

**MODEL RECORDS  
MANAGEMENT  
STATEMENTS FOR  
INCLUSION IN  
AGENCY POLICY  
AND PROCEDURES  
MANUAL**

## **1. MANAGEMENT OF RECORDS**

*[The agency should include a statement regarding its commitment to records management such as, “The records of Alabama state government are a vital source of information for public officials, as well as the state’s citizens. Whether state records contain evidence to protect the rights of individuals or of government, accurate and accessible records are the life blood of an efficient and productive governmental organization; yet, insufficient attention is paid to the effective management of these records. The following records management policies, procedures, and practices provide the framework for managing the life-cycle of the records of this agency.”]*

## **2. CREATION AND OWNERSHIP OF RECORDS**

All *[insert agency name]* employees are required by law to create and maintain records that document the conduct of the business of their offices. These records must be complete and accurate. All records created or received in the course of work are records of the state and, as such, must not be disposed of or removed without proper authorization. Records may be created in formats other than paper, including electronic, audio, video, etc.. All employees are responsible for reporting any actual or threatened loss or removal of records to the agency records officer.

## **3. ACCESS TO RECORDS**

The operational records of the *[agency name]* are open to public inspection based upon Code of Alabama 1975, Section 36-12-40 unless otherwise restricted. *[The agency’s legal counsel and Administrative Code entry should be consulted to identify restricted records and create a policy covering such records. That policy should be inserted here]*

Individuals desiring to see agency operational records should address their requests to  
*[insert agency access procedure]*.

#### **4. RETENTION OF RECORDS**

Good records management requires the creation of a records retention plan, known in Alabama as a Records Disposition Authority. Each record created by the agency should have a retention period as identified in the agency's Records Disposition Authority (RDA), which is approved by the State Records Commission. According to Alabama law, the State Records Commission is authorized to set retention periods for records (Code of Alabama 1975, Sections 41-13-21 and 41-13-23). Records are to be retained by the agency until the retention period has expired, at which time the records become eligible for final disposition. Employees should be aware of the retention period, as listed in the RDA, for records in their custody and should ensure any personal copies of official records are destroyed or transferred as outlined in the RDA. Employees should notify the agency records officer regarding any changes for records retention periods listed in the agency's RDA.

Electronic records consist of electronically recorded information created or received by the agency staff in the transaction of department business and are to be retained according to the agency's RDA. Electronic records may include, but are not limited to, word processing files, data bases, spreadsheets, graphic files, or electronic mail messages.

These records are subject to the policies and procedures stated within this manual. *[The agency should include instruction on how to deal with electronic records such as:*

*Electronic records should not be deleted or destroyed without the approval of the records*

*officer unless the record is printed to paper and filed. Some electronic records are altered when printed to paper. Prior to replacing electronic records (with the exception of those created by word processing software) with paper printouts, check with the records officer.]*

## **5. FILING OF RECORDS**

All records, including those in non-paper formats such as electronic or microfilm, are to be filed properly and in a timely manner. To free up storage space, cutoff/closing periods should be established for files after which they are boxed up and moved to storage or removed from hard-drives and placed on tape, diskette, or CD-ROM. *[Proper procedures for the filing of records should be established by each division and/or office and inserted.]*

## **6. STORAGE OF RECORDS**

*[Some records may become too voluminous for an employee and/or division/office to maintain in office space until the records' retention period has expired. These records should be stored either in a designated location elsewhere in the agency or at the State Records Center. The agency should decide where it will store its records and create procedures governing the use of such storage areas. If the State Records Center is to be used, those procedures must be followed. Any procedure concerning the storage of records should include steps to notify the designated agency records officer whenever records are transferred to or from storage.]*

## **7. DESTRUCTION OF NON-PERMANENT RECORDS**

Once the retention period for non-permanent records has expired, the employee should contact the designated agency records officer, who will verify that the records are eligible for destruction and help the employee obtain approval for the destruction of the records. Once the destruction is approved, the employee may then destroy the records *[The agency should insert appropriate instructions on the destruction of records, including instructions on the destruction of non-paper records. Note- The State of Alabama encourages the use of recycling]*. No records are to be destroyed that are necessary for agency compliance with requirements of the state Sunset Act, an agency audit, any legal notice, or subpoena.

## **8. TRANSFER OF PERMANENT RECORDS**

\_\_\_\_\_ Records with a retention period of “Permanent Record” are not to be destroyed, but transferred to the holdings of the Alabama Department of Archives and History when the agency no longer has an administrative need for them. When records with a disposition of “Permanent Record” become inactive or are not regularly referenced, the employee responsible for the records should contact the agency records officer for further instructions in transferring the records to ADAH. The following is a list of the permanent records of the agency followed by the name of the creating division or office in parenthesis:

*1. (Insert list of Permanent Records from Approved RDA*

## **9. REFORMATTING RECORDS**

Reformatting generally involves replacing paper records with microfilm or electronic images, but may also include replacing electronic records with paper, microfilm, or other

media. No reformatting project should take place without prior consultation with the agency records officer and completion of a thorough cost-benefit analysis of the project.