as the request has been received.

*“If a public records request is made at a time when such record exists but is scheduled for destruction in the near future, the agency, [...] shall retain possession of the record, and may not destroy or erase the record until the request is resolved.” (RCW 42.56.100)*

This applies to records that:

1. Met their minimum retention period before the request was received, but had yet to be destroyed; or
2. Reach their minimum retention period after the request was received, but before the request is fulfilled.

### After Request Is Fulfilled – Normal Retention Applies

Once a public records request is fulfilled, the original requested records may be destroyed as planned. The records request does not add to the records’ retention requirement; it just puts a hold on their destruction while the request is open.

### Copies/Descriptions of Records Provided

If an agency uses copies of the records (instead of lists describing them) as their evidence of what was provided to the requester, those copies are to be retained with other records relating to the request in accordance with **Public Disclosure/Records Requests (DAN GS 05001 / GS2010-014)** in the *State Government General Records Retention Schedule* or the *Local Government Common Records Retention Schedule (CORE)*.

**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)**