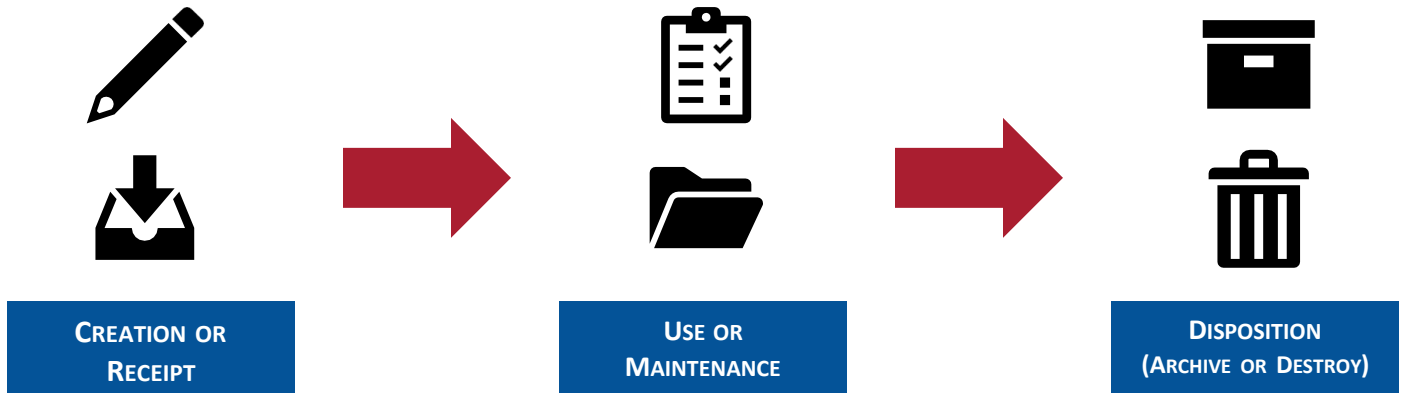




The Records Life Cycle

Disposition is the final stage in the records life cycle. It is the process of moving a record to an archive or destroying it. After a record has served its purpose, it is important to clear it away and create space for new records.



Do I need to dispose of records?

Since TSLAC only sets *minimum* retention periods, government agencies may keep records longer than they are required to. However, there are benefits to disposing of records in a timely manner.

- **Space:** Clearing out records that are no longer needed saves space—both physical space and electronic server space for digital records.
- **Cost:** Reducing storage space saves money.
- **Time:** When you have fewer records to dig through, finding what you need takes less time.
- **Risk:** Minimizing the number of records you have can help reduce legal risk and information privacy risk.

How should I conduct disposition?

First, inventory your records and note the retention periods that apply. Sort records based on whether they must be maintained, archived, or destroyed. When destroying records, use effective destruction methods for the types of records you have. Keep confidential records secure throughout the disposition process.

Be sure to document what you archive or destroy. State agencies are required to keep a disposition log and local governments are highly encouraged to do the same.

How can I incorporate disposition into my workflow?

Rather than letting records pile up, it's best to have a “clean as you go” approach. This helps make disposition less overwhelming, helps reduce error, and can help avoid the negative public perception of getting rid of many records all at once.

For emails and other records that pile up quickly, try setting aside time for review once a week or once a month. For other types of records, try the end of the fiscal year, the end of the calendar year, or during a slow time of year in your workplace. The important thing is to find a schedule that works for you so that you can consistently dispose of your records.

When should I *not* dispose of a record?

- **Minimum retention period not met:** Be sure not to dispose of records that haven't reached the end of their life cycle. Intentionally destroying government records before their minimum retention period can be considered a crime.
- **Destruction holds:** Records currently subject to litigation, claims, negotiations, audits, public information requests, administrative review, or other similar actions may not be destroyed.