

# **Alabama Plumbers and Gas Fitters Examining Board**

## **Functional Analysis & Records Disposition Authority**

**Revision  
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# Functional and Organizational Analysis of the Alabama Plumbers and Gas Fitters Examining Board

## Sources of Information

### Representatives of the Alabama Plumbers and Gas Fitters Examining Board:

Julia Williams, Custodian of Records

Code of Alabama (1975), Sections 34-37-1 through 34-37-18

Alabama Government Manual (1994)

Rules of the Alabama Plumbers & Gas Fitters Examining Board (Alabama

Administrative Code, Chapters 720-X-1 through 720-X-13)

Acts of Alabama, 96-712, 96-795, and 96-797

## Agency Organization

The Plumbers Examining Board was created in 1949 and renamed the Alabama Plumbers and Gas Fitters Examining Board in 1989. It consists of seven members, one from each congressional district, appointed by the governor for terms of up to four years. The composition of the board is mandated by the Code of Alabama to include a master plumber, a journeyman plumber, a master gas fitter, a journeyman gas fitter, a registered professional engineer, a municipal or county building official, and a member of the public at large. The board, which meets at least once annually, appoints a director and a deputy director to carry out its daily operations. In addition to clerical staff, the board also hires compliance officers to ensure that its rules and regulations are carried out. In 1996 the Alabama Legislature added medical gas piping fitters to the board's jurisdiction.

## Agency Function and Subfunctions

The mandated function of the board is to examine, certify, and regulate plumbers and gas fitters on a statewide basis. It is one of the agencies responsible for performing the regulatory function of Alabama government. In performance of its mandated function, the board may engage in the following subfunctions:

- **Promulgating Rules and Regulations.** The Code of Alabama 1975, Section 34-37-2, authorizes the board to adopt rules and regulations governing the licensure as a plumber, gas fitter, or medical gas fitter in Alabama. This subfunction involves the board's work in developing, implementing, and managing the licensing and regulatory system for persons licensed as plumbers, gas fitters, or medical gas fitters in the State of Alabama.

- **Examining/Certifying.** To become registered, apprentices must file an application and pay a fee. Journeyman certification is achieved by completing two years of apprenticeship or a board-approved training program; passing an examination administered by an independent testing agency; and paying a fee. Master certification is accomplished by completing at least one year's experience as a journeyman; passing an examination; and paying a fee. Medical gas piping fitters are certified by the addition of an endorsement to a plumber's or gas fitter's certificate.

Certificates must be renewed annually, and plumbers and gas fitters are required to have current certification with them at all times when they are on the job. Although the board contracts out the administration of the examinations, it schedules them, collects the fees, and maintains the test scores. The board also approves training programs for apprentices. Policy decisions regarding registration and certification standards are recorded in the meeting minutes of the board. Certification files are maintained for all masters, journeymen, and registration files for all apprentices.

- **Supervising.** The board establishes rules and regulations regarding the plumbing and gas fitting trade. These are published as the Rules of the Alabama Plumbers & Gas Fitters Examining Board. Its compliance officers conduct routine checks to ensure that individuals performing plumbing and gas fitting work are certified, are carrying their certificates, and are otherwise complying with board regulations. These activities are recorded in the compliance officers' contact reports. The board's staff may cite individuals who have violated board regulations by issuing a Notice of Violation. The board keeps an electronic "Notices of Violations" file which documents those who have been cited by the compliance officers. Board staff may mediate between plumbers or gas fitters and dissatisfied customers to ensure that some sort of resolution or completion of the job is accomplished. Such complaints are noted in the certification files, and a log of consumer complaints is also kept.
- **Investigating.** Compliance officers may carry out investigations into serious rule violations. These violations may lead to revocation of certification or further legal action. At present no separate investigation files are maintained. Compliance officers may maintain information in their own files, which are not at present a part of the board's record keeping system, and the information on the investigation is added to the violator's certification file. This procedure may lead to a problem if the violation is committed by a non-certified plumber or gas fitter because the board would not have a certification file for this person. The Government Records Division recommends that a separate investigation file be kept for each person suspected of a serious violation of the board's regulations or of repeated minor violations. Such files are necessary to build evidence to be used in case of a hearing before the board.
- **Negotiating.** A hearing must be held prior to the revocation of a certificate. An independent hearing officer is appointed by the board to conduct the hearing, and the decision of the board may be appealed to the circuit court. Since its establishment as a

statewide agency, the board has never conducted a hearing; problems or violations have been resolved by mediation with the assistance of the board's attorney. At this point information about such negotiations is maintained in the individual certification files. This information probably should be kept in the investigation files which the Government Records Division has recommended be created. There are currently no records that document hearings or resulting orders of the board, although it is likely that these records will be created in the future.

- **Administering Internal Operations.** A significant portion of the agency's work includes general administrative, financial, and personnel activities performed to support its programmatic areas including:

**Managing the agency:** Activities include internal office management activities common to most government agencies such as corresponding and communicating, scheduling, meeting, documenting policy and procedures, reporting, litigating, legislating (drafting, tracking), publicizing and providing information, managing records, and managing information systems and technology.

**Managing finances:** Activities include budgeting (preparing and reviewing budget package, submitting the budget package to the Department of Finance, documenting amendments and performance of the budget); purchasing (requisitioning and purchasing supplies and equipment, receipting and invoicing for goods, and authorizing payment for products received); accounting for the expenditure, encumbrance, disbursement, and reconciliation of funds within the agency's budget through a uniform system of accounting and reporting; authorizing travel; contracting with companies or individuals; bidding for products and services; and assisting in the audit process.

**Managing human resources:** Activities include recruiting and hiring eligible individuals to fill positions within the agency; providing compensation to employees; providing benefits to employees such as leave, health insurance, unemployment compensation, worker's compensation, injury compensation, retirement, and death benefits; supervising employees by evaluating performance, granting leave, and monitoring the accumulation of leave; training and providing continuing education for employees; and disciplining.

**Managing properties, facilities, and resources:** Activities include inventorying and accounting for non-consumable property and reporting property information to the appropriate authority; leasing and/or renting offices or facilities; providing security for property managed by the agency; insuring property; and assigning, inspecting and maintaining agency property, including vehicles.

## **Attachment: Organizational Chart**

# **Analysis of Record Keeping System and Records Appraisal of the Alabama Plumbers and Gas Fitters Examining Board**

## **Agency Record Keeping System**

The Alabama Plumbers and Gas Fitters Examining Board currently operates a hybrid record keeping system composed of paper, micrographic and electronic records.

**Paper-based Systems:** The board creates and maintains most of its records, such as various application forms and correspondence, in paper form.

**Computer Systems:** The system is made up of IBM PCs using visual database and Windows 98 operating system software. The majority of the electronic files that the board maintains are various roster files, including registered apprentices and certified plumbers and gas fitters and individuals cited for violations. Most of the information in these files is contained in paper files. It should be noted that none of the board's records date from before 1987 except for a few index card roster files.

**Micrographic Systems:** The board had contracted with the State Department of Public Health to microfilm its licensure files. The board placed microfilms in jackets for reference. The board terminated the microfilm project in 1995 but may film again in the future. Staff members who were responsible for micrographic activities are no longer employed by the board. There is no finding aid in place to access the microfilms.

## **Records Appraisal**

The following is a discussion of the two major categories of records created and/or maintained by the Alabama Plumbers and Gas Fitters Examining Board: Temporary Records and Permanent Records.

**I. Temporary Records.** Temporary records should be held for what is considered to be their active life and disposed of once all fiscal, legal, and administrative requirements have been met. Some of the temporary records created by the board are discussed below:

- **Masters and Journeymen Certification Files.** These records contain a variety of information about the plumbers, gas fitters, and medical gas piping fitters whom the board has certified, including the original application, examination scores, approved affidavits requesting waiver of the examination requirement, correspondence, endorsements, complaints, reports from compliance officers, and notices of violations. Currently they contain the only evidence of rule violations and of actions taken to correct them. There are also inactive files on masters who have become city inspectors and on retirees and deceased

individuals. The board may need to refer to these files over an individual's entire career span.

- **Notices of Violation.** These are electronic records in the form of a list or roster of individuals who have been served by a compliance officer with a notice of violation. The roster includes the name of the individual and the types and dates of all citations. These records document the supervisory and enforcement activities of the compliance officers and provide the board with a current summary of all plumbers and gas fitters who have been cited for rules violations which it may use to respond to inquiries from the public or to build a case for suspension or revocation.

**II. Permanent Records.** The Government Records Division recommends the following records as permanent.

**Promulgating Rules and Regulations:**

- **Meeting Minutes of the Board.** These records provide evidence of the board's decision-making processes and are the best documentation over time of the important functions of the board, particularly certification, supervision, and disciplinary procedures. (RDA page 3-2) **(Bibliographic Title: Meeting Minutes)**

**Administering Internal Operations:**

- **Administrative Correspondence.** These records include correspondence with state officials, legal/advisory opinion correspondence, correspondence between the board and the director, and correspondence between the Alabama Plumbers and Gas Fitters Examining Board and other state agencies. Because the records document the policies and procedures of the agency and how it interacts with other agencies/boards, the records are deemed permanent. (RDA page 3-3) **(Bibliographic Title: Administrative Correspondence)**

**Permanent Records List**  
**Alabama Plumbers and Gas Fitters Examining Board**

**Promulgating Rules and Regulations:**

1. Meeting Minutes of the Board

**Administering Internal Operations:**

1. Administrative Correspondence

# **Alabama Plumbers and Gas Fitters Examining Board Records Disposition Authority**

This Records Disposition Authority (RDA) is issued by the State Records Commission under the authority granted by the Code of Alabama 1975, Sections 41-13-5 and 41-13-20 through 21. It was compiled by the Government Records Division, Alabama Department of Archives and History (ADAH), which serves as the commission's staff, in cooperation with representatives of the Alabama Plumbers and Gas Fitters Examining Board. The RDA lists records created and maintained by the Alabama Plumbers and Gas Fitters Examining Board in carrying out its mandated functions and activities. It establishes retention periods and disposition instructions for those records and provides the legal authority for the agency to implement records destruction.

Alabama law requires public officials to create and maintain records that document the business of their offices. These records must be protected from "mutilation, loss, or destruction," so that they may be transferred to an official's successor in office and made available to members of the public. Under Code of Alabama 1975, Section 36-12-40, "every citizen has a right to inspect and take a copy of any public writing in this state, except as otherwise expressly provided by statute." Records must be kept in accordance with auditing standards approved by the Examiners of Public Accounts (Code of Alabama 1975, Section 36-12-2, 36-12-4, and 41-5-23). For assistance in implementing this RDA, or for advice on records disposition or other records management concerns, contact the ADAH Government Records Division at (334) 242-4452.

## **Explanation of Records Requirements**

- This RDA supersedes any previous records disposition schedules governing the retention of the Alabama Plumbers and Gas Fitters Board records. Copies of superseded schedules are no longer valid and should be discarded.
- The RDA establishes retention and disposition instructions for records regardless of the medium on which those records may be kept.
- Electronic mail is a communications tool that may record permanent or temporary information. As for records in any other format, the retention periods for e-mail records are governed by the requirements of the subfunctions to which the records belong.
- Some temporary records listed under the Administering Internal Operations subfunction of this RDA represent duplicate copies of records listed for long-term or permanent retention in the RDAs of other agencies.
- Certain other record-related materials need not be retained as records under the disposition requirements in this RDA. They may be disposed of in whatever way the agency determines best. Such materials include: (1) duplicate record copies that do not require official action, so long as the creating office maintains the original record for the period required; (2) catalogs, trade journals, and other publications received that require no action and do not

document government activities; (3) stocks of blank stationary, blank forms, or other surplus materials that are not subject to audit and have become obsolete, (4) transitory records, which are temporary records created for short-term internal purposes that may include, but are not limited to, telephone call-back messages; drafts of ordinary documents not needed for their evidential value; copies of material sent for information purposes but not needed by the receiving office for future business; and internal communications about department social activities, such as a note to a group going to lunch.

## **Records Disposition Requirements**

This section of the RDA is arranged by subfunctions of the Alabama Plumbers and Gas Fitters Examining Board and lists the groups of records created and/or maintained by the board as a result of activities and transactions performed in carrying out these subfunctions. The board may submit requests to revise specific records disposition requirements to the State Records Commission for consideration at its regular quarterly meetings.

### **■ Promulgating Rules and Regulations**

MEETING MINUTES OF THE BOARD

Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

Administrative Procedures Rule Filings

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

Register of Administrative Rule Filings

Disposition: Retain in Office (Code of Alabama 1975, Section 41-22-6).

### **■ Examining/Certifying**

Masters and Journeymen Certification Files

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 50 years after initial certification. Retain files currently designated as inactive 10 years.

Apprentice Registration Files

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after achievement of journeyman status or after date of last contact.

Apprentice Registration Database

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain for useful life.

Examination Files of Unsuccessful Applicants

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after date of examination.

Overpayment of Fees/Refund Pending Files

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

Balance Due on Fees/Bad Check Files

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

Certification Card Files

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

Approved Apprentice Programs

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the program is no longer in existence.

Waiver of Examination Roster

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

■ **Supervising**

Compliance Officers' Agendas/Work plans

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain for useful life.

Compliance Officers' Contact Reports

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

Notices of Violation

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain for useful life.

Consumer Complaint Log

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

Consumer Complaint Database

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain for useful life.

■ **Administering Internal Operations**

**Managing the Agency:**

ADMINISTRATIVE CORRESPONDENCE

Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

#### Board Members' Appointment Files

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain for useful life.

#### Routine Correspondence

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

#### Administrative Reference Files

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain for useful life.

Records documenting the implementation of the agency's RDA (copies of transmittals forms to Archives or State Records Center, evidence of records destroyed, annual reports to State Records Commission)

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

#### Copies of Approved RDA

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the RDA is superseded.

Computer systems documentation (hardware/software manuals and diskettes, warranties, records of access/authorities, file naming conventions, Y2K records)

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain documentation of former system 3 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the former hardware and software no longer exists anywhere in the agency and all permanent records have been migrated to a new system.

#### **Managing Finances:**

Records documenting the preparation of a budget request package and reporting of the status of funds, requesting amendments of allotments, and reporting program performance

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

Records documenting the requisitioning and purchasing of supplies and equipment, receipting and invoicing for goods, and authorizing payment for products

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

Records of original entry or routine accounting transactions, such as journals, registers, and ledgers, and records of funds deposited outside the State Treasury

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

Records documenting requests for authorization from supervisors to travel on official business and other related materials, such as travel reimbursement forms and itineraries

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

Records documenting contracts for services or personal property  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 years after expiration of the contract.

Records documenting the bid process, including requests for proposals and unsuccessful responses  
Disposition: Retain in office (Code of Alabama 1975, Section 41-16-24).

Audit Reports  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

**Managing Human Resources:**

Position Classification Files  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 4 years after position is reclassified.

Application Materials  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 1 year.

Records documenting payroll (e.g. pre-payroll reports, payroll check registers)  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

Records documenting payroll deduction authorizations  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 years after separation of the employee from the agency.

Records documenting payroll deductions for tax purposes (including Form 941)  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

Records documenting an employee's work history - generally maintained as a case file  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 years after separation of employee from the agency.

Records documenting employees' daily and weekly work schedules  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

Records documenting an employee's hours worked, leave earned, and leave taken (including time sheets)  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

Records documenting an employee's work history, generally maintained as a case file  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

Records documenting sick leave donations

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

Records of final leave status (cumulative leave)

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 years after separation of employee from the agency.

Employee Flexible Benefits Plan Files

Disposition: Temporary Record. General information -- Retain until superseded.

Other (applications, correspondence) -- Retain 6 years after termination of participation in program.

State Employee Injury Compensation Trust Fund Files

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 years after separation of the employee from the agency.

### **Managing Properties, Facilities, and Resources:**

Semiannual Inventory Lists

Disposition: Retain in office. (Code of Alabama 1975, Section 36-16-8 [1]).

Transfer of State Property Forms (SD-1) (Agency copies)

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

Property Inventory Cards and/or Computer Files

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the items were removed from inventory.

Receipts of Responsibility for Property

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain until return of item to property manager.

Real Property Leasing/Renting Records

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 years after expiration of the lease.

Facilities/Building Security Records (including visitor logs)

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

Motor Pool Vehicle Use Records

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

Insurance Policies/Risk Management Records

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 years after termination of policy or membership.

Building Maintenance Work Orders

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 1 year.

## Approval of Records Disposition Authority

By signing this agreement the Alabama Plumbers and Gas Fitters Examining Board acknowledges its responsibilities for the proper management of its records and agrees to abide by the implementation guidelines listed below:

- The Alabama Plumbers and Gas Fitters Examining Board will designate a managerial position as the agency records officer. This position is responsible for: ensuring the development of quality record keeping systems that meet the business and legal needs of the agency, coordinating the transfer and destruction of records, ensuring that permanent records held on alternative storage media (such as microforms and digital imaging systems) are maintained in compliance with national and state standards, submitting an annual report on records management activities to the State Records Commission in January of each year, and ensuring the regular implementation of the agency's approved RDA.
- Permanent records in the Alabama Plumbers and Gas Fitters Examining Board's custody will be maintained under proper intellectual control and in an environment that will ensure their physical order and preservation.
- Destruction of temporary records, as authorized in this RDA, should occur agency-wide on a regular basis— for example, after the successful completion of an audit, at the end of an administration, or at the end of a fiscal year. Despite the RDA's provisions, no record should be destroyed that is necessary to comply with requirements of the state Sunset Act, audit requirements, or any legal notice or subpoena.
- The Alabama Plumbers and Gas Fitters Examining Board should maintain full documentation of any computerized record-keeping system it employs. It should develop procedures for: (1) backing up all permanent records held in electronic format; (2) storing a back-up copy off-site; and (3) migrating all permanent records when the system is upgraded or replaced. If the agency chooses to maintain permanent records solely in electronic format, it is committed to funding any system upgrades and migration strategies necessary to ensure the records' permanent preservation and accessibility.
- The Alabama Plumbers and Gas Fitters Examining Board agrees to allow the staff of the State Records Commission or the Examiners of Public Accounts to examine the condition of the permanent records maintained in the custody of the agency and to inspect records destruction documentation. Government Records Division archivists are available to train the agency's staff in RDA implementation and otherwise assist the agency in implementing its records management program.

This records disposition authority is hereby adopted.

By: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Ed Lawrence, Executive Director  
Alabama Plumbers and Gas Fitters Examining Board

By: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Edwin C. Bridges, Chairman  
State Records Commission