

College Operating Procedures (COP)



Procedure Title: Records Retention and Disposition
Procedure Number: 09-0105
Originating Department: Risk Management

Specific Authority:

Board Policy

Florida Statute 119, 257
Florida Administrative Code 1B-24

Procedure Actions: 8/1/2025

Purpose Statement: To describe the College's procedures for the retention, disposition, and archival of public records per Florida public records law.

I. APPLICABILITY/ACCOUNTABILITY:

This procedure applies to all employees of Florida SouthWestern State College (College).

II. DEFINITIONS:

Public Records - Florida's public records law, Chapter 119 of the *Florida Statutes*, defines public records as: *All documents, papers, letters, maps, books, tapes, photographs, films, sound recordings, data processing software or other material, regardless of physical form, or characteristics, or means of transmission, made or received pursuant to law or ordinance or in connection with the transaction of official business by any agency.*

General Records Schedule – *retention requirements issued by the Division of Library and Information Services of the Florida Department of State to establish disposition standards for public records common to specified agencies within the State of Florida which specify the minimum time such records are to be kept.*

Records Series – *a group of related documents arranged under a single filing arrangement or kept together as a unit because they consist of the same form, relate to the same subject, result from the same activity, or have certain common characteristics.*

Disposition – *the authorized destruction or archival transfer of records after all retention requirements have been satisfied.*

Records Management Liaison Officer (RMLO) – *individual designated by the College that serves as the contact person to the Division of Library and Information Services and is assigned responsibilities of records retention and disposition for the College.*

III. POLICY STATEMENT:

The *Florida Statutes*, Chapter 257.36, authorizes the Division of Library and Information Services through the Bureau of Archives and Records Management to promote the efficient and economical management of Florida's public records. This chapter also specifies the records management responsibilities of public agencies.

All public records must be retained for a period of time that varies depending on the nature of the documents. Public records must be retained before final disposition for the minimum amount of time set by the Division of Library and Information Services. The State of Florida provides the retention schedules for agencies in the General Records Schedules.

According to *Florida Statutes*, Chapter 119, it is the responsibility of the College and all College employees to comply with Florida's public records law and state retention schedules for public records adopted by the Division of Library and Information Services. Most documents, including e-mail messages, created or received by College employees in connection with official business are public records. Employees may not delete public records in their possession or control except in accordance with the record retention schedules applicable to Florida SouthWestern State College.

In the event of litigation, audit, or investigation, all disposition activities must be suspended until further notice from the Office of General Counsel.

IV. PROCEDURES:

- A. The RMLO is responsible for:
 - 1. Maintaining retention schedules and disposition documentation
 - 2. Coordinating staff training on records management
 - 3. Ensuring compliance with reporting requirements
 - 4. Serving as the point of contact with the Division of Library and Information Services
- B. Disposition Procedures and Best Practices:
Before disposing of records, departments must:
 - 1. Review department records annually to determine which retention requirements of the State's General Records Schedules have been satisfied and must be disposed of by destruction or archiving.
 - 2. Confirm that all retention requirements have been met.
 - 3. Receive written approval from the RMLO before records disposition.
 - 4. Submit a Records Disposition Form to the RMLO for approval including:
 - Records series title and item number
 - Inclusive dates
 - Volume (paper or electronic)
 - Method and date of disposition
 - 5. Ensure confidential records are destroyed securely with an appropriate destruction method such as shredding.
 - 6. Determine if Records have historical value and may be transferred to the college archives.