

Mississippi Department of Archives & History
Local Government Records Office
Standards for Off-Site Storage of Inactive Records
of Local Government Entities

(Adopted by Board of Trustees, December 12, 1996)
(Submitted to Secretary of State December 10, 1996)
(Adopted by Secretary of State, January 14, 1997)
(Amended October 20, 2009)

The following standards are issued by the Department of Archives and History in accordance with Section 39-5-9 (b), *Mississippi Code of 1972, Annotated*, as amended.

Section 39-5-9 (b) authorizes the Department of Archives and History to establish records management standards for local governments on issues including, but not limited to, microfilm production and storage, electronic records security and migration, records preservation, imaging, and records storage.

1. For the purposes of these standards, in addition to the definitions established by §25-59-3, *Mississippi Code of 1972, Annotated*, as amended, the following definitions will have effect:

Department: The Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

Inactive Records: Records become inactive when the reference activity for such records requires, on average, less than one retrieval per month per file.

Local Governmental Entities: Any unit of local government including, but not limited to, municipalities, cities, towns, villages, counties, school districts, and library systems.

Records of Archival Value: Those records designated by the Department of Archives and History to be permanently preserved. Records of archival value are so designated on the records control schedule governing the disposition of the records.

Records of Enduring Value: Those records of a local governmental entity not having archival value that the entity determines need to be retained for a period of time after the records become inactive. Records of enduring value are so designated on the records control schedules governing the disposition of the records.

2. Standards for the Off-Site Storage of Inactive Records of Local Governmental Entities:

The physical location of the off-site storage facility in relation to the local governmental unit's seat of operations. The storage facility should be located in relatively close proximity to the local government's seat of operations in order to provide efficient reference services to staff members and the public.

The physical structure of the off-site storage facility. The storage facility must maintain a secure, clean records storage environment. A modern facility is preferred but not required. The structure should provide solid protection from the weather.

Floor strength. The floor must be capable of bearing the full weight of the records.

The physical security and interior environment of the off-site storage facility. The storage facility should provide a secure and appropriate environment for records storage.

Document security and access. The facility should provide appropriate levels of security from theft and premature destruction. Access to the storage area should be limited to authorized persons only. The doors to the storage areas should be equipped with devices which allow only the entry of appropriate personnel.

Fire protection. Proper fire and smoke detection devices should be located throughout the storage facility and a continuing fire awareness and safety program should be a part of the facility's standard operating procedures. A sprinkler or other fire suppression system is preferred but not required.

Flood protection. The facility should not be located in a flood plain.

Climate control (temperature/humidity). The facility should maintain moderate temperature and humidity levels and avoid extremes in either direction of both categories. Temperatures of 65-75 degrees Fahrenheit and a relative humidity of 30-60 percent are recommended. *Special provisions are needed for storing records on media such as microfilm and electronic formats.* The ideal records storage environment is clean, dry, and cool.

Records accessibility. The Public Records Act of 1983 (§25-61-2, *Mississippi Code of 1972, Annotated*, as amended), states in part, "It is the policy of this state that public records shall be available for inspection by any person unless otherwise provided by this chapter." Therefore, custodians of public records must ensure reasonable access to public records. Provisions should be made to provide efficient and timely reference services to local government officials and employees as well as members of the public.

Continuity of Operations/Emergency Operations Plan. The storage facility must certify that it maintains an appropriate plan to protect and recover records stored off-site and to provide access to those records in the event of a hazard (natural or man-made).

3. These standards are established and will be regularly reviewed by MDAH Archives and Records Division staff, including the directors of the division, the local government records office, the government records section, and the electronic records section, and other staff as appropriate.