Using Records Retention Schedules: Notorious/Historically Significant Case Files/Inmate Records

Purpose: Provide guidance to law enforcement agencies on the identification and retention of notorious/historically significant case files and inmate custody records.

The Law Enforcement Records Retention Schedule includes two records series with an “Archival” designation relating to notorious or historically significant case files (DAN LE2010-060) and inmate records (DAN LE2010-086).

The following list provides criteria that should be considered when evaluating whether case or inmate records should be retained according to a records series for notorious/historically significant records:

- Did the case/inmate attain contemporary public notoriety?
- Did the case/inmate receive significant media coverage?
- Did the inmate/case cause local agencies to develop or utilize new methods or technologies?
- Is the case/inmate frequently cited in scholarly or professional literature or other resources?
- Has the case/inmate caused a change in policies or laws?
- Did the case affect a large portion of the community?
- Was the case/inmate controversial?
- Was the case/inmate generally viewed by the community as important or significant?
- Was the case/inmate the subject of a well-known book or feature film?
- Did the case/inmate incur large restitution amounts?

If a case or inmate file meets one or more of the above criteria, it should be retained according to the most appropriate records series for notorious/historically significant records in the Law Enforcement Records Retention Schedule. Accordingly, such records should not be destroyed and the agency should contact Washington State Archives to arrange for archival appraisal and transfer.

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

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