

# Records Management Basics for Local Governments

## Zoom Training

## Q & A Report

(Edited for clarity)

#	Question	Answer
1	Will a copy of the video be accessible after the class today?	Good morning! This session is being recorded, and attendees will be able to access the new recording soon after today's webinar. In the meantime, please see our course materials here: <a href="https://www.tsl.texas.gov/slrn/classes/rmb-lg">https://www.tsl.texas.gov/slrn/classes/rmb-lg</a> .
2	I get a lot of emails at work, many from businesses or organizations that have nothing to do with my job. Is it okay to delete them?	Good morning... Before deleting email messages, are they spam, or should they be forwarded to an individual or a department that handles those types of email messages? Unsolicited email advertisements can be deleted, but if the sender is requesting information or has some type of business with your local government, it is important to find out who the custodian of those records is so that you can forward those messages to the correct person, and they can be filed and retained according to the appropriate local retention schedule. Please let me know if you have any other questions. Here are two blog articles related to email and custodians: 1) FAQ: How Long Do I Keep Email? <a href="https://www.tsl.texas.gov/slrn/blog/2018/11/faq-redux-how-long-do-i-keep-email/">https://www.tsl.texas.gov/slrn/blog/2018/11/faq-redux-how-long-do-i-keep-email/</a> 2) FAQ: Who is the custodian of this record? <a href="https://www.tsl.texas.gov/slrn/blog/2019/07/faq-who-is-the-custodian-of-this-record/">https://www.tsl.texas.gov/slrn/blog/2019/07/faq-who-is-the-custodian-of-this-record/</a>
3	Can you link the information about requirements for metadata?	Good morning... Here is one of our blog articles on metadata, which includes links to resources from the National Archives... Is Metadata a Part of an Electronic Record or Not?: <a href="https://www.tsl.texas.gov/slrn/blog/2018/10/faq-is-metadata-a-part-of-an-electronic-record-or-not/">https://www.tsl.texas.gov/slrn/blog/2018/10/faq-is-metadata-a-part-of-an-electronic-record-or-not/</a>
4	If the person designated as the RMO has changed, do we need to submit an updated form?	Yes, whenever the person designated as the RMO changes, local governments will need to submit an SLR 504 form to TSLAC. For county elected officials, the SLR 512 form needs to be submitted. Also, if the RMO position/title designated in your local government's records management policy has NOT changed, then just the SLR 504 form is needed (this updates the RMO contact information). County elected officials will always submit the SLR 512 form, which includes a records management policy. If the RMO position/title in the records management policy has changed, an updated policy will also need to be submitted to TSLAC so that the RMO title/position in the policy matches the position on the SLR 504 form. Please let me know if you have any other questions. Related blog article: FAQ: Are We

	In Compliance? <a href="https://www.tsl.texas.gov/slrm/blog/2020/05/faq-are-we-in-compliance/">https://www.tsl.texas.gov/slrm/blog/2020/05/faq-are-we-in-compliance/</a>
5 Do you have to keep email if you have a hard copy or the other way around?	If an email message has links or attachments, those are a part of the complete record. If an email message is printed out, local governments must make sure any information that was attached to it stays together and is retained according to its appropriate retention period in the local schedules. If a local government (LG) has two identical copies of the same record (e.g., one in paper format and one in electronic format), the LG can decide which format will be the record copy that must be retained for its full retention period. Consider which format is best for the type of record in question and ensure the record remains complete for its full retention period. Please let me know if you have any other questions.
6 If we would like to transfer all of our students' record to electronic format are we allowed to do that?	Yes, local governments can decide which format they want to use for their records, but they must ensure their records remain available, accessible, and readable for their full retention period. Certain formats may be better than others, especially for long-term/permanent/vital records.
7 Are there records that we have to keep them as paper copy rather than electronic copy?	If paper records are taken care of properly, they can last for hundreds of years. With electronic records, local governments also must always make sure their records remain available, accessible, and readable even through changes in technology, hardware, and software. For long-term retention periods (10 years or longer), please also see the Library of Congress's preferred file formats: <a href="https://www.loc.gov/preservation/resources/rfs/">https://www.loc.gov/preservation/resources/rfs/</a> .
8 If an application was saved from a system are we still required to retain the printed application?	If a local government has two copies of the same record with one being in paper format and the other being an electronic version, your local government can decide which identical version will be the record copy, which must be retained for its full retention period according to the appropriate local retention schedules. For example, if your local government decides the record copies of lien/release records will be managed in a specific electronic database, and if those are the ones that will be retained for their full retention period, the paper versions of the same exact records can be destroyed at any time. According to Section 201.003 of the Local Government Records Act, extra identical copies of convenience are non-records, so local governments can destroy them when they are no longer needed or when their purpose is served. For long-term or permanent records, local governments must make sure that the system they use, whether that is managing records in paper or electronic formats, allows the local government to access, open, and read the records at any time to continue carrying out business operations. For long-term retention periods (10 years or longer),

		please also see the Library of Congress's preferred file formats: <a href="https://www.loc.gov/preservation/resources/rfs/">https://www.loc.gov/preservation/resources/rfs/</a> .
9	Are there posted RM best practices on the TSLAC website?	Hello, Cymone. Our training and blog webpages have information on specific topics. Would you like more information on best practices for social media, email, or electronic records management policies? Here are the links to our blog and our training pages: 1) <a href="https://www.tsl.texas.gov/slrmblog/">https://www.tsl.texas.gov/slrmblog/</a> 2) <a href="https://www.tsl.texas.gov/slrmttraining/webinars">https://www.tsl.texas.gov/slrmttraining/webinars</a>
10	So, part of my role is retrieving records we store for other departments within our county. Many of these records are digitized and uploaded into a repository that our customers have access to and are able to view the record through. In the repository, we leave notes about who completed the work order. Once the work order is complete, I send a courtesy email notifying the customer that their request has been completed and that they can view the file. My question is, is that email to the customer, a record, since my actions are technically documented in the repository itself?	It sounds like the courtesy/acknowledgement email is not included in the file in the repository that your customers have access to, so those courtesy emails that you send to confirm that your local government has carried out specific business is a record that must be retained according to its appropriate retention period in the local schedules. Depending on the subject or the content of the email, it might fall under general correspondence, which has a mandatory minimum of 2 years, or it might fall under another, more specific record series. I suggest reaching out to your analyst at the following email address: <a href="mailto:slrminfo@tsl.texas.gov">slrminfo@tsl.texas.gov</a>
11	Methods of persuasion to get staff to follow retention schedules. I have a hard time enforcing our retention periods with staff that assume we keep records indefinitely.	"This is an incredibly important question. You are not alone with this challenge. A good starting point is to share these resources with as many staff members as needed because they go into some of the benefits carrying out regular disposition and the consequences of not carrying out disposition (e.g., disposition saves space, time, and money, etc.): 1) <a href="https://www.tsl.texas.gov/slrmblog/2020/06/disposition-101-webinar-now-available/">https://www.tsl.texas.gov/slrmblog/2020/06/disposition-101-webinar-now-available/</a> 2) <a href="https://www.tsl.texas.gov/slrmblog/2021/05/data-and-disposition-how-disposition-protects-loss-of-privacy-in-a-data-driven-world/">https://www.tsl.texas.gov/slrmblog/2021/05/data-and-disposition-how-disposition-protects-loss-of-privacy-in-a-data-driven-world/</a> 3) <a href="https://www.tsl.texas.gov/slrmblog/2015/10/featured-question-why-use-a-disposition-log/">https://www.tsl.texas.gov/slrmblog/2015/10/featured-question-why-use-a-disposition-log/</a> " Here is another blog article that might be helpful to you: <a href="https://www.tsl.texas.gov/slrmblog/2019/02/how-to-secure-wins-and-motivate-people-records-management-as-customer-service/2/">https://www.tsl.texas.gov/slrmblog/2019/02/how-to-secure-wins-and-motivate-people-records-management-as-customer-service/2/</a>
12	What about old VHS films, CDs from either trainings being conducted or recordings of meetings etc.?	Your local government must make sure that if it does not transfer the records from older formats/media to newer options, it must make sure that it keeps the hardware and software needed to access, open, and read the records on VHS, CDs, etc.

13	If lots of copies keep stuff safe, then why are we required to only keep 1 hard copy of records?	The LOCKSS approach is recommended for vital records that you need to keep your local government's operations running if, hopefully not, it faces a disaster (e.g., natural, digital, etc.).
14	Will this Q&A section be shared at the end of the session?	The Q&A information will be provided to attendees soon after today's webinar. Please let us know if you have any other questions.
15	If the paper files are changed into e-file, do you need to keep both, the paper and the e-file? We have lots of file cabinets with paper folder files. I am task to scan all the records and archive them into Laserfiche. When that happens, can I delete the paper files?	If you have two identical copies of a record, only one copy must be retained for the full retention period. Make sure the scanned versions are complete, accessible, and readable before destroying the paper versions.
16	Also, I am in the Planning department which we keep the records in a case file, which has plats, correspondences, meeting notes, and applications. We need to keep them all together, and not separate the correspondence from the plats, and applications. Do I just go with the longest retention on all the case files? How do I decide what retention code to use?	Yes, if you have different records that have different retention periods, but they are inseverable, use the longest retention period and apply that to all of the records.
17	Had to step away. Have we discussed Check Sums?	Hello, Roxanne. Are check sums a type of metadata? It seems this question needs more attention, so I suggest sending this question to your analyst so that we can provide you with a thorough response: <a href="mailto:slrminfo@tsl.texas.gov">slrminfo@tsl.texas.gov</a>
18	From my understanding, checksums are used to when migrating a large amount digital information. I don't know the technical stuff, but you can look at a checksum and be sure no information was lost during migration. I'll ask my analyst. Thank you for the suggestion.	This definitely seems like a specific type of record. Your analyst will be able to provide suggestions on where it may fall in schedule GR. This type of record might fall under Section 5-2 in Schedule GR: <a href="https://www.tsl.texas.gov/slr/localretention/schedule_gr#s5-2">https://www.tsl.texas.gov/slr/localretention/schedule_gr#s5-2</a>
19	Can we just shred a paper doc. with shredder in campus right after the retention period is over?	Yes, but verify if your local government has procedures for the destruction process. For example, some local governments require a disposition request and a disposition log to be completed before destroying records so that it can keep track of which records were destroyed and when in case it received a Public Information Act request, audit, litigation, administrative review, etc. It is a way of protecting the local government and shows that the records were destroyed properly. Here is a related link: <a href="https://www.tsl.texas.gov/slr/blog/2015/10/featured-question-why-use-a-disposition-log/">https://www.tsl.texas.gov/slr/blog/2015/10/featured-question-why-use-a-disposition-log/</a>
20	May you please explain the components of the Local Disposition Template? The Record Series Title is the legal retention Record Series Title like GR or JC etc. right?	The Record Series Title might be "SYSTEM ACTIVITY MONITORING RECORDS" (if the eligible records are related to GR5825-16 in Schedule GR). The template can be modified to work best for your local government, so if you would like to add more columns of information, please adjust it to fit your local

Where on the form do we let the RMO know what group of records we are disposing i.e. Applications, PR etc.?"	government's tracking and review/destruction approval needs. Please let me know if this was helpful.
21 What record number do I use for planning and each case folder?	The record number you would need depends on the type of record or the content of the record. Please let us know if you would like us to help you find the appropriate record series for your records so that they can be filed appropriately. Contact: <a href="mailto:slrminfo@tsl.texas.gov">slrminfo@tsl.texas.gov</a>