



# Maine State Police Crime Laboratory

## Archiving

### 1. Scope

Maine State Archives is divided into two primary branches: Archives and Records Management. The crime laboratory utilizes Records Management. Title 5 §95 requires that **all** state government records be covered by retention schedules. This includes records that never leave the laboratory's custody. Records retention scheduling organizes the laboratory's records into series and sets a retention period for each series. It also establishes the correct disposition for each series. Digital records, including e-mail, are covered by record scheduling the same as paper records. The laboratory adheres to the records retention schedules approved by the Maine State Archives Advisory Board. Records will minimally be retained for the length of time defined in the retention schedule; they may be retained longer at the discretion of the laboratory.

### 2. Definitions

#### Record

Record means all documentary material, regardless of media or characteristics, made or received and maintained by an agency in accordance with law or rule or in the transaction of its official business. "Record" does not include extra copies of printed or processed material of which official or record copies have been retained; stocks of publications and processed documents intended for distribution or use; or records relating to personal matters that may have been kept in an office for convenience.

Records include any recorded information, regardless of physical form or characteristics and include: paper, microfilm, word processing files, spreadsheets, databases, audio recordings, video recordings, e-mails, paper documents scanned to create image files, plus any other formats that may come into use as technology advances. Information that is maintained in records includes:

- Information made or received in connection with the transaction of official government business
- Information maintained as evidence of the agency's functions, policies, decision, procedures, operations and other activities
- Items maintained for informational value

#### Record Series

A record series is a group of identical or related records (or, in more modern terms, a group of records created by the same business process that document the same type of transaction).

Examples: case files; invoices; transitory correspondence.

Documents in the same record series are normally filed as a unit, whether in a drawer of paper records, a computer subdirectory, or an e-mail folder.

Some characteristics of a record series are:

- Produced by the same activity
- Documents a certain kind of transaction



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- Relates to a particular subject
- Arranged under a single filing system
- Retained for the same period of time

### **Records Retention Schedule**

Any record, paper or digital, produced by the state during the course of business must be covered by a record retention schedule. Schedules determine what records will be retained, for how long and the intended disposition; the records center or destruction. Records may not be destroyed without an approved record schedule.

### **Records Officer**

The Maine State Police has one Records Officer and several Assistant Records Officers throughout the bureaus. The Records Officer for the Maine State Police is the legal counsel. Two Forensic Chemists from the laboratory are the Assistant Records Officers.

### **3. Record Retention Scheduling**

- 3.1 The laboratory will determine appropriate retention schedules for the records generated during the course of business.
- 3.2 To determine the appropriate retention period for records, the following should be considered:
  - The value to the laboratory and accrediting bodies
  - Any enduring or permanent value to researchers
  - The value of the records in carrying out the laboratory's functions and how long will they be needed for immediate use
  - The statutory or regulatory requirements for maintaining the records
  - Any fiscal requirements
  - Historical value for potential historical research
- 3.3 The Maine State Archives website should be referred to for the current instruction manual and forms for creating records retention schedules.
- 3.4 Generally the Quality Manager will be responsible for writing the records retention schedules for the laboratory.
- 3.5 The Application for Records Retention Schedules will be completed. The application provides general information about the records to be scheduled, such as the creating agency, series title, and proposed retention period. It serves as a cover or "batch" sheet for the Records Series Inventory form (or forms) to follow.



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- 3.6 The Record Series Inventory will be completed for each series to be created. A thorough explanation of what the records are and why they are to be retained must be included on this form.
- 3.7 An example of the records to be retained must accompany the Record Series Inventory form. Any confidential information should be removed from the example.
- 3.8 The Record Series Inventory and the Application for Records Retention Schedules must be signed by the Records Officer.
- 3.9 All Records Retention Schedules must be approved by the Archives Advisory Board, which meets approximately once every six months. All paperwork must be submitted to the board a couple of weeks prior to the meeting.
- 3.10 The Quality Manager will maintain a list of current laboratory Records Retention Schedules.
- 3.11 Any records destroyed in accordance to the Records Retention Schedule will be shredded or otherwise permanently destroyed.
- 4. **Preparing Records for the Records Center**
- 4.1 The records to be submitted to the Records Center will be placed in preprinted archive boxes.
- 4.2 Approximately  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the box should remain empty should additional records need to be added to the box.
- 4.3 Each box containing records will be inventoried. A complete inventory list of all records present in the box will be taped to the inside cover of the box.
- 4.4 The Assistant Records Officer will label the boxes using the following guidelines.
  - 4.4.1 MSPCL will be written under the Agency name.
  - 4.4.2 The Box number will be written in the space provided. This number continues from year to year dependent on the records being submitted.
  - 4.4.3 For laboratory case records, the sequence of numbers that the box contains will be written on the side of the box.
  - 4.4.4 Personnel at the Archives Record Center will complete the Location Number and Retention Date on the box.



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### **5. Sending Records to the Records Center**

- 5.1 To send records to the Records Center, the Transmittal of Records form must be completed, signed by the Records Officer or Assistant Records Officer and forwarded to the Records Center. The form can also be submitted without a signature via e-mail.
- 5.2 Once the completed Transmittal of Records form has been received, arrangements with the Records Center can be made for the transportation of the records.

### **6. Requesting Records from the Records Center**

- 6.1 To request records from archives, provide the Assistant Records Officer with the laboratory case number.
- 6.2 The Assistant Records Officer will contact the Records Center. The following information will be provided to the Records Center:
- Type of file requesting (i.e. lab case files, photographic negatives)
  - Laboratory file reference number
  - Laboratory case name
  - Archives location number
  - Box number of record requesting
  - Name of person making request (Assistant Records Officer)
  - Phone number
  - Records Center Use Card authorization number
  - How Records Center should handle record (e.g. hold, mail, etc.)
- 6.3 Complete the requested information on the online fillable request form.

### **7. Application for Authorization of Records Center Use Card**

- 7.1 The Application for Authorization for Records Center Use Cards form will be completed annually.
- 7.2 The Laboratory Director determines the personnel to be authorized to obtain a Records Center Use Card.
- 7.3 Once the form is completed, it must be forwarded to the Department Records Officer.

### **8. Disposal of Records**

- 8.1 Prior to disposal, the Records Center will contact the laboratory for approval to dispose of records.



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- 8.2 Paper records, whether maintained by the Records Center or the laboratory, will be securely disposed of via either a secure shredding service or by shredding the records on site.
- 8.3 Electronic records to be disposed will be deleted from the equipment or laboratory server.