



Managing Court Records

Geof Huth, Chief Records Officer

New York State Unified Court System

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Office of Records Management (ORM)

- Develop records retention schedules
- Sign off on destruction of all records of the Court System
- Provide guidelines for the preservation and use of all records
- Provide training and advice on how to manage records
- Help you manage, protect, and provide access to records



Your Records Responsibilities

- ▶ 1. Protect
- ▶ 2. Destroy



Records Retention

Keeping records for only as long as needed



What a Retention Schedule Does

- ▶ Lists minimum records retention periods
- ▶ Does not mandate destruction
- ▶ Does not address all records issues, such as
 - ▶ How to destroy records
 - ▶ What records are confidential
 - ▶ Destruction of non-records



What Retention Schedules Do

- ▶ Ensure records are kept as long as required
 - ▶ Identify permanent records
- ▶ Identify when to discard records no longer needed
- ▶ Help improve records retrieval
- ▶ Help save money and space
- ▶ Make your overall work life easier



How Retention Schedules Work

- ▶ Cover the record copy (primarily)
 - ▶ But still need permission to destroy extra copies
- ▶ Cover only records that exist
- ▶ Cover records regardless of format (usually)
- ▶ May require the use of more than one schedule:
 - ▶ 1. Civil Records
 - ▶ 2. Criminal Records
 - ▶ 3. Administrative Records



Retention Rules

- ▶ Follow this process:
 - ▶ Identify the retention in the appropriate retention schedule
 - ▶ Fill out and submit to ORM a Records Disposition Request Form
 - ▶ *Digitized paper records*: Fill & submit Certification for Electronic Records
 - ▶ Once you have permission from ORM, carry out destruction
 - ▶ Ask ORM if you need help or clarification
- ▶ Always ask ORM for permission to destroy records
 - ▶ Even if you have made digital copies of the paper records
 - ▶ Even if the records are electronic
 - ▶ Even if the retention is listed as "Destroy immediately"



Retention and Digitized Records

- ▶ Digital images can replace the paper if
 - ▶ Accurately represent all paper pages
 - ▶ Stored in compliance with ORM Policy #9
 - ▶ Request for disposition includes certification of compliance
- ▶ But must complete a destruction request for the paper
 - ▶ http://www.nycourts.gov/admin/recordsmanagement/too_forms.shtml
 - ▶ Complete a Records Disposition Request Form
 - ▶ Complete an Electronic Records Compliance Certification
 - ▶ Covers only digital records in Division of Technology's Tier 1 storage



Records Storage

Ensuring records are maintained in ways that protect them



The Goals of Records Storage

- Security
- Preservation
- Easy retrieval
- Cost savings



What to Avoid in Storage Areas

- Unrestricted access
- Overhead pipes
- Standing water or excessive moisture
- Underground storage
- Attic storage
- Large temperature and humidity fluctuations
- See ORM Policy #1 for requirements for offsite storage



Optimal Paper Storage

- ▶ Security and oversight in place
- ▶ Records in labeled boxes
- ▶ Boxes on steel shelving
- ▶ Good air circulation
- ▶ Adequate lighting
- ▶ Cleanliness
- ▶ Temperature between 65-72° F
- ▶ Humidity between 40-55%



Proper Digital Storage

- ▶ Complies with ORM Policy #9
 - ▶ Organized, Secure, and Access-Restricted
 - ▶ Geographically dispersed backups
 - ▶ Verification that records have not changed over time
- ▶ Good news for some:
 - ▶ Anything in a UCS case management system meets all requirements



Records Access

Knowing how to find records and who can see them



What Good Access Provides

- Easier to find records
- Easier to manage records
- Simpler destruction of records
- Improved court operations
- Public access to records (where appropriate)



Ways Courts Improve Access

- ▶ Case management systems
- ▶ Organized paper records storage
- ▶ Computer filing systems
- ▶ Digitization of paper records
- ▶ Transition to digital records
- ▶ Space for the public to view records
- ▶ Trained staff



Records Destruction

Destroying records at the right time in the right way



Managing Destruction

- Destruction is Good
 - Destruction clears the deck, makes space
 - Destruction saves money
 - Destruction makes using records easier
- Carrying out Destruction
 - Don't destroy records early
 - Destroy on a schedule
 - Don't wait until you're overwhelmed



Methods of Destruction

- For Public Records
 - Use any means you want
 - Recycling is encouraged but not required
 - Move records securely to destruction location
- For Sealed or Confidential Records
 - Destroy in a way that destroys all information
 - Ensure that no unauthorized access is possible
 - Recycling is allowed if the above are followed
 - Possible means of destruction:
 - Shredding
 - Burning
 - Pulverization



Destruction of Digital Records

- Delete network-based records
- Eventually, they will be no more
- Don't simply discard old computers
 - Those may be filled with sensitive information
- Destroy records on computers and removable media by
 - Degaussing
 - Physical destruction (including shredding of media)
 - Incineration (for digital media)



Finding My Office

- Via email
 - records@nycourts.gov (ORM email)
 - ghuth@nycourts.gov (my personal email)
- Via the Web
 - <http://www.nycourts.gov/admin/recordsmanagement/index.shtml>
- Via phone
 - 212-428-2875 (general number)
 - 212-428-2877 (my desk phone)