



Central Technology Services

Information Technology Center • Public Safety Technology Services • Fleet Services

Bruce High  
Executive Director & CIO

October 6, 2015

Commissioners Court  
Harris County Administration Building  
1001 Preston, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Houston, Texas 77002

Vote of the Court:			
	Yes	No	Abstain
Judge Emmett	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comm. Lee	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comm. Morman	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comm. Radack	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comm. Cagle	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

RE: **Records Management Plan**

Members of Commissioners Court:

In accordance with Section 203.005 of the Local Government Code, the Information Technology Center, Records Management Section, requests approval of the attached Records Management Policy and Plan and authorization to file it with the director and librarian of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission.

This plan will replace the current policy that was approved in Commissioners Curt on October 23, 2012. The changes provide for the more efficient management of both electronic and physical records as well as addresses recent developments with the records management and preservation funds.

The County Records Management Committee, consisting of representatives for the County Attorney, District Attorney, and County Auditor, have reviewed and approved this plan.

Sincerely,

Bruce High  
Executive Director & CIO

Presented to Commissioners' Court

OCT 13 2015

APPROVE CIM  
Recorded Vol. \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

BH/ps/st  
Attachments

cc: Chron

15 OCT -6 PM 4:35

HARRIS COUNTY  
BUDGET MANAGEMENT  
DEPARTMENT

CTS-0507

Lance-007

For inclusion on Court Agenda dated October 13, 2015



# Records Management Plan

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*Harris County, Texas*

*Prepared By:  
Harris County CTS*

*Reviewed and Approved by:  
The County Attorney's Office  
The District Attorney's Office  
The County Auditor's Office*

*October 13, 2015*

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## **RECORDS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM**

### **HARRIS COUNTY AND HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT**

**SECTION 1. APPLICABILITY.** This plan is applicable to:

- (a) all appointed Harris County officials and their employees and all Harris County Flood Control District officials and employees; and
- (b) all elected Harris County officials who have elected or will elect to participate in the county program as is permitted by TEX. LOC. GOV'T CODE §203.005(g), as amended.

### **SECTION 2. PURPOSE.**

The Harris County, Texas (the County) Records Management Plan (Policy) is adopted in compliance with TEX. LOC. GOV'T CODE §203.005 to establish the framework of rules and guidelines for handling all of the County's records throughout their lifecycles, including creation, access, use, storage, retention, and disposition. This Policy ensures the satisfaction of legal obligations, regulatory requirements, and operational needs for records and their retention by establishing consistent and accountable recordkeeping practices throughout the County.

**SECTION 3. DEFINITION OF OFFICIAL RECORDS.** All documents, papers, letters, books, maps, photographs, sound or video recordings, microfilm, magnetic tape, electronic media, or other information recording media, regardless of physical form or characteristics and regardless of whether public access is open or restricted under the laws of the state of Texas, created or received by Harris County or any of its officers or employees pursuant to law or in the transaction of public business are hereby declared to be the official records of Harris County and shall be created, maintained, and disposed of in accordance with the provisions of this order or procedures authorized by it and in no other matter.

This definition of County Records does not include Transitory Records (sometimes referred to as Non-Records) which include:

- (a) Extra identical copies of documents created only for the convenience of reference, research or office convenience;
- (b) Preliminary drafts and reference notes compiled in the preparation of an Official Record;
- (c) Notes, journals, appointment books, diaries, day calendars and similar documents an employee may use for personal convenience;

- (d) Blank forms;
- (e) Stocks of publications;
- (f) Correspondence, messages, and documents of a personal or professional nature that an employee or official may keep at his or her office that do not document public business; or
- (g) Reference material, including books and information files that do not document official actions.

**SECTION 4. ADDITIONAL DEFINITIONS.** The following definitions shall apply in the application of this Program:

- (a) “Accessioning” shall mean the action of transferring control and title of records from the originating agency or department to the archives section of the Records Management Program.
- (b) “Archival Record” shall mean any record (no matter what physical form) for which the retention period of the approved Records Control Schedule is given as “permanent” and which has been accessioned into the archives section of the Records Management Program.
- (c) “Chief Information Officer” shall mean the head of the Harris County Central Technology Services Department.
- (d) “Department Head” shall mean any elected or appointed official who is in charge of a department of Harris County that creates or receives official records.
- (e) “Essential Record” shall mean any record of Harris County necessary to the resumption or continuation of operations of Harris County in an emergency or disaster, to the re-creation of the legal and financial status of Harris County, or the protection and fulfillment of statutory or constitutional obligations of Harris County or Harris County officials.
- (f) “Formal Records Destruction” shall mean a process for implementing the destruction of County records that includes the affirmative authorization of commissioners court and the concurrence of the Records Management Committee.
- (g) “Informal Records Destruction” shall mean a process for implementing the destruction of County records that does not require the affirmative authorization of Commissioners Court.

- (h) "Official Actions" shall mean any action by a public official or employee to comply with a constitutional requirement, statute, regulation, or County or departmental policy.
- (i) "Permanent Record" shall mean any record of Harris County for which the retention period on the approved Records Control Schedule is given as "permanent."
- (j) "Records Custodian" shall mean the appointed or elected public officer who is in charge of a Harris County office that creates or receives Harris County records or a person appointed by the officer to serve as the custodian of records.
- (k) "Records Liaison Officer" shall mean the person or persons designated under Section 14 of this order.
- (l) "Records Management" shall mean the application of management techniques to the creation, use, maintenance, retention, preservation, and disposal of records for the purposes of reducing the costs and improving the efficiency of record keeping. The term includes the development of records control schedules, management of filing and information retrieval systems, protection of Essential and Permanent Records, economical and space-effective storage of inactive records, control over the creation and distribution of forms, reports, and correspondence, and the management of micrographics and electronic and other records storage systems.
- (m) "Records Management Committee" shall mean the committee established under Section 9 of this order.
- (n) "Records Management Officer" shall mean the individual designated in Section 8 of this order.
- (o) "Records Control Schedule" shall mean a document prepared by or under the authority of the Records Management Officer listing the records maintained by offices or departments of Harris County, their retention periods in accordance with the Texas Local Government Records Act, TEX. LOC. GOV'T CODE §§ 203.001 *et seq.*, as amended, and other records disposition information that the records management program may require.
- (p) "Retention period" shall mean the minimum time that must pass after the creation, recording, or receipt of a record, or the fulfillment of certain actions associated with a record, before it is eligible for destruction.
- (q) "Transitory Record" shall mean all documents generated or received by County departments that are not Official Records including preliminary drafts, duplicates, and convenience copies of Official Records as well as

documents that were not created or received in the transaction of public business such as out-of-office replies, announcements, advertisements, editorial statements, humor, entertainment, general announcements, and personal and professional correspondence.

**SECTION 5. HARRIS COUNTY RECORDS MANAGEMENT PERSONNEL.**

The County Records Management staff consists of three distinct components that may be concentrated in a single County department or distributed among various County offices at Commissioners Court discretion.

- (a) Members of the Records Management Committee described in Section 9.
- (b) The Harris County Archives approved by Commissioners Court on November 19, 2002, now assigned to the County Clerk's Office.
- (c) The Harris County Records Center currently part of the Central Technology Services Department.

The components shall work together to carry out the provisions of the Harris County Records Management Program including storage of inactive records, records preservation, records disposition, and emergency response and planning.

**SECTION 6. HARRIS COUNTY RECORDS DECLARED PUBLIC PROPERTY.**

- (a) All Official and Transitory Harris County records are hereby declared to be the property of Harris County. No County official or employee has, by virtue of his or her position, any personal or property right to such records even though he or she may have developed or compiled them. Harris County forbids the unauthorized destruction, removal, or use of its records and information.
- (b) The County reserves the right to access and review the content of all records and information created, stored, transmitted or received using County systems and resources except as provided by law. Employees should not expect any right to privacy with respect to such documents and communications.
- (c) Department heads at their discretion may authorize employees to make and keep reference copies of public documents provided that it does not violate the privacy of citizens, compromise the interests of Harris County, or impose a burden on County facilities.

**SECTION 7. POLICY.** It is hereby declared to be the policy of Harris County to provide for efficient, economical, and effective controls over the creation, distribution, organization, maintenance, use, and disposition of all County official records and transitory records through a comprehensive system of integrated procedures for the management of records from their creation to their ultimate disposition, consistent with the requirements of the Texas Local Government Records Act TEX. LOC. GOV'T CODE §§ 203.001 *et seq.*, as amended, and accepted records management practice.

This Policy is supplemented by the following County policies and any others issued relating to records management. Employees are advised to review this documentation for additional guidance.

- Records Control Schedule
- Records Management Procedures Manual
- County Personnel Regulations
- County Equipment, Media, and Services Policy

**SECTION 8. DESIGNATION OF RECORDS MANAGEMENT OFFICER.** The County Records Manager in the Central Technology Services Department and the successive holders of said position, shall serve as Records Management Officer for Harris County. As provided by TEX. LOC. GOV'T CODE § 203.025(c), as amended, each successive holder of the position shall file his or her name with the Director and Librarian of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission within thirty (30) days of the initial designation of or taking up the position.

**SECTION 9. ESTABLISHMENT OF A RECORDS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE.** A Records Management Committee is hereby established. The committee shall consist of:

- (a) the County Records Management Officer;
- (b) the County Attorney or his or her designated representative;
- (c) the District Attorney or his or her designated representative; and
- (d) The County Auditor or his or her designated representative.

The Committee shall:

- (a) Review and approve amendments to the Records Control Schedule before they are submitted to the Texas State Library and Archives Commission; and
- (b) Review and approve all Formal Records Destructions of Official Records whether in accordance with the approved Records Control Schedule or in accordance with TEX. LOC. GOV'T CODE § 203.045, as amended, except records destructions authorized or required in Sections 19 and 20 of this plan.

**SECTION 10. DUTIES OF RECORDS MANAGEMENT OFFICER.** The Records Management Officer shall:

- (a) Administer the Records Management Program and provide assistance to department heads and elected officials in its implementation;

- (b) Plan, formulate, and prescribe records disposition policies, systems, standards, and procedures;
- (c) Develop procedures to ensure the permanent preservation of historically valuable records of the County and their Accessioning into the archives;
- (d) Provide records management advice and assistance to all departments by preparation of a manual of procedure and policy and by on-site consultation;
- (e) Monitor records retention schedules and administrative rules issued by the Texas State Library and Archives Commission to determine if the Records Management Program and the County's Records Control Schedule are in compliance with state regulations;
- (f) Disseminate to the Commissioners Court and department heads information concerning Texas laws and administrative rules relating to local government records;
- (g) Instruct Records Liaison Officers or other personnel in policies and procedures of the Records Management Program and their duties in the Records Management Program and the requirements of Texas law and this order;
- (h) Direct Records Liaison Officers or other personnel in the conduct of records inventories in preparation for the development of Records Control Schedules and the requirements of Texas law and this order;
- (i) Ensure that the maintenance, preservation, imaging, microfilming, destruction, or other disposition of County Records is carried out in accordance with the policies and procedures of the Records Management Program and the requirements of Texas Law and this order;
- (j) Facilitate and document the destruction of records disposed of under the Records Control Schedule and the estimated cost and space savings as a result of such disposal or disposition;
- (k) From time to time, report to the Commissioners Court on the implementation of the records plan in each department of the County, including summaries of the statistical and fiscal data compiled under Subsection (j) above;
- (l) Bring to the attention of the Commissioners Court non-compliance by department heads or other County personnel with the policies and procedures of the Records Management Program or of the Texas Local Government Records Act, TEX. LOC. GOV'T CODE §§ 203.001 *et seq.*, as amended;

- (m) Act as the Records Custodian for those records for which the office of origin cannot be determined, records of defunct offices unless the records have been transferred to the custody of another County office, records that the County acquires coincidental to the acquisition of property unless those records are required by a County department to maintain or administer the asset, and for existing offices for programs no longer overseen by the department head if the department head transfers them to the Records Management Officer; and
- (n) Plan for and coordinate records disaster preparedness and disaster response.
- (o) Evaluate proposals for expenditures from the County-Wide Records Management Funds and submit to Commissioners Court those recommended for approval.

**SECTION 11. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF DEPARTMENT HEADS.**

Department Heads shall:

- (a) Cooperate with the Records Management Officer in carrying out the policies and procedures established in Harris County for the efficient and economical management of records and in carrying out the requirements of this order.
- (b) Adequately document the transaction of government business and the services, programs, and duties for which the Department Head and his or her staff are responsible.
- (c) Maintain the records in his or her care and carry out their arrangement, description, preservation (including, migrating and refreshing electronic media as necessary), and disposition.
- (d) Establish, as necessary, internal policies and procedures to facilitate compliance with this Records Management Plan, the Texas Local Government Records Act, and the informational needs of the department. Such internal policies may include identifying specific employees authorized to destroy/delete records under Section 19 Subsections (b) and (c), requiring the minimum retention or mandatory destruction of transitory records, and restricting access to specific systems and areas.

**SECTION 12. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF COUNTY EMPLOYEES, CONTRACTORS, AGENTS.**

All county employees, contractors and agents have a responsibility to comply with records management policies and procedures and relevant laws and regulations. Specific responsibilities include:

- (a) Creating, receiving and managing records as part of their daily work according to established policies and procedures.

- (b) Evaluating paper and electronic records to determine their appropriate classification and storage requirements.
- (c) Disposing of records according to established records management policies and procedures.

**SECTION 13. DESIGNATION OF RECORDS LIAISON OFFICERS.** Each Department Head applicable in this order as specified in Section 1 shall designate in writing (or re-affirm in writing) a member of his or her staff to serve as Records Liaison Officer for the implementation of the Records Management Program in the department. Department Heads may serve as their own Records Liaison Officers and may appoint two or more Records Liaison Officers for different sections of their office. Persons acting as Records Liaison Officers shall be thoroughly familiar with all the records created and maintained by the department and shall have full access to all County records maintained by the department. In the event of the resignation, retirement, dismissal, or removal by action of the Department Head of a person designated as a Records Liaison Officer, the Department Head shall promptly designate another person to fill the vacancy.

**SECTION 14. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF RECORDS LIAISON OFFICERS.** Records Liaison Officers shall:

- (a) Assist the Records Management Officer in the development and maintenance of the County Records Control Schedule;
- (b) In cooperation with the Records Management Officer, coordinate and implement the policies and procedures of the Records Management Program in their department; and
- (c) Disseminate information to department staff concerning the Records Management Program.

**SECTION 15. ONGOING RECORDS MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.**

- (a) Creation and Capture. Records provide documentation of governmental business transactions, decisions, operations, and other official activities. The latest, complete, and final version of a record constitutes an Official Record. All drafts, duplicates, and convenience copies are Transitory Records to be retained as long as they are of administrative value or as otherwise required by law, regulation, or this policy. All records should be created and composed in a professional and concise manner using appropriate language and facts. Employees, contractors, and agents are expected to capture and retain County records in an approved recordkeeping system.
- (b) Use and Access. Public records must be available both for business purposes and, except as where otherwise provided for by law, accessible to the public to comply with the statutory commitment that the people have complete information

about the affairs of government and the official acts of public officials and employees as expressed by the Public Information Act, Chapter 552 of the Government Code.. All County employees, contractors, and agents must take reasonable steps to protect the security of records and information and to prevent unauthorized access to those documents excepted from disclosure by the Public Information Act or made confidential by other law or regulation. They must behave ethically in relation to their privileged access to information.

Records within a given department may be accessed for operational purposes only by employees designated by the Department Head. Access to others may be granted by the Department Head, based on the business need.

The County Records Management Officer has access, to the extent allowed by law, to all records for litigation, investigation, and audit support.

(c) Storage. Records are considered active while they relate to current or in-process activities and are referenced regularly; records become inactive when the activities they refer to are closed or completed or they are no longer referenced regularly. Active records must be stored in an approved recordkeeping system (whether manual or electronic).

Active records must be reviewed regularly to dispose of records that have no administrative value and move inactive records to inactive storage, flagged for destruction review or preservation as historical records.

Inactive records must be stored to ensure their protection, usability, and integrity for the period of time prescribed in the Records Control Schedule. Physical records must be stored on County premises or in an approved off-site storage facility. Electronic records must be stored in County systems or with vendors approved by the Chief Information Officer or designee. Storage facilities and systems, whether on-site or off-site, must protect records from corruption, degradation, environmental or other physical harm and from unauthorized access..

(d) Retention and Destruction. The County Records Control Schedule identifies and describes Official Records of the County and specifies how long each record must be retained based on its operational, legal, or historical value to the County, along with the two exceptions below.

The first exception is a destruction hold, which is an order to preserve and protect records during or in anticipation of litigation, investigation, inspection, or audit. The duty to preserve records subject to destruction hold supersedes the scheduled retention and destruction of records. Under a hold order all records including records that have no administrative value may be retained for longer than the period prescribed in the Records Control Schedule and may not be destroyed, even if otherwise eligible, until the hold order is lifted. In addition, a judge may also prohibit the destruction of personal and records that are not official records and do not relate to the transaction of public business, but are, nevertheless, stored on a County electronic or digital system.

The second exception is an expunction order which is a court order that requires the destruction of all case files, offense reports, investigations, and other records

relating to a criminal case. Upon receipt of an expunction order it becomes the duty of every recipient to comply with the instructions of the court, typically destroying or returning the case files to the court, obliterating names in dockets and indexes, deleting electronic files and otherwise destroying or altering records associated with the case to protect the identity of the accused.

## **SECTION 16. COUNTY-WIDE RECORDS MANAGEMENT FUNDS.**

- (a) State law authorizes counties to collect fees to support the county-wide records management program. The Records Management Officer, shall review and prioritize proposed projects to be financed by the County-Wide Records Management Fees and recommend the best to Commissioners Court for final approval.
- (b) Fund 23F0 is authorized by the Texas Local Government Code Section 118.052(3)(G) with directions for its use detailed in Sections 118.0546 and 118.0645. The fee is to be collected from those filing civil and probate cases and is to be used “only for records management and preservation purposes in the county.”
- (c) Fund 23L0 is authorized by Sections 51.317(b)(4) and (c)(1) of the Government Code and the Code of Criminal Procedures 102.005(f)(1). It is collected from those filing suits in civil district courts and from those convicted in the county and district criminal courts. It is to be used for records management and preservation, including “automation,” i.e. information technology.
- (d) In evaluating proposed uses of the fee the Records Management Officer shall consider:
  - (1) If the project is a core records management function.
  - (2) The number of departments that will benefit.
  - (3) Benefit to the public.
  - (4) The return on investment.
  - (5) Availability of other funding sources.
  - (6) Such other factors that may be appropriate and reasonable.

## **SECTION 17. RECORDS CONTROL SCHEDULE TO BE MAINTAINED; APPROVED; FILED WITH THE STATE.**

- (e) The Records Management Officer, in cooperation with Department Heads and Records Liaison Officers, shall maintain and update as needed the County Records Control Schedule listing all records created or received by county departments participating in the County-wide program and the retention period for each record. Records Control Schedules shall also contain such other information regarding the disposition of records as may facilitate good records management practice.

- (f) The Records Control Schedule shall be monitored and amended as needed by the Records Management Officer on a regular basis to ensure that it is in compliance with Records Control Schedules issued by the state of Texas, and that it continues to reflect the record keeping procedures and needs of the departments and the Records Management Program of Harris County.
- (g) Before its adoption, an Amended Records Control Schedule approved by the members of the Records Management Committee, and Commissioners Court.
- (h) Before its adoption, Amended Records Control Schedules must be submitted to and accepted for filing by the Director and Librarian as provided by Texas law TEX. LOC. GOV'T CODE § 203.041, as amended. If a schedule is not accepted for filing, the schedule shall be amended to make it acceptable for filing. The Records Management Officer shall submit the Records Control Schedules to the Director and Librarian as the executive and administrative officer of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission.

**SECTION 18. IMPLEMENTATION OF RECORDS CONTROL SCHEDULE;  
DESTRUCTION OF RECORDS UNDER SCHEDULE.**

- (a) The Records Control Schedule approved and adopted under the provisions of Section 16 shall be implemented by Department Heads and Records Liaison Officers according to the policies and procedures of the Records Management Plan.
- (b) A record whose retention period has expired according to an approved Records Control Schedule should be destroyed unless:
  - (1) A request for the record has been made in accordance with applicable Texas law;
  - (2) The subject matter of the record is responsive to anticipated or pending litigation including a discovery motion or subpoena that has been received by the appropriate Harris County official; or
  - (3) The Department Head determines that the record should be retained for an additional period.
- (c) There are two authorized procedures for destroying County records.
  - (1) The Informal Records Destruction is a process for implementing the destruction of County records that does not require the affirmative authorization of Commissioners Court. The records must be in the physical possession of the owning department and the department head or a designated subordinate authorizes the destruction of the records.

The department head is responsible for ensuring that there are no outstanding Public Information Act requests, that the records are not needed for legal proceedings or investigations, and that they have reached the age required under the Records Control Schedule. Department should develop internal procedures to accomplish and document the destruction.

- (2) The Formal Records Destruction is a process for implementing the destruction of County records that includes the affirmative authorization of commissioners court and the concurrence of the Records Management Committee. The records are listed on a form that identifies the records by classification according to the Records Control Schedule, dates covered, and quantity. The custodian (or department head), records management officer, and members of the review committee must endorse the form which is presented to commissioners court for final approval.

A Formal Records Destruction is:

(A) Required whenever a department is destroying records it is storing for another department or agency.

(B) Permitted whenever the department determines that the sensitivity or intrinsic value make it prudent to document fully the review process and official approval for the destruction of the records.

- (d) The Records Management Officer shall keep accurate records of Formal Records Destructions.

**SECTION 19. PROGRAMMED DESTRUCTION/DELETION OF ELECTRONIC RECORDS.** County departments and agencies keeping records electronically are authorized to program into their systems a mechanism for the automated deletion of records at the end of their required retention under the County-wide Records Control Schedule provided:

- (a) Fifteen (15) days before the records are destroyed/deleted a report is generated identifying the records to be destroyed and posted online for review.
- (b) That such automated destruction can be overridden for documents subject to a Public Information Act Request, or to a destruction hold including a legal, investigation, inspection, or audit hold, and
- (c) That a report be generated and filed with the Records Management Officer confirming the deletion of the records.

This section does not apply whenever electronic systems are retired or updated and the records on those systems destroyed or deleted. In such cases approval of all affected

Department Heads, the Records Management Committee and Commissioners Court is required for any Official Records not being migrated to the system replacing the old one.

**SECTION 20. DEPARTMENTS AUTHORIZED TO DESTROY CERTAIN RECORDS.** Department may establish procedures to destroy records without notifying the Records Management Committee or Commissioners Court:

- (a) In compliance with a court order requiring the destruction or expunction of a record.
- (b) In compliance with a law requiring the destruction of a record.
- (c) When the required retention under the County's Records Control Schedule is 1 year or less.

**SECTION 21. DESTRUCTION OF UNSCHEDULED RECORDS.** Records that have not been listed in the approved Records Control Schedule may be destroyed if such destruction has been approved in the same manner as a record destroyed under an approved Records Control Schedule and the Records Management Officer has submitted to and received back from the Director and Librarian of the Texas State Library an approved destruction authorization request.

**SECTION 22. DESTRUCTION OF TRANSITORY RECORDS AND UPDATED DOCUMENTS.**

- (a) Harris County encourages departments to destroy documents, files, and other information that do not qualify as Official Records under the definition in Section 3 of this order as soon as they cease to be of administrative value unless:
  - (1) A request for the record has been made in accordance with applicable Texas law; or
  - (2) The subject matter of the record is responsive to a legal or audit hold.
- (b) Unless otherwise provided by law, County departments may dispose of documents such as Texas County and District Retirement System ("TCDRS") statements and certificates of merit, belonging to former employees six months after making a good faith effort to deliver them to the owner.
- (c) Nothing in this order shall be construed to prevent the usual and customary practice of discarding individual documents in personnel, subject, or other files when superseded by updated documents or otherwise become irrelevant.
- (d) Any material excluded from the definition of County Records by Section 2, whether in paper or electronic form—including electronic communications, may be destroyed when its usefulness to the department has ceased. Such material shall not be sent to the County Records Center. Department Heads shall direct individuals maintaining the files to discard routinely such items. No record of such destruction need be kept.

**SECTION 23. PHYSICAL RECORDS STORAGE.** Departments are to send inactive records to off-site storage facilities where they can be conveniently, securely, and economically retained until such time as they can be disposed of under the County Records Control Schedule or they once again become active. Normally this will be the Harris County Records Center, which is under the direct control and supervision of the Central Technology Services Department, which shall continue to keep current policies and procedures regulating the operations and use of the records center, and ensuring that this Records Management Program is carried out. Until the Harris County Records Center has adequate capacity to store and provide timely access to all the County's physical records, Departments are authorized to make other arrangements providing that the facilities meet all applicable standards established by statute, code, and regulations and that the records are kept safe and secure. Departments will notify the Records Management Officer of such storage sites and permit their inspection.

**SECTION 24. ELECTRONIC RECORDS MANAGEMENT.** Harris County utilizes a variety of systems and media to store records and other data. Central Technology Services Department and other County departments operating information systems are directed to:

- (a) Ensure that information systems provide for access, security, and the recovery of data in the event of an emergency.
- (b) Design and implement systems that reproduce records as they appear in their original form.
- (c) Design systems to ensure the retention of Official Records throughout their required retention periods and that when a system is replaced all Official Records are to be migrated to the new system.
- (d) Design and implement systems to permit the destruction/deletion of Official Records upon the expiration of the retention period as established by the County Records Control Schedule.
- (e) Whenever County records are on electronic systems meeting the standards of this Section, they are considered to be the Official Record and any physical copies are to be considered the Transitory Records

**SECTION 25. ARCHIVES.** The Harris County Archives is administered by the Harris County Archivist and is the County agency established to collect, preserve, and provide access to the historically significant records of Harris County when they are no longer needed by the creating department. The Archives shall take into its holdings:

- (a) All materials determined by an approved Records Control Schedule to be “permanent” but no longer needed for the operations of the office of origin;
- (b) All materials determined by the Records Management Officer and the Archivist to be of value in documenting the history of Harris County, the life and times of its citizens, or the social, intellectual, political, economic, educational, or leisure time activities of both the inhabitants and businesses within the County; and,
- (c) Such materials as may from time to time be donated to Harris County that, although not official records of the County, nonetheless shed light on its people and their history.

The County Archivist is authorized to:

- (a) Sign transmittals from County departments on behalf of the Archives, independent of the county department to which the Archives is attached;
- (b) Receive and serve as records custodian any permanent records of offices when the office of origin cannot be determined, records of defunct offices unless the records have been transferred to the custody of another office, and records that the County acquires coincidental to the acquisition of property unless those records are required by a County department.

**SECTION 26. DONATED HISTORICAL MATERIALS.** If materials are donated to Harris County under the provisions of Section 24 (c), the Archivist shall obtain a Deed of Gift for such items. Such Deed of Gift shall clearly state that title to the materials shall pass to Harris County, shall stipulate the conditions under which access to the materials shall be granted, and must be approved by Commissioners Court.