



Pennsylvania State Archives

What happens to agency records at the State Archives?

Transfer to the Archives.

Certain records are designated by their retention schedule as 'Archival,' meaning they must be kept permanently by the State Archives. Archival records can be either paper or electronic. Archival records are transferred to the State Archives directly from your agency or from the State Records Center. If the records will be sent from the agency, your records coordinator should contact the State Archives to arrange for transfer (717-787-7330). If the archival records are stored at the State Records Center, the Agency Records Coordinator will receive an Agency Disposal Report (issued twice a year) listing records to be destroyed, returned to the agency, or transferred to the Archives. This authorization for final disposition must be signed and dated by the Records Coordinator and returned to the Center. Once authorization has been received, records are transferred to the State Archives. When a transfer has been completed, the records become the property of the PHMC on behalf of the Commonwealth, and they are accessioned into the holdings of the State Archives.

Confidential Records.

Some archival records cannot be made available to the public. The Archives adheres strictly to all commonwealth and federal privacy laws. An agency should work closely with the Archives staff to flag records that are confidential so that private information is not accidentally disclosed. For each type of confidential record the agency must provide the citation or regulation that restricts them, indicate where among the larger group of records the restricted records are found, and provide the title of an agency representative who can address questions related to restricted records.

Preservation of Records.

The Archives staff will send an acknowledgement memo to the agency to confirm receipt of the records. Archives staff will review the records and make a final determination about what must be kept and weed out (whenever possible) duplicates, restricted records that have no research value, and routine information that has little or no historical value. For preservation purposes, all records are placed in boxes and folders made of acid-free materials; the Archives does not retain the boxes and numbering used by the agency. The records themselves may be reorganized in order to prepare them for future research. Electronic records may be reformatted for preservation or access purposes. Generally, the Archives does not digitize records it receives from the agency; only selected records are scanned for public access.

Agency access to records at the State Archives.

Agency staff may view records at the State Archives' Reading Room. The Reading Room is open Wednesday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and is located at the corner of Third and Forster Streets in Harrisburg, PA. If records are needed on a Monday or Tuesday, please contact the State Archives and arrangements will be made to give you access. Finding aids for all agency records at the State Archives are available on the Archives' [website](#). Agency staff are encouraged to review these finding aids before visiting the archives.

Please note: The State Archives does not permit any records to be taken from the building. Copying services are provided, usually for free (large copy orders may incur a fee). Right to Know requests for records already at the Archives should be redirected to the PHMC Agency Open Records Officer. If the public calls the agency for records already transferred to the State Archives, the individual may contact the State Archives directly by calling 717-783-3281.