
Using Records Retention Schedules: What is a Non-Archival Record?

Purpose: Provide guidance to state agencies and local government entities on what it means when a records series is designated as non-archival.

If a records series is designated as Non-Archival, Washington State Archives has determined that these types of records do not have long-term value for public research, and therefore do not need to be transferred to the Archives once they have met retention.

Non-Archival records may be destroyed by the originating agency when they have met their minimum retention period, *provided*:

1. The records are not subject to open public records requests in accordance with chapter 42.56 RCW. Existing public records requests must be fulfilled before the related records can be destroyed.
2. The records are not subject to ongoing or reasonably anticipated litigation. Litigation must be resolved, and any legal holds must be lifted before the related records can be destroyed.

How should Non-Archival records be destroyed?

The sensitivity/confidentiality level of the records will impact whether they can be destroyed through typical methods or require secure disposal. For more advice on this subject, please see our advice sheets:

- “Destroying Non-Archival Records: Methods for Destroying Paper Records”
- “Destroying Non-Archival Records: Methods for Destroying Electronic Records”

Do agencies need to document records destruction?

Agencies are not required by statute to document records destruction, but the Archives strongly recommends they do so; records destruction logs can serve as evidence of agency compliance in the event of a public records request, audit, or legal challenge. For more advice on this subject, please see our advice sheet:

- “Destroying Non-Archival Records: Documenting the Destruction of Public Records”

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

**www.sos.wa.gov/archives
recordsmanagement@sos.wa.gov**