

Electronic Records Management Best Practices

WAPRO Virtual Spring Conference

May 20, 2026



RM Supports Public Disclosure

1. Faster retrieval and response
2. Knowing what you have
3. Legally defensible destruction
4. Records authenticity
5. Risk mitigation and cost savings



What is a public record?

A public record is:

- ❑ ANYTHING made or received in the transaction of public business
- ❑ Regardless of format

Invoice? **Public record.**

Database entry? **Public record.**

E-mail? **Public record.**

Voicemail? **Public record.**

Leading Best Practices of RM

1. Responsibility Assigned
2. Policies and Procedures Exist
3. Tools Available
4. Staff Trained
5. Retention Requirements Understood
6. Records are Inventoried
7. Records are Organized
8. Records are Kept for Required Time period
9. Records are Destroyed/Archived
10. Disaster Preparedness

Assigning RM Responsibilities



- Identify retention responsibilities for all staff
- Use workflows to anticipate sticky RM situations and how to handle them
- Records management policies should identify who at the executive level is responsible for overseeing the RM program and key RM staff

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Policy Development

Regulatory Framework

- RCW 40.14
- RCW 42.56
- Chapter 434-662 WAC

Retention Schedules Still Apply

- For all public records
- Regardless of format

Maintain Authenticity

- Keep electronic records electronic
- Metadata

Policy Development

MRSC & SAO Electronic Records Policy Toolkit

- Sample language
- Available on MRSC website
(<https://mrsc.org/explore-topics/public-records/electronic-records/electronic-records-policy-tool-kit>)

Which records are public records?

- Do they meet the definition?
- Do they have retention value?

Get specific!

- Where to store e-records / how to use filing structures
- How to keep sensitive data secure
- Appropriate personal device/account use
- Social media capture / retention

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Tools

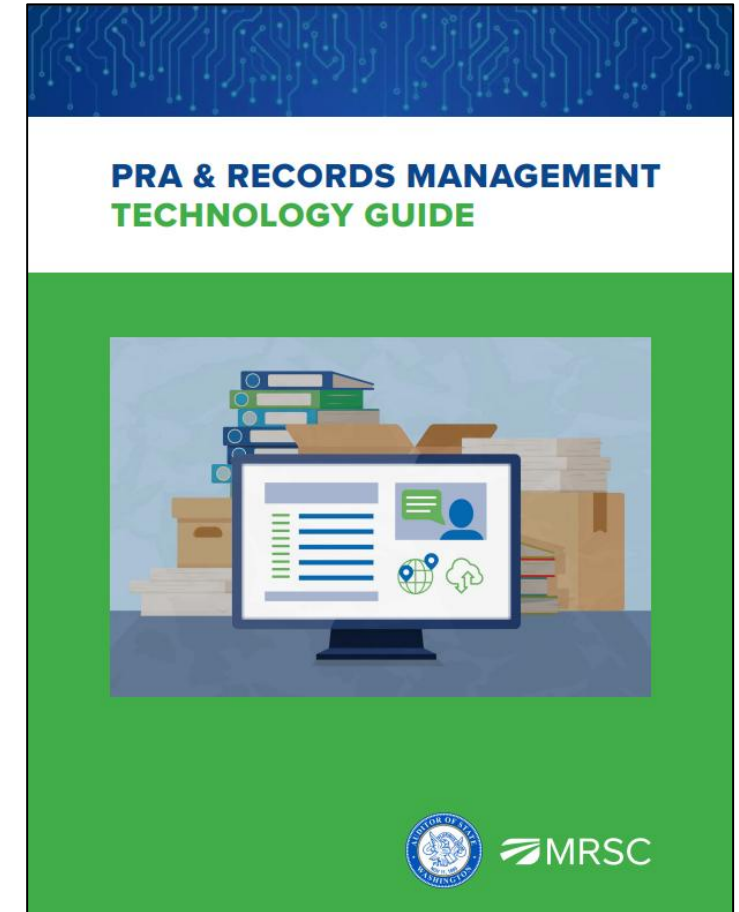


- Appropriate software/systems to manage and retain
- Retention management functionality
- Has implemented or is planning to implement Enterprise Content Management System (ECMS)

Tools - ECMSs

5 components of ECMSs, according to Assoc. for Intelligent Information Management (AIIM):

1. Capture
2. Manage
3. Storage
4. Preservation
5. Output



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Staff Training



RM isn't intuitive.



Everybody needs training.



Using retention schedules requires business knowledge

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Understanding Retention Requirements

Staff need to know:

- Which retention schedules to use
- How to interpret the schedules
- How to apply retention

CONTEXT
MATTERS

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Records Inventories



- **State agencies:** required every 2 years (RCW 40.14.040)
- **Local agencies:** recommended every 2 years
- Regular and systematic
- Templates on our website

Leading Best Practices of RM

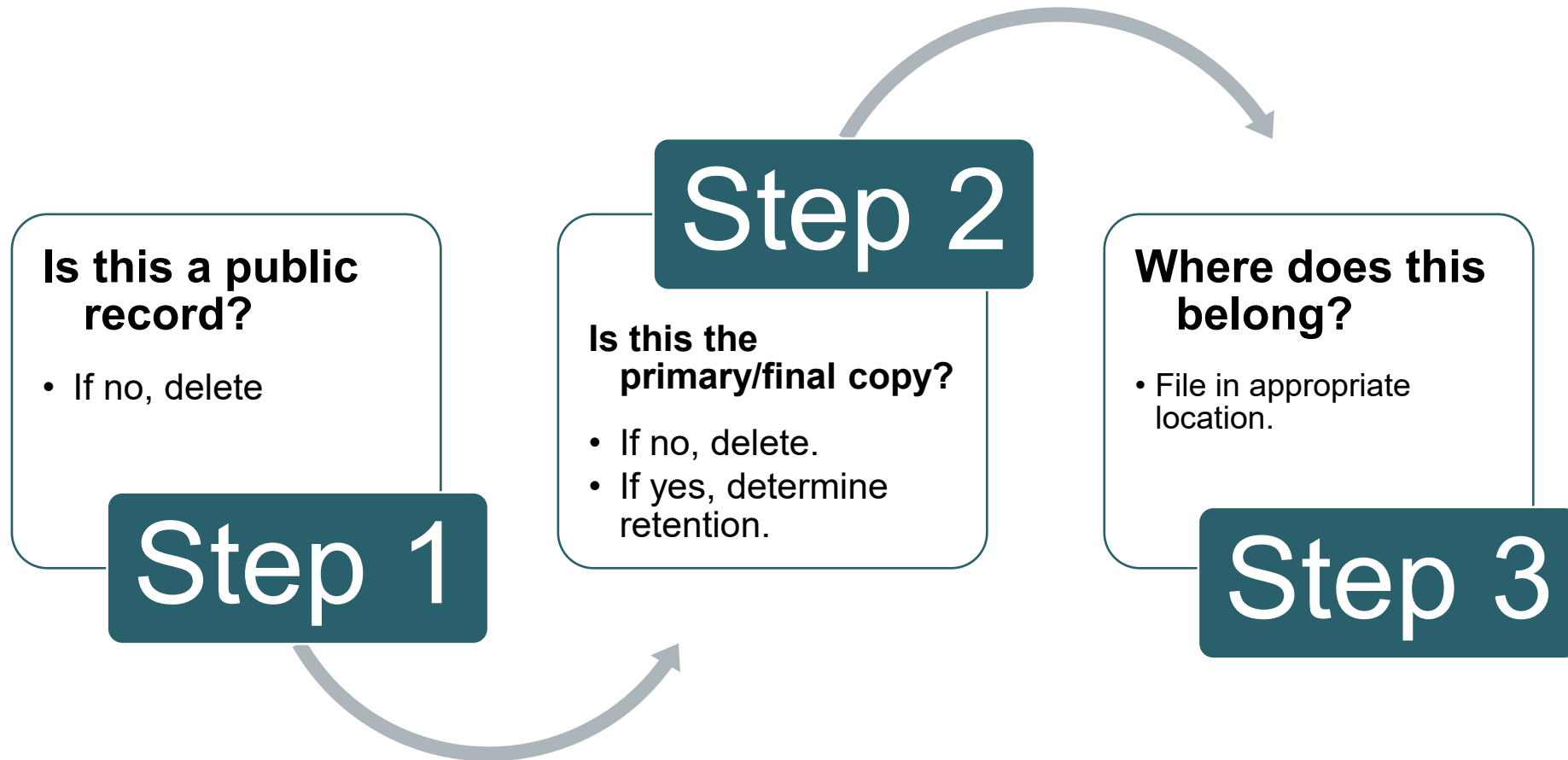
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Organizing E-records

- Some coordination at the work unit level on where records are stored and naming conventions
- Agency-wide organization achieved through file plans and/or file naming conventions
- Pick a format and stick to it. A reliable standard:
YYYY-MM-DD_Description_Source.ext
Example: 2025-11-03_Tax-Return_IRS.pdf
This keeps files sortable by date automatically.
- Remember the endgame = disposition (destruction or transfer)



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Meet Retention Requirements



Electronic records retained in electronic format



Paper records either kept as paper or digitized in compliance with Scan and Toss requirements



Records remain accessible throughout retention



Electronic records migrated as needed



Safeguards in place to prevent premature destruction

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Transfer or Destroy

keep **PUBLIC RECORDS** for
MINIMUM RETENTION

Destroy

Transfer

- 🛡️ Deleting
- 🛡️ Overwriting
- 🛡️ Degaussing
(magnetic media)
- 🛡️ Physical destruction

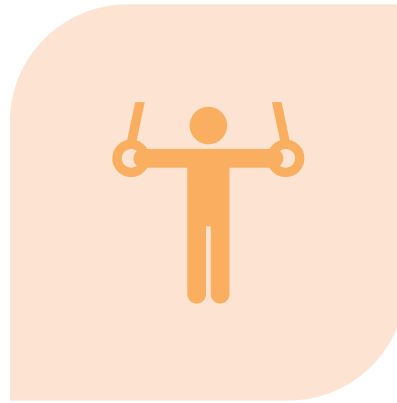
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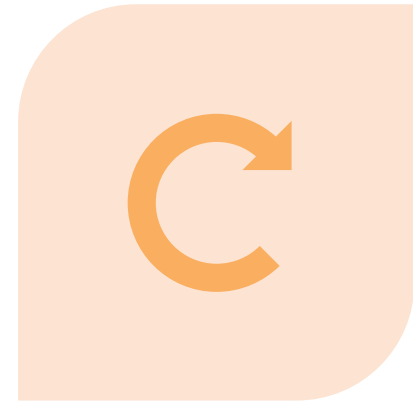
Disaster Preparedness



**IDENTIFY ESSENTIAL
RECORDS**



**SYSTEMATIC AND
ROUTINE BACK-UPS**



**ABILITY TO RESTORE
FROM BACK-UPS**

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