

Electronic Records Management: Can Paper Records Be Destroyed After Scanning/Imaging?

Purpose: Provide guidance to state agencies and local government entities on how paper records can be destroyed if they have been properly scanned/imaged.

Can paper records be destroyed after scanning/imaging?

YES – if your agency follows the steps below:

1. Determine if the records are “Archival” or “Non-Archival”

- Designations of “Archival” or “Non-Archival” are clearly indicated on the records retention schedules.
- State agency records retention schedules can be found at:
<https://www.sos.wa.gov/archives/recordsmanagement/state-agencies-records-retention-schedules.aspx>
- Local government records retention schedules can be found at:
<https://www.sos.wa.gov/archives/recordsmanagement/local-government-records-retention-schedules---alphabetical-list.aspx>

2. Scan the records according to:

[Requirements for the Destruction of Non-Archival Paper Records after Imaging](#)

- For “Archival” records, use the formats recommended for long-term records.

3. What to do with the paper?

- For “Non-Archival” records, destroy the paper records after verification of successful conversion.
- For “Archival” records, contact Washington State Archives for an appraisal. The paper records will either be selected for preservation at Washington State Archives or your agency will be allowed to destroy them.

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

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