

# A CALL TO

***Making a Move? ... Renovating? ... Building? Make sure to incorporate planning for your records. One component that is often forgotten when it comes to planning for a major event such as moving or renovating is the department's records. Considerations of records concerns are often left until staff are almost ready to turn the lights out and lock the door.***

## CONTENTS

Step 1 Allow Sufficient Time	1
Step 2 Put Someone in Charge.....	1
Step 3 Obtain an Overview of Records.....	1
Step 4 Determine Records and Non-records.....	2
Step 5 Use Campus Records Schedules.....	3
Step 6 Use Department Records Schedules.....	3
Step 7 Preparing for Packing.....	3
Step 8 Destruction or Transfer.....	3
Moving Computer Equipment.....	4
Do's and Don'ts for moving Records.....	4

## Relocation and Records Issues

Like considerations for lighting, setting an office layout plan, and acquiring a communication system, records require planning. The objective of this ARMS Bulletin is to outline the minimal planning steps that should occur in preparing to move, discard, or temporarily relocate records as part of an office move. Packing and moving an entire office's records can appear to be nothing less than a monumental task. There are, however, several procedures that can help to eliminate confusion and provide needed direction to staff about what their responsibilities are toward records.

**Planning Objective:** The overall objective should be a smooth transition of a department's records from one office environment to another with minimal disruption to client service and without loss of control over the records and information assets of department.

**General records responsibilities:** This Bulletin will not address in detail the records responsibilities of all staff. ARMS Bulletin #1 provides detailed information about the records responsibilities of all University employees. It is important to note that records do not belong to an individual employee with the exception of faculty and staff personal papers. All records created

and maintained in the course of University business belong to the University.

### Step 1. Allow sufficient time.

A minimum of two months should be allotted for a records move. If it is a large move, for example an entire building or college, allow six to ten months for planning and moving.

### Step 2. Put someone in charge of the project.

As with any other activity, in order for the move of records to be completed smoothly and efficiently, someone needs to be in charge. This person should:

- Make certain that each activity is documented.
- Ensure records accountability.
- Secure proper authorization for disposal.
- Set up a central point for acquiring supplies and forms.

### Step 3. Obtain an overview of records.

A quick survey of the records in your office can be enormously beneficial in providing information for use in planning for the move. The following information should be collected:

- Categories, types of records, and date spans.
- Volume and location of records.
- To whom the records belong.
- Special circumstances or concerns—i.e. whether records are poorly organized, damaged, unknown owner, etc.

**REMINDER: Not all records are paper based. Remember to account for electronic records as well.**

#### Step 4. Determine records and non-records.

##### RECORDS

By law, University records are any papers, books, photographs, tapes, films, recordings, or other documentary materials, or any copies thereof, regardless of physical form or characteristics, made, produced, executed, or received by any department or office of the University or by any academic or administrative staff member in connection with the transaction of University business, and retained by that agency or its successor as evidence of its activities or functions because of the information contained therein.

University records include the data generated via automated information systems. If your office has developed a computer application to manage some particular facet of its operations, the information in that system is considered a University record, whether or not you generate any actual paper or hard copy from it. You are not, however, responsible for information systems such as the accounting information system for which your office does not bear major responsibility. Although your office may access and/or input data into the accounting system, the responsibility for the system and its contents belongs to the business services-accounting office.

##### NON-RECORDS

Certain categories of materials are *not* considered records.

- Stocks of printed or reproduced documents kept for supply purposes when file copies have been retained for records purposes; for example, handbooks or manuals prepared for the instruction of a particular course.
- Books, periodicals, newspapers, and other library and museum materials made or acquired and preserved solely for reference or exhibition purposes.
- Duplicate microfilm.
- Preliminary drafts of letters, memoranda, reports, worksheets, and information notes which do not represent significant basic steps in the preparation of the record document.
- Convenience copies of reports, memoranda, etc. for which your office was not the originator or the office of record, and which have not been annotated by your office.
- Materials not filed as evidence for department operations that have no informational value, such as telephone call slips, letters of transmittal, route slips, etc.

When there is any doubt as to whether or not any document (paper or other format), record, or group of records is a University record, it should be considered an official record until determined otherwise. Any questions regarding the record should be directed to the ARMS, (contact information is at the end of this Bulletin) which will carefully analyze the records in question and make the final determination.

##### TREATMENT of PUBLICATIONS

While the definition of University records generally excludes books, periodicals, and other printed material, certain types of publications are collected by the Archives as official records of the University. The Archives divides publications roughly into five categories:

**A. Official University publications.** These include budget "red books", catalogs or bulletins, faculty, staff, and student directories, timetables, etc. This type of publication describes official admission procedures and requirements, degree requirements, course lists, and so on. ARMS routinely receives these publications and retains them permanently. It is not necessary for department offices to retain copies of these publications except as needed for reference: collections of these publications should not be transferred to the UW Archives.

**EXCEPTION:** Since many departments produce their own course catalogs and periodically update them, arrangements should be made to transfer a copy of these items to the Archives for permanent preservation.

**B. Publications produced as a result of University operations.** These publications are largely administrative and include such items as annual financial reports, annual budgets, enrollment reports, and various other statistical and planning reports and documents. These publications are also considered archival. Some are sent to the UW Archives routinely, while others come to the Archives from the originating department when it transfers its administrative subject files. University departments that receive copies of these publications may dispose of them after reference use has been completed, provided the department is not in any way responsible for significant annotations in the report or document. Because this category is not as clearly defined as the first one, it is advised that the department contact the UW Archives with questions about whether or not a report should be saved or destroyed.

**C. Publications of research centers and institutes.** This category includes publications such as the report series prepared by the Social Systems Research Institute and the various reports by the Sea Grant program. The UW Archives routinely receives many of

these publications, but because of limited space, is not actively recruiting additional collections of publications from centers and institutes. Departments are advised to check with the Archives to ascertain which publications it receives, while centers and institutes should check with appropriate college or department libraries that may wish to collect their publications.

**D. Faculty publications.** Many faculty members have extensive reprint or book collections. Because of space considerations the Archives does not actively recruit this type of publications unless it is of an unusual nature. A faculty member seeking storage alternatives for a reprint or book collection should check with the appropriate college or department library. The library may want the collection or may have suggestions for its disposition.

**E. Publications authored or produced outside the University.** This category contains a variety of publications from supply catalogs to professional journals and magazines. The Archives does not collect these printed materials; they should be removed from records collections prior to their transfer to the Archives.

**Step 5. Use the campus-wide records schedules** posted on the Archives and Records Management web site ([www.library.wisc.edu/libraries/Archives/](http://www.library.wisc.edu/libraries/Archives/)) to further purge department records. Use of the campus-wide schedules can greatly reduce the volume of records you need to maintain and/or store. Such items as recruitment records and course evaluation forms are voluminous, and offices frequently have vast accumulations of these items. For example, applicant recruitment files need only be retained for six (6) years past the date the position is filled. Current campus-wide general schedules include:

- Business/Financial
- Departmental Academic Administrative Information
- Faculty and Academic Staff Personnel Records Retention Policy
- Payroll (U.W. System-wide)
- Risk Management
- Student Employment Records

For records that are eligible for destruction, see Step 8 for recommendations on records destruction.

**Step 6. Locate and implement department records schedules.**

By Wis. Statute 16.61, all records are to be governed by records retention schedules. While many of the more common administrative records are covered by campus-wide schedules, departments will have record material that is unique to them and should therefore be covered by a specific records retention authorization. Many departments on campus have developed

records schedules but have never implemented them! Planning for a move can be the opportunity to either implement existing schedules or develop them if they do not already exist.

If records schedules need to be developed, consult the ARMS website and/or contact the campus records officer for further assistance.

**Step 7. Preparing records for packing.**

Do not start packing for the move without documenting what's being moved, where it's going, who is to be responsible for it, and how it's to be arranged.

- Computer checklists: Generate computer reports to use as checklists for the move. Sort by office, destination, and staff person assigned to the files. Use the reports as box packing lists and to determine if records are missing. It is recommended that staff generate a packing list detailing box contents before packing anything. Put one copy in the box and provide one to the Records Coordinator.
- Train staff: Assign staff to be accountable for particular records before, during, and after the move.
- Boxes: Use State Records Center boxes and copy paper size boxes. Do not exceed 30-50 lbs per box. Determine standard methods to mark box contents.

*Information on how to obtain Records Center boxes is available on our website: [www.library.wisc.edu/libraries/Archives/faq/faq\\_forms.htm](http://www.library.wisc.edu/libraries/Archives/faq/faq_forms.htm)*

- Organize records: pack records into boxes in the order that files will be maintained on shelves or in file cabinets.

**Step 8. Records Destruction or transfer**

For records that can be discarded based on records retention policies, follow these guidelines.

- The recycling bin is sufficient for most types of office paper.
- Records containing any type of personally identifiable information, social security numbers, personal identifiers, charge card numbers, etc. should be confidentially destroyed. The Department of Administration-Records Management Section has a contract for confidential disposal that is available to all University departments. Please contact the Records Management office for more information about this service.

- Shredding. Records containing personally identifiable information can certainly be shredded. However, shredding documents can be labor intensive and pose environmental problems. Particularly, if there is a substantial volume of record material to be shredded, it is advisable to use the confidential disposal services available through the Department of Administration.
- For more information on paper record destruction, see the DOA web site, Fact Sheet #4 "Options for Destruction of Paper Records."  
[www.doa.state.wi.us/dsas/recordsmgt/facts4.asp](http://www.doa.state.wi.us/dsas/recordsmgt/facts4.asp)
- For more information on transferring records please see our website:  
[www.library.wisc.edu/libraries/Archives/rm/manual/ManualDisp\\_ch4\\_.html](http://www.library.wisc.edu/libraries/Archives/rm/manual/ManualDisp_ch4_.html)

## Moving Computer Equipment

Your computer contains records and their safe transfer should be considered. Remember to check UW and department records schedules. What are your obligations to retain the electronic data? How will you access it later is needed?

1. Records schedules apply to electronic files as well as hard copy. Delete/erase those items that have exceeded recommended retention times.
2. Back up your data before unplugging the computer.
3. Move record items to appropriate storage media. Diskettes are not viable long term storage media. Do not place permanent records on diskettes when transferring them to the Archives. Transfer to a recognized language (e.g. ASCII) where appropriate.
4. For long term storage of data tapes, check periodically for readability and playback quality.
5. Before discarding any storage media all record materials should be thoroughly erased. The same is true for discarding computer equipment such as hard drives.

## DO's and DON'Ts for Moving Records

### DO's:

1. DO call the ARMS office at least a month in advance.

It will be so much easier for you, and we can do a better job of meeting your needs.

2. DO use the State Records Storage cartons.

It is the only box the State Records Center and the University Archives will accept!

3. If you are reorganizing as part of the move, DO inventory the records of both offices, functions, entities, etc. that will be merged or divided.

This will permit you to do some organizing on paper or on the screen before you actually begin shuffling files. It will also permit the identification of duplication records and information that can simply be destroyed as opposed to moved!

4. If multiple offices are moving boxes simultaneously, use color labels to aid in identification of boxes belonging to specific organizational units.

### DON'Ts:

1. Do not remove documents from their folders.

Folder headings and file tabs provide helpful information about organizational structure, topic or subject covered, dates, and other critical information that you and others will need in order to retrieve or use the documents at a future date.

2. Do not remove folders from file cabinets or other storage equipment without recording organizational scheme information. See number 1.
3. Do not leave sensitive or confidential information unattended on loading docks or other unsupervised areas.

Theft or inadvertent loss of personal or confidential information cannot only be embarrassing to the University but costly as well.

4. Do not leave computer equipment or electronic storage media containing sensitive or confidential material unattended in openly accessible areas such as loading docks. Electronic storage devices (e.g. hard drives and disks) that are being discarded must be erased before disposition.

**Archives and Records Management Services**

**Main Office**

**B134 Memorial Library  
728 State Street**

**Madison, WI 53706-1494**

**Phone: (608) 262-5629**

**Fax: (608) 265-2754**

**[Recmgmt@library.wisc.edu](mailto:Recmgmt@library.wisc.edu)**

**[www.library.wisc.edu/libraries/Archives/](http://www.library.wisc.edu/libraries/Archives/)**

©2000, Board of Regents, University of Wisconsin-Madison  
ARMS is a periodical bulletin from the University of  
Wisconsin-Madison's Archives and Records  
Management Services.