This schedule applies to: County Coroners and Medical Examiners

Scope of records retention schedule
This records retention schedule authorizes the destruction/transfer of public records of County Coroners and Medical Examiners relating to the function of death investigation and other duties in accordance with chapters 36.24 and 68.50 RCW. It is to be used in conjunction with the Local Government Common Records Retention Schedule (CORE), which authorizes the destruction/transfer of public records common to all local government agencies. CORE can be accessed online at: http://www.sos.wa.gov/archives/recordsmanagement/UsingtheLocalGovernmentCommonRecordsRetentionScheduleCORE.aspx.

Disposition of public records
Public records covered by records series within this records retention schedule must be retained for the minimum retention period as specified in this schedule. Washington State Archives strongly recommends the disposition of public records at the end of their minimum retention period for the efficient and effective management of local resources.

Public records designated as Archival (Permanent Retention) or Non-Archival (with a retention period of “Life of the Agency” or “Permanent”) must not be destroyed. Records designated as Archival (Appraisal Required) must be appraised by the Washington State Archives before disposition. Public records must not be destroyed if they are subject to ongoing or reasonably anticipated litigation. Such public records must be managed in accordance with the agency’s policies and procedures for legal holds. Public records must not be destroyed if they are subject to an existing public records request in accordance with chapter 42.56 RCW. Such public records must be managed in accordance with the agency’s policies and procedures for public records requests.

In addition to the minimum retention requirements specified in this schedule, there may be additional (longer) retention requirements mandated by federal, state and/or local statute, grant agreement, and/or other contractual obligations.

Revocation of previously issued records retention schedules
All previously approved disposition authorities for records that are covered by this retention schedule are revoked, including those listed in all general and agency unique retention schedules. Local government agencies should take measures to ensure that the retention and disposition of public records is in accordance with current approved records retention schedules.

Authority
This records retention schedule was approved by the Local Records Committee in accordance with RCW 40.14.070 on June 25, 2015.

For the State Auditor: Cindy Evans
For the Attorney General: Matt Kernutt
The State Archivist: Steve Excell

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Revision History

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Version</th>
<th>Date Approved</th>
<th>Extent of Revision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>11/29/2012</td>
<td>New sector schedule created from records series imported from version 5.2 of the <em>Local Government General Records Retention Schedule (LGGRRS)</em>, which has been dismantled. 4 series have been designated “Archival – Permanent Retention” (Card File Index, Inquests, Coroner/Medical Examiner Investigation Files, and Coroner/Medical Examiner Ledger). All disposition authority numbers (DANs) have been assigned a prefix of “CO” and a revision number of “0” (zero). A glossary of terms is located in the <em>Local Government Common</em> schedule.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>06/25/2015</td>
<td>Major revision/overhaul. Consolidation of all records relating to deaths reported to the County Coroner/Medical Examiner whether or not jurisdiction is assumed in order to simplify AND align with modern (electronic) recordkeeping practices. Death Ledgers/Registers are legacy records that possess enduring historical value and should be transferred to Washington State Archives. Financial records relating to indigent burial are covered by GS2011-184, <em>Financial Transactions – General</em>, in the <em>Local Government Common Records Retention Schedule (CORE)</em>. All changes are detailed in the Summary of Changes. Note: <strong>Biological samples</strong> are not considered public records for purposes of chapter 40.14 RCW, and should be retained and disposed of pursuant to County Coroner/Medical Examiner policy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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1. DEATH INVESTIGATION
The function of determining cause of death and the management of the bodies and property of deceased individuals in accordance with chapter 68.50 RCW.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISPOSITION AUTHORITY NUMBER (DAN)</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION OF RECORDS</th>
<th>RETENTION AND DISPOSITION ACTION</th>
<th>DESIGNATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| CO50-34-03 Rev. 1                   | **Death Investigation Case Files**
All records relating to the investigation of deceased persons by the County Coroner/Medical Examiner, including initial notice, determination of manner & cause of death, identification of the deceased, certification of death, and disposition of remains. Includes, but is not limited to:
- All notices of death (*whether or not* jurisdiction is assumed and *whether or not* full investigation is warranted);
- All manners of death (accident, natural, homicide, suicide and undetermined);
- Investigative work (scene notes and sketches; photographs, audio/video/digital recordings, etc.);
- Laboratory work (autopsy report, radiographs, lab reports, state toxicologist analyses, dental records, etc.);
- Coroner’s inquests held pursuant to [RCW 36.24.020](https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=36.24.020&Session=20152&System=Legislation) (including coroner’s files, transcripts, records of oral proceedings, list of impaneled juror names, etc.);
- Personal property list compiled pursuant to [RCW 68.50.040](https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=68.50.040&Session=20152&System=Legislation); property release forms; suicide notes (or copies of suicide notes), etc.;
- Disposition of remains (including claimed, unclaimed, indigent, etc.);
- Related correspondence, regardless of format;
- Index used to identify/locate individual case files (card index, register, list, spreadsheet, database, etc.).


Retain one copy permanently and Contact Washington State Archives for appraisal and transfer of paper/hard copy, electronic copy, microfilm, and/or any other format.

ARCHIVAL (Appraisal Required) ESSENTIAL OPR
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISPOSITION AUTHORITY NUMBER (DAN)</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION OF RECORDS</th>
<th>RETENTION AND DISPOSITION ACTION</th>
<th>DESIGNATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CO50-34-06 Rev. 1</td>
<td><strong>Morgue Register</strong></td>
<td>Retain for 6 years after last log entry then Destroy.</td>
<td>NON-ARCHIVAL NON-ESSENTIAL OPR</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Register/log recording the arrival and removal of human remains from morgues established pursuant to [RCW 68.52.010](http://leg.wa.gov).
## 2. LEGACY RECORDS (no longer created and/or received by County Coroners)

These are records no longer created by County Coroners; however, Coroners/Medical Examiner offices may still hold some of these records.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISPOSITION AUTHORITY NUMBER (DAN)</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION OF RECORDS</th>
<th>RETENTION AND DISPOSITION ACTION</th>
<th>DESIGNATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CO50-34-02 Rev. 1</td>
<td>Death Ledger/Register</td>
<td>Retain until no longer needed for agency business and Contact</td>
<td>ARCHIVAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Death ledgers/registers created by County Coroners from early statehood into the 20th century. While bound volumes/ledgers are no longer created, offices may still hold these records which possess enduring legal and/or historical value.</td>
<td>Washington State Archives for appraisal and transfer of paper/hard copy, electronic copy, microfilm, and/or any other format.</td>
<td>ESSENTIAL OPR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Death ledgers/registers contain information such as:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Name, gender, race, marital status, residence, occupation &amp; age of deceased;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Date and place of birth;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Date and place of death;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Cause and manner of death;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Name of person who signed the death return/certificate.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Excludes Death Investigation Case Files (and indexes) covered by CO50-34-03.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INDEXES: ARCHIVAL / PERMANENT RECORDS

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Death Ledger/Register .............................................................................. 5

INDEX: ESSENTIAL RECORDS

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Death Ledger/Register .............................................................................. 5

INDEX: DISPOSITION AUTHORITY NUMBERS (DANs)

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CO50-34-06................................................................. 4
INDEX: SUBJECTS

NOTE: “CORE” refers to the Local Government Common Records Retention Schedule.

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accidents/incidents (employee)...........see CORE accounting...............................see CORE annual report....................................see CORE as-built drawings..........................see CORE asset management.......................see CORE

B

benefits (human resources)..............see CORE biological samples..........................2 boards/councils/committees..............see CORE budget............................................see CORE buses............................................see CORE

C

community/public relations.............see CORE construction (agency structures)........see CORE contracts.................................see CORE
drawings
architectural (agency structures)........see CORE investigative..................................3

electronic information systems.........see CORE emergency preparedness (agency)........see CORE employee (HR Mgmt).........................see CORE executive communications..............see CORE

facilities/property management........see CORE financial management....................see CORE fleet/motor pool..............................see CORE

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human remains (biological samples)............2

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agency financials............................see CORE death ledger/register..........................5 legal (advice, litigation, legal affairs)........see CORE liability waivers.............................see CORE
For assistance and advice in applying this records retention schedule, please contact Washington State Archives at:

recordsmanagement@sos.wa.gov

or contact your Regional Archivist.

http://www.sos.wa.gov/archives/