

Critical Records Guidance

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Indiana Archives and Records Administration
Records and Information Management Division
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I. What is a Critical Record?

Indiana Code 5-15-5.1-1(d) defines Critical Records as records necessary to:

- 1) Resume or continue governmental operations;
- 2) Reestablish the legal and financial responsibilities of government in Indiana; or
- 3) Protect and fulfill governmental obligations to the citizens of the state.

More broadly, Critical Records are those records produced by your agency or office which have a vital function in State or County/Local government - vital not only to your agency or office's day-to-day workings, but to the functioning of government, and to the citizens of Indiana. Critical Records are those without which government could not function, and those records which citizens must be able to access at any time.

These records need to be specifically identified when creating a Records Retention Schedule, so that proper steps can be taken to secure and preserve them, even beyond the usual steps taken to preserve valuable public records.

Records currently designated as Critical are listed in Appendix A. For more information, please use the [Record Series Search](#) on iara.in.gov.

II. Critical Records and You

As the staff of State agencies or County/Local offices, you work most closely with your records. You have the best understanding of the functions and programs of your agency or office and are invaluable in determining which records are critical to Indiana government.

Your legal staff should be involved with the determination, basing their suggestions on the state and federal codes that apply to your records.

Your administrative officers and Records Coordinator/Custodian(s) should work together with the legal staff to determine whether any of the records you produce:

1. Affect the administration of Indiana government.
 - If the records were unavailable, would the State of Indiana be unable to fulfill major duties or re-organize during / after a crisis?
2. Affect citizens at a basic level.
 - If the records were unavailable, would citizens be denied a critical service?

If you feel you have records which *should* have a Critical designation, but currently do not, please reach out to rmd@iara.in.gov (for State agencies) or cty@iara.in.gov (for County/Local offices) to discuss.

III. Critical Records and the Indiana Archives and Records Administration

What is the role of IARA in this identification process?

Indiana Code 5-15-5.1-12 says that IARA shall:

- establish and maintain a Critical Records program
- determine what records are essential to the continuity of government operations
- survey records to identify Critical Records
- plan and implement a program for protection of Critical Records through dispersal, duplication, or secure vault storage of those records.

While working with you to create or update a Records Retention Schedule, IARA's Records and Information Management team will ask you to identify which of your agency or office's records may be critical to governing the State of Indiana.

If IARA agrees, this information will be written into the description of the record series, and appropriate retention and disposition instructions will be created to help ensure the preservation of your Critical Records in an emergency situation.

If you have questions at any time about records that are designated as critical on your Records Retention Schedule, please reach out to rmd@iara.in.gov (for State agencies) or cty@iara.in.gov (for County/Local offices).

IV. How to Manage Critical Records

Government entities can make the decision to retain Critical Records in an electronic-only format *without* a paper or microfilm copy when:

1. they are confident that their records repository meets the criteria of a [Trustworthy, Accessible, Reliable Digital Information System](#) and
2. the records do *not* meet two or more of the criteria listed in IC 5-15-5.1-1(d).

If Critical Records *do* meet two or more of the criteria listed in [IC 5-15-5.1-1\(d\)](#), IARA strongly recommends you consider maintaining at least one copy on microfilm or paper. Microfilm and paper remain time-tested, industry standards for permanent and critical records.

IARA can advise agencies and offices on readiness and make format recommendations, but the final decision rests with you.

V. Trustworthy, Accessible, Reliable Digital Information Systems (TARDIS)

Government entities that have met the criteria for Trustworthy, Accessible, Reliable Digital Information Systems (TARDIS) can confidently make decisions about the format(s) in which their permanent or critical records can be safely maintained.

Entities that decide they do *not* meet the criteria can work toward this status by strengthening their commitment to the recordkeeping systems they maintain or are seeking to develop, starting with a review of the criteria below.

These criteria were developed in accordance with industry standards, records and information management best practices, and to meet the needs of both agencies and records.

TARDIS Criteria

A government entity that has a Trustworthy, Accessible, Reliable Digital Information System meets the following criteria:

- has sufficient funds and personnel to stand up and maintain a storage system for electronic records;
- maintains their recordkeeping system(s) by patching, upgrading, fixing bugs, and working with the vendor and Information Technology or the Indiana Office of Technology (as needed) to ensure it is well maintained and secure;
- has a dedicated and adequately staffed IT department which is kept up to date about the data and records management needs of the agency;
- understands and follows their mandate with regards to public records;
- understands (including the IT staff) basic records management concepts;
- is able to commit resources (personnel, financial, policy, technical, et cetera) to care for electronic records for their lifespan;
- maintains trustworthy data and / or records;
- is able to guarantee access to records for the duration of their lifespan;
- is able to migrate records from the existing system to a new one as necessary;
- is able to dispose of records in accordance with Records Retention Schedules, including transfer to the Indiana Archives.

It may also be beneficial to walk through and record your answers to the following questions.

1. Do you manage the recordkeeping system or is it managed by a third party?
2. Do you have a strategy for migrating records and any associated metadata from the system in the event the vendor goes out of business or there is a similar issue with access?
3. Are the records geographically backed up?
4. Do you have a disaster recovery plan?
5. Do you feel confident that the records will remain accessible in electronic-only format for as long as they are scheduled?
6. Do you want to avoid microfilm solely due to cost, storage, accessibility or another similar reason?
7. For records that are scheduled to come to the Indiana Archives: can the records be transferred to the Archives and do you have a plan in place to do so?

If you wish IARA to review your answers, please reach out to erecords@iara.in.gov.

VI. How to Get Started

Both State Records Retention Schedules and County/Local Records Retention Schedules can be found at iara.IN.gov under *Services For Government*, or requested from IARA's Records and Information Management team.

- Review your current Records Retention Schedule(s), to see which, if any, records are listed as Critical.
- Examine those Record Series *not* listed as critical. If you believe that the Record Series should be re-classified as Critical Records, contact IARA, and the Records and Information Management team will work with you to update your Records Retention Schedule(s).
- Survey any records being created by your agency or office that are *not listed* on your Records Retention Schedule(s). Contact the Records and Information Management team to add these items, and explain that they should also be considered for Critical Record status.
- In general, review *all* records being created by your agency or office, and keep your agency's records retention program up-to-date. This is the best way to protect not only your Critical Records, but all public records.

APPENDIX A

Record Series	Record Series Title	Agency or Office	Level of Government
CL 13-01	Marriage Records	Clerks	County/Local
GEN 10-01	Minutes	General	County/Local
GEN 23-06	Historical Data on Government Buildings and Properties	General	County/Local
GEN 23-10	Ordinances	General	County/Local
HD 23-17	Pre-1907 Birth Records	Local Health Departments	County/Local
HD 23-18	Pre-1900 Death Records	Local Health Departments	County/Local
PPA 14-01	Minutes	Private/Public Agreement Operators	County/Local
PPA 14-02	Policy Files	Private/Public Agreement Operators	County/Local
RE 10-01	Entry Book	Recorders	County/Local
RE 10-02	Original Instruments Not Returned to the Public	Recorders	County/Local
RE 10-03	Original / Official Deed Record & Index to Original / Index to Official Deed Record	Recorders	County/Local
RE 10-04	Cemetery Deed Record	Recorders	County/Local
RE 10-05	Sheriff's Deed Record	Recorders	County/Local
RE 10-06	Tax [Sale] Deed Record	Recorders	County/Local
RE 10-07	Quiet Title Record / Index to Quiet Title Record	Recorders	County/Local
RE 10-08	Tract Book	Recorders	County/Local
RE 10-09	Plat Book / Plat Book General Index / Plats	Recorders	County/Local
RE 10-11	Dormant Mineral Interest Record	Recorders	County/Local
RE 10-12	Original / Official Mortgage Record & Index to Original / Index to Official Mortgage Record	Recorders	County/Local
RE 10-13	School Fund Mortgage Record	Recorders	County/Local
RE 10-19	Armed Forces Discharge Record (DD214)	Recorders	County/Local
RE 10-20	Articles of Association and Incorporation Record	Recorders	County/Local
RE 10-22	Resolutions of Corporations and Associations	Recorders	County/Local
RE 10-23	Revocations	Recorders	County/Local
RE 10-24	Co-Partnership Record / Partnership Agreements	Recorders	County/Local
RE 10-25	Miscellaneous Record	Recorders	County/Local
RE 10-26	Register of Farm Names	Recorders	County/Local
RE 10-28	Official Bond Register	Recorders	County/Local
85-3.1-02	Will Record	Judicial	Not managed by IARA
85-3.1-03	Transcript Will Record / Original Will Record Ledger	Judicial	Not managed by IARA
85-3.1-05	Index to Will Record	Judicial	Not managed by IARA
85-3.1.04	Clerk's Report of Wills Probated in Vacation	Judicial	Not managed by IARA

2008-34	Child Protection Service Assessment-Substantiated	DCS	State
78-916	Foreign Adoption Program	DCS	State
91-17	Environmental Review Mitigation Documentation	DNR	State
GRADM-1	Minutes	General	State
84-50	Approved Records Retention and Disposition Schedules	IARA	State
80-1003	Historical Data Summary	IDOA	State
79-3660	Physicist / Inspector Application	IDOH	State
81-237	Marriage Index	IDOH	State
81-239	Birth Index	IDOH	State
81-238	Birth Certificates	IDOH	State
81-240	Record of Adoption Form	IDOH	State
81-241	Certificate of Death	IDOH	State
81-242	Death Index	IDOH	State
85-167	Radiology License Files	IDOH	State
89-204	Record of Marriage	IDOH	State
90-52	Adoption Case Files	IDOH	State
2004-11	Excess Land Records	INDOT	State
84-894	Right of Way Records	INDOT	State
84-907	HRM Staff (Human Resources Management System)	SPD	State