Office of the Secretary of State
Washington State Archives

Using Retention Schedules:
Examples of Common Records with Minimal Retention

Purpose: Provide guidance to state agencies and local governments on the types of records that can typically be destroyed when no longer needed for agency business (commonly referred to as "transitory" records).

Retain until no longer needed for agency business

- Basic informational messages (such as "Please call," "Running 10 minutes late," etc.)
- Business cards and contact information
- Drafting/editing notes such as handwritten annotations/notes, track changes, information/ comments in Microsoft Word, etc.
- Duplicate copies
- Electronic records created solely for printing, such as signs, mailing labels, etc.
- Email delivery/read receipts
- Emails notifying staff of weather/traffic conditions or social gatherings (such as potlucks, agency sports teams, etc.).

- Extra copies of blank forms or publications
- Information received from an external source which requires no action (such as bulletins, notices, newsletters, etc.)
- Internet browsing history, cache/temporary files, cookies, etc.
- Mailing lists and email distribution lists
- Meeting scheduling (provided the calendar is retained)
- Microsoft Word versions of documents that have been signed or finalized in print format.
- Notes taken in brainstorming sessions and meetings

- Out-of-office email notices
- Reference materials (such as news clippings, published articles, etc.)
- Requests for basic agency information (such as business hours, driving directions, web address, etc.)
- Rough/working notes that have been written up into a more formal record.
- Routing slips
- To-do lists
- Unsolicited information (such as junk mail, spam, advertisements, etc.)
- Workflow notifications

Records series covering transitory records can be found in both the *Local Government Common Records Retention Schedule* and the *State Government General Records Retention Schedule* under the section heading "Records with Minimal Retention Value (Transitory Records)."

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

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