UNIVERSITY OF WEST GEORGIA

Records Information Management Program

Employee Guide to:

Moving University Records

Relocating?...Consolidating?...Renovating?…Building?...Closing?

We would like to acknowledge the work of colleagues at other institutions and agencies (referenced throughout the handbook).

This document was created and modified using the following sources:

Alaska State Archives. (2019, November). *Records Move Planning*. Retrieved June 1, 2020, from https://archives.alaska.gov/documents/rims/records-move-planning.pdf

Connecticut State Library. (n.d.). *Tips for Managing Records during an Office Relocation*. Retrieved February 22, 2018, from http://ctstatelibrary.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Managing-Records-during-Office-Relocation-Employees.pdf

Questions:
records@westga.edu

Introduction

Moving records is an important part of successful office relocations or remodels. Moves often present unique challenges to access and security of records but provide unique opportunities to organize and rethink how files are stored and accessed.

Though it may be challenging to continue normal business functions while preparing to relocate, early preparations and strategic planning can mitigate much of the unpleasantness and eliminate confusion by providing staff direction about what their responsibilities are toward records. In the case of a departmental consolidation or closing, planning is also necessary to pack and transfer files to the correct storage area efficiently.

Your overall objective should be to smoothly transition departmental records from one office environment to another with minimal disruption to services and without loss of control over the university records and information assets.

All employees have the responsibility to manage records, whether they are kept permanently or for a pre-determined length of time.

This Guide outlines the minimal steps that should occur in preparing to move, discard, or temporarily relocate records as part of an office move or closure.

Following these move steps will:

- Reduce the volume to move
- Lower moving costs
- Improve control over your information assets
- Identify confidential materials needing special handling
- Boost morale and lower stress

Waiting until after the move can result in:

- Wasted dollars and time
- Lost, misplaced, or abandoned records
- Potential security breaches
- Inadvertent destruction of official records
- Less productive staff

So let's start with the first step.

Step 1 Devise a timetable

Before the move, devise a timetable and include information regarding what steps are needed, the person responsible for those steps, start date, estimated completion date, and any additional notes. A minimum of two months should be allotted for a records move or closure. For a massive move, for example, an entire building or college, allow six to ten months for planning and moving.

Items to include in your timetable are:

- ✓ Meeting dates with space planners
- ✓ Space planning timelines. Identify the number of workspaces assigned to each unit
- ✓ Equipment, supply, and furniture orders. Identify the type of filing equipment designated for each filing room
- ✓ Identify the number and location of other non-workstation filing equipment
- ✓ Record inventory dates
- ✓ Records shred or recycle dates
- ✓ Identify the number or color scheme used for moving boxes and equipment from the old location to the new location
- ✓ Identify unit move dates and which units will move to what spaces
- ✓ Unpacking timelines

Step 2 Assign a move coordinator

As with any activity, someone needs to be in charge of the records so that the move will go smoothly and efficiently. This person should:

- ✓ Make sure that each activity is planned and documented
- ✓ Meet with management to discuss move preparation needs, then with representatives from the unit to review what is needed and why
- ✓ Set up a central point for acquiring supplies like boxes and forms/checklists
- ✓ Secure proper authorization for disposal of records
- ✓ Ensure records accountability before, during and after the move
  The unit may want to develop or review their current filing systems or file plans and update or improve them before the move begins. If a file plan does not exist, then before moving records, develop methods for shelf identification, monitoring central files retrievals, and refiles.

Step 3 Plan the new space

Planning for a new space offers a chance to improve the way records are stored and accessed. Consider the following issues when designing the new space to determine records placement:

Usage - Who will use the records, how frequently, and for what purpose? Are there multiple users?

Security - Records with restricted access or valuable records requiring special protection may need particular placement and equipment.

Environment - Some records may require special storage conditions with specific temperature and humidity controls.

Central files - Would the office benefit from having files in a centralized location? If there is a centralized file location, determine the location of:

- Active records
- Inactive records
- Non-records, including technical reference materials and duplicate publications and forms

Other planning considerations include:

- ✓ Check engineering drawings to see if floors can support the weight of the records and filing equipment
- ✓ Plan your space to allow for growth—consider your annual accrual rate and plan for the number of active years you need on hand
- ✓ Determine what records to maintain electronically and who will be responsible for maintenance
- ✓ Order the appropriate equipment and verify the order
- ✓ Plan a “reference area” where staff can review records
- ✓ Plan a “staging area” where records will be prepped for filing, disposition, microfilming or scanning
- ✓ Plan space for computers, printers, copiers, or other specialized equipment
- ✓ Plan where electrical and telephone outlets for equipment are needed
- ✓ Plan sufficient space and equipment for oversize items such as maps, or non-paper items such as videotapes, slides or microfilm

Step 4 Accessibility and security during the move

As state employees, we do not have the luxury of denying public (open) records requests, nor can litigation requests go unanswered due to not being able to access our records. During a move, this is one of the most significant challenges. While it would be easy to treat boxed records like furniture, they are not! Records require special handling and tracking to make sure information is not lost or misplaced. It is also critical that they remain accessible and secure throughout the move.

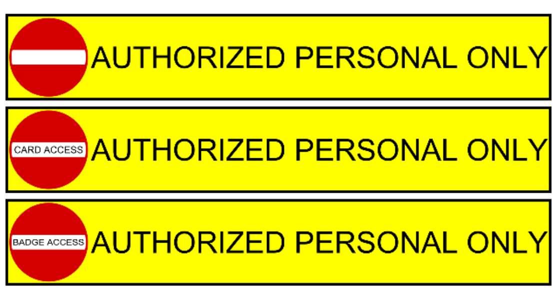
Before packing, labeling, and inventorying the records determine access needs:

- What is the probability of needing access to these records during the packing, move, and unpacking of the files?
- If access is required, what indexing information on the labels and inventory listings is needed to aid in access?
- If records need to be accessed, is there space and time to allow for the following until move day?
  - Not stacking boxes
  - Not putting lids on boxes
  - Not palletizing boxes

Ensuring records security during a move is critical. Simply knowing records reached the new location is not enough; they need to arrive intact and uncompromised, and the process needs to be verifiable.

Ensure security by:

- Determining which records are confidential and which are not, including those containing Personal Identifiable Information (PII) and Protected Health Information (PHI)
- Determining and implement any state or federal requirements needed during the moving process
- Determining if boxes, containers, or trucks need security seals, and develop a log and verify the seals



Step 5 Identify applicable retention schedules

Be aware, records shall not be disposed of arbitrarily due to lack of space or because the unit no longer wishes to maintain them. The Georgia Archives works with the University System of Georgia and their institutions to identify record series, retention periods and creates Records Retention Schedules. These retention periods apply to all University records, including paper materials, digital files, email, etc.

If the move is known well in advance, take the opportunity to review current retention schedules and see if it reflects unit needs and complies with state and federal regulations.

Contact Records Information Management Services to assist with:

- Determining what records are in your unit.
- Identifying schedules that apply to the unit.
- Identifying any Records Information Management training that may be beneficial.
- Helping identify official records from copies

Step 6 Identify records on hand

By moving only those records that need to be moved will save time and money, and make it easier to find and retrieve once the relocation has concluded. Inventorying records before the move will help identify those to be maintained, which are eligible for disposal, and which can be transferred to an off-site storage vendor.

Remember that not all records are paper.

"Record" means any document, paper, book, letter, drawing, map, plat, photo, photographic file, motion picture film, microfilm, microphotograph, exhibit, magnetic or paper tape, punched card, electronic record, or other documents, regardless of physical form or characteristic…

When going through record materials, identify and decide how to handle:

- Duplicate records
- Related records
- Missing files
- Fragmented records

For each unit moving, identify the following:

- Who is the records steward?
- In what formats are records stored?
- What is the location(s) of all the records (include workstations, central filing areas, closets, storage areas, and empty offices)?
- What are the records? Name the series according to existing Retention Schedule item number and record series titles, and record the volumes of each record series.
- What records are kept in binders or other odd-sized folders?
- What records are past due for destruction?
- Are the records active or inactive?
    - Active records are those you use daily and may include items such as open invoices or current contracts.
    - Inactive records are those you do not regularly need, such as completed projects or closed contracts.
    - Which inactive records can be transferred to an off-site storage vendor?
- What records will be needed first after the move?

Step 7 Separate non-records from records

It may seem easier to box up all the non-record materials held in filing cabinets and on bookshelves, but in reality, the moving costs are higher. If materials are not designated as a record and no longer useful, purge them before moving.

Non-record materials, including personal papers, duplicate copies of publications or forms, and technical reference material, should be separated and kept apart from official records.

For non-record materials:

- Weed superseded or obsolete items, including technical reference materials.
- Do not keep non-record materials for sentimental reasons—if it has not touched in over six months, get rid of it!

Non-record materials include:

- ❖ Reference materials
- ❖ Catalogs
- ❖ Newspapers
- ❖ Magazines
- ❖ Phone books
- ❖ Personal papers
- ❖ Blank forms
- ❖ Publications
- ❖ Technical reference materials
- ❖ Convenience copies

Once official records and non-records are separated, dispose of files per the approved retention schedule, move inactive records to less expensive storage, and purge non-record materials.

Step 8 Dispose of copies (duplicates)

It is easy to print out emails, copies of budgets or contracts, and other documents that exist in digital formats. However, if those are not the official record and the printouts are verified as copies, then recycle or shred them. Remember, copies are considered duplicates of official records and are eligible for disposal.

Copies include:

- ❖ Printouts of emails already stored online
- ❖ Printouts of digital documents made for convenience or reference use

Step 9 Dispose of records that have met their retention

It costs time and money to move records that are no longer active and have met the designated retention period. Therefore follow these guidelines for record series that can be discarded based on records retention schedules.

On average, **40%** of records in offices have met their retention requirements and should be destroyed.

- ✓ Check with Records Information Management Services and Legal Affairs to identify any items to retain due to ongoing investigations, litigation holds, audits, or pending retention schedule changes
- ✓ Designate a person in each unit to oversee shredding and recycling activities
- ✓ Organize a “Records Purge Day” and contact vendor to provide shred and recycling bins
- ✓ Coordinate with Campus Planning and Facilities pick-up of recycling
- ✓ Work with RIM Services to complete a Certificate of Records Destruction for all record series shredded or recycled
- ✓ Request RIM Services and stewards be available on your records purge day to answer questions concerning what records are eligible for destruction

Shred paper records containing personally identifiable information (PII) such as social security numbers, personal identifiers, charge card numbers, etc.

NOTE: Shredding documents can be labor intensive mainly if there is a substantial volume of record material to be shredded.

Step 10 Preparing records for the move

Many questions need to be answered before moving. Will you be going to the new space? Will your file cabinets be set up similarly? Will you have less space? More? The same? How many rooms are you moving to and from?

You will want to number rooms (A, B, D, etc.) and label boxes accordingly to ensure they are delivered to the correct room.

Do not start packing until these four questions have been answered and documented.

- What records are being moved?
- Where the records going?
- Who is responsible for the records?
- How are the records to be arranged?

Inventory the hardcopy records to determine what's going over before moving it. You will know if some files are missing before the move, and you will know if any files went missing during the move. Generate spreadsheets to use as checklists for the move. These checklists can be sorted by office, destination, and staff person assigned to the files. Other information to include would be to label filing cabinets A, B, C, or by numbers and have an inventory of what is in each cabinet and label moving boxes appropriately to match. Use the checklists 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.

Consider how your boxes are going to be unpacked. Organize records and pack records into boxes in the order that files will be maintained on shelves or in file cabinets.

When boxes are moved, be sure to move the boxes you want to unpack last first and those you want to unpack first move last. Movers will probably stack the first delivery against the wall, the second delivery in front of those, the third delivery in front of those, etc.

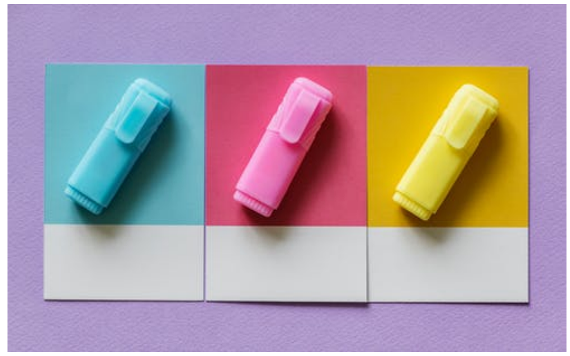
Train staff: The Records Coordinator should assign staff to be accountable for particular records before, during, and after the move.

Boxes:

- Use standard-sized storage boxes (Do not use copier paper boxes for records storage)
- Do not exceed 30-50 lbs per box
- Determine standard methods to mark box contents
- Include a list of files contained inside each box

Step 11 Color coding units for moving

When determining records and non-records placement in the new space, consider assigning a color code for each unit and personnel. Color coding helps movers and staff to identify locations quickly and should be used on the box or labels to aid with location placement.



Once colors are assigned, determine the areas materials will be moved.

Areas may include:

- Workstations
- Centralized active filing areas
- Centralized inactive filing areas
- Non-records areas, including technical reference materials

Step 12 Change of records custody

It is essential to formally document the chain of custody from the prior data steward to the new one as it signifies the ending and beginning of responsibility for the records. Once both stewards acknowledge their duties, the current Records Liaison should contact the new Records Liasion to:

- Make arrangements for the transfer of records
- Provide copies of the Records Transfer Lists for records residing at off-site storage
- Notify off-site storage vendor with the following information regarding the change in records custody
    - Provide the name of the new unit
    - Contact information for the new Records Liasion
    - A list of boxes transferred.

It is imperative to include those records residing at off-site storage in the records transfer to prevent loss or abandoned records.

Step 13 Pack and label boxes and carts

The move coordinator should:

- Determine if boxes or carts will be used to move records (carts can be shrink-wrapped to keep files in place during the move)
- Determine the number of linear or cubic feet of records to be moved and order boxes accordingly

BUDGET SERVICES	
Disaster Preparedness Records	
Tracking #	1 of 3
Contents:	Emergency Planning Records
Belongs to:	Jane Doe
Destination Location:	TLC Building Directors Desk
Destination Room #	1124

INSERT DEPT NAME HERE	
INSERT RECORD SERIES	
Tracking #	
Contents:	
Belongs to:	
Destination Location:	
Destination Room #	

INSERT DEPT NAME HERE	
INSERT RECORD SERIES	
Tracking #	
Contents:	
Belongs to:	
Destination Location:	
Destination Room #	

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INSERT DEPT NAME HERE	
INSERT RECORD SERIES	
Tracking #	
Contents:	
Belongs to:	
Destination Location:	
Destination Room #	

The Records Management Liaison within the unit should:

- Oversee and assist with file packing preparations
  - Identify and separate files according to record series
  - Arrange files in the correct order they should be arranged on the new shelves or in filing cabinets
  - Pack files in order within boxes or carts.
    Do not overstuff boxes as they will not close properly. During the packing process, leave boxes open for accessibility
- Label each box or cart with:
  - **Box or cart #**—the box or cart # for records in this grouping in the order they need to be placed (box 1 of 3; cart 2 of 5, etc.)
  - **Contents description**
  - **Destination**—put the destination location # where records will reside (workstation #, filing room, etc.)
  - **Employee name**—if applicable, use the employee name of the workstation records are going to, or the person responsible for the records
- Central file location—if applicable, include the central file location number, the filing cabinet or shelving unit number, then drawer or shelf number
- Inventory all boxes for each unit—create an inventory sheet with all the information captured on the labels and include a check-off column to use after records are moved
- Place label on the outside of box under the handle or on the cart near the handle
- If the unit is closing or being consolidated then document the disposition on the outside of each box

The day before the move put lids on the boxes, shrink wrap carts, and palletize boxes if necessary. Color code all carts and pallets.

Step 14 During the Move

The Records Coordinator in charge of the move should:

- ✓ Designate individuals to be present in each unit of the new facility/unit to oversee and coordinate the placement of pallets, boxes or carts into the correct area
- ✓ Use a checklist to track all boxes arrived safely at their new destination
- ✓ Document any issues as they occur

Step 15 Unpack and organize

When the move has been completed:

- ✓ Take files out in the order that they were packed
- ✓ Set up files in an organized fashion to promote access and retrieval
- ✓ Check off records on the inventory sheet as they are removed from boxes or carts and placed in filing cabinets or on shelves.
- ✓ Check to make sure all boxes and carts were received and unpacked.
- ✓ Break down boxes and work with the move coordinator to remove empty pallets, carts, and moving boxes.

Continue to use the University Records Retention Schedules in the normal course of business going forward to be in compliance with university policies.

Step 16 Post-move—Keep your records organized

Once the move is complete and staff has settled in, take the opportunity to schedule an annual records clean-up day. Dedicate a date and time to:

- ✓ Purge obsolete records and non-records.
- ✓ Have shred and recycle bins available for destruction.
- ✓ Box up inactive records and send them to an off-site storage vendor.
- ✓ Attend training on records management issues.
- ✓ Make sure files are in order and document any lost or misplaced information.
- ✓ File all interfiles and back-logged items.
- ✓ Check filing equipment for functionality.
- ✓ Check if shelves and cabinets protect records from wear and tear.

Hopefully, the move inspires your unit to reorganize records and improve access and procedures!

Tips for Managing Records during Office Relocation/Consolidation

In any office relocation, you must carefully consider how to handle your records. It is essential to begin planning for transfer, relocation, and/or disposition of the records well in advance.

Please be aware that pursuant to O.C.G.A. §50-18-102(c) and (d), it is a misdemeanor to destroy, mutilate or otherwise dispose of any public record without an applicable retention schedule. No person acting in compliance with this article shall be held personally liable.

Here are several reminders for moving records efficiently from a records management standpoint:

a. Contact your Departmental Records Management Liaison (RML) for assistance in this process.
b. Conduct an inventory to determine where records are currently located. Remember to consider possible storage areas beyond your immediate physical area, e.g., off-site storage, closets, stairwells, and other out-of-the-way areas.
c. All electronic records and Google Drives must be a part of the records inventory. Although hard copies are the primary concern during the move, attention should be paid to eliminate all duplicates and non-record material, regardless of format. Departments should only retain the official record copy.
d. Once you have created the list, identify any non-record items. Some examples of non-records are extra (duplicate) copies, reference materials, publications not related to agency business, and blank forms. You can immediately dispose of items that are non-records. If you are unsure if materials are non-records, contact Records Information Management Services for guidance before disposing of records.
e. For the remaining records, consult the records retention schedules. Records Retention Schedules are available online.
f. If records are found which are on some sort of storage media, make sure that records are duplicates or have met their retention before destroying.
g. For those records that have exceeded the minimum retention period per the USG Records Retention Schedules, submit a Certificate of Records Destruction to RIM Services.
h. Before discarding any storage media, all record materials should be thoroughly erased. The same is true for discarding computer equipment.
i. For inactive records not eligible for disposition, review Employee Guide for Moving University Records.
j. Move all paper and e-records to appropriate storage (i.e., department shared network drive) or to those that individuals or units were needing the information.

Don’t forget the Electronic Records and Your Computer

Do's and Don't's for Moving Paper Records

DO contact the RIM Services as soon as possible for a consult.

DO use standard-sized storage boxes when moving or storing records

DO determine standard methods to mark box contents

If you are reorganizing as part of the move, **DO** inventory the records of 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! If multiple offices are moving boxes simultaneously, use color labels to aid in the identification of boxes belonging to specific organizational units.

DO work with IT to ensure that all electronic records are accounted for and moved to appropriate storage to meet retention requirements or transferred to the new user.

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.

Do Not use copier paper boxes for records storage.

Do Not remove folders from file cabinets or other storage equipment without recording organizational scheme information.

Do Not leave sensitive or confidential information unattended in unsupervised areas such as hallways.

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

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.