

# RECORDS MANAGEMENT HANDBOOK

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PREPARATION AND TRANSFER OF PERMANENT RECORDS



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## **INTRODUCTION**

The Delaware Public Archives (Archives) is the official repository for the archival records of this state and its political subdivisions. As such, the Archives recognizes that in order for the Records Officers and Authorized Agents to be successful in administrating their agency's records management program, they may need some guidance in preparing all the necessary documents required to transfer their agency's records for permanent preservation. The goal of this handbook is to provide instruction to the Records Officers and Authorized Agents so that they may properly prepare their records for storage.

## **RECORDS OFFICERS AND AUTHORIZED AGENTS**

The Delaware Public Records law, [29 Del C. § 521](#), requires that each agency and political subdivision designate at least one records officer to serve as the liaison with the Archives for the purpose of implementing and overseeing a records management program and coordinating the legal disposition, including the destruction of obsolete records. The designations are made each year, on July 1<sup>st</sup>, by completing and submitting the Records Officer and Authorized Agent Form to the Archives. This form is available on our website, <https://archives.delaware.gov>. In the event that an agency has a modification (addition or deletion) with the appointed designees, please notify Archives, as soon as possible, to ensure only authorized personnel are granted access to an agency's records.

The appointed records officers and authorized agents perform a number of important records management functions and careful consideration must be made when making these appointments. These designees must have the time and ability to:

- Serve as the primary points of contact with the Archives and submit requests for the destruction, retrieval, and transfer of records.
- Oversee the agency's records management programs including training others in the agency to follow the established records management guidelines.
- Work with the Archives to develop and revise record retention schedules.
- Document the authorization of destruction and transfer of records to the Archives.
- Maintain the information on records that have been transferred to allow for their efficient retrieval.

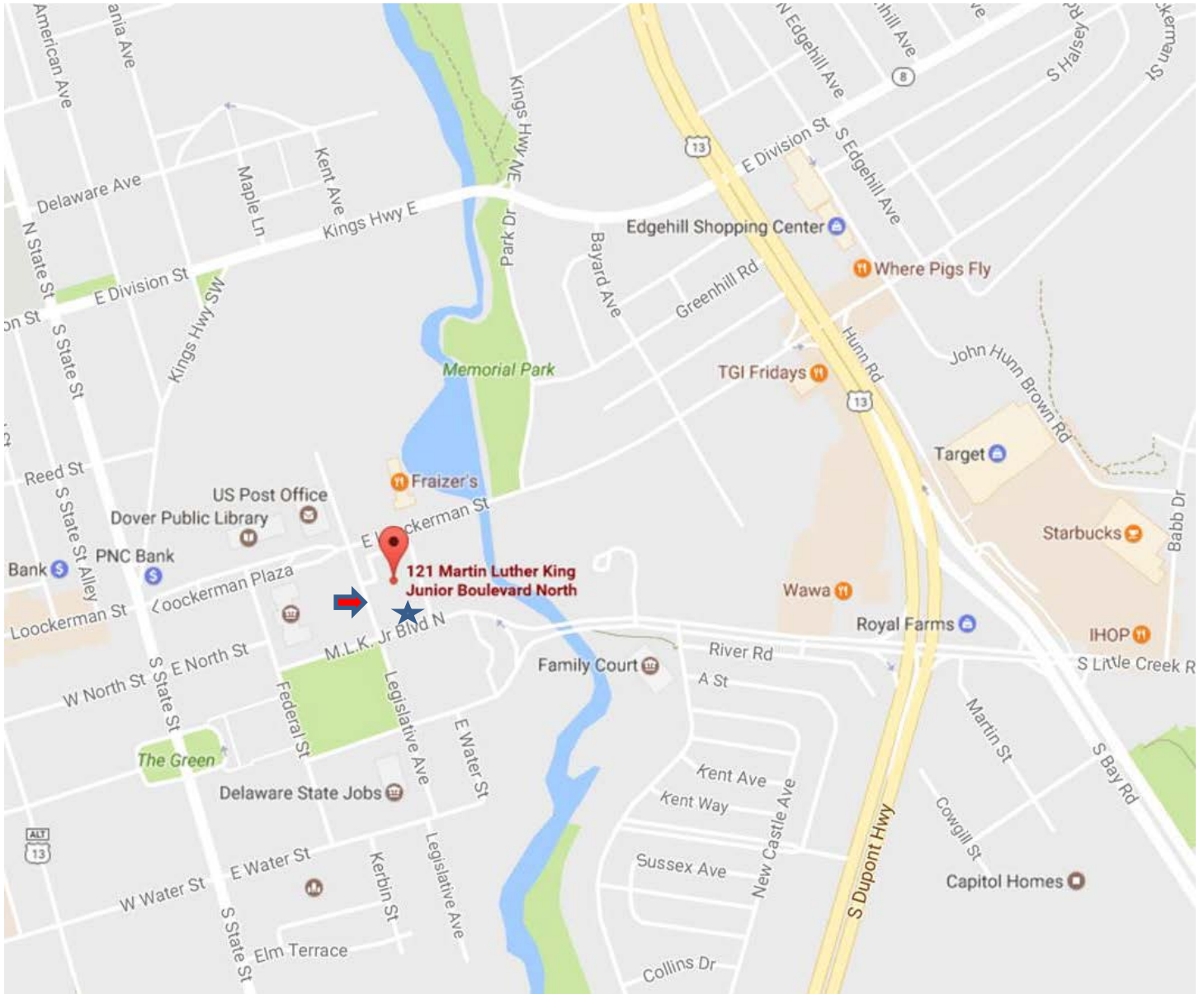
## ARCHIVES LOCATION

When agencies are delivering records to the Archives, they must bring their records to the loading dock, which is located on the west side of the building and only accessible from Legislative Avenue. ➡

When agencies are visiting the Archives for meetings, research or training, please use the main entrance that is accessible from Martin Luther King Junior Boulevard North. ★

Address: 121 Martin Luther King Junior Boulevard North, Dover, DE 19901

<https://goo.gl/maps/U6azNpCE1gp>



## WEBSITE NAVIGATION

This manual and other useful record management items are located on our website.

ABOUT ▾ RESEARCH ▾ FORMS ▾ SOCIAL ▾ CONTACT

A Message From State Archivist Stephen M. Marz, CA

Select Language ▾

**Digital Archives**  
Delaware's most prized documents, photographs of Delaware in the past, historic audio clips, and much more.

**Research Room**  
The Mabel Lloyd Ridgely Research Room is open to the public from 8:30a to 4:00p, M-F unless otherwise noted.

**Public Finding Aids**  
Guides to our Military records and Agency Histories are just a few of the links available.

**Government Services & Records Management**  
Responsible for the administration and implementation of the Delaware Public Records law.

**Digital Ancestry**  
You can use your Delaware Library Card to login to the Delaware page on Ancestry.com.

**Historical Markers**  
Learn More about Historical Markers

**Collection Gateway**  
Search 400,000+ records. Then, get a price quote or print a detail slip for your Research Room visit!

**Exhibits at DPA**  
Exhibits are open to the public and admission is free

Select [\*\*GOVERNMENT SERVICES & RECORDS MANAGEMENT\*\*](#) from this page and you will be able to access links to:

- **Announcements**
- **Agency Assignments**
- **Education and Training**
- **Local Government Directory**
- **Manuals**
- **Records Management Forms**
- **Records Management Policies and Procedures**
- **Retention Schedules**
- **Tips and Tools**

## Selecting and Ordering Boxes

Permanent records are required to be transferred to the Archives in 1 cubic foot (15”x12”x10”), double-walled, acid-free boxes. The boxes may be used to transfer both letter and legal sized documents. When transferring partial boxes or odd sized records, such as maps, plots and plans, please consult with your assigned Records Analyst. The boxes must be ordered from the State of Delaware vendor. The minimum order to receive contracted pricing is 40 boxes.

The current vendor is the Paige Company and their contact information is:

Point of Contact: Peter Brown  
Phone: 1-800-223-1901, ext. 116  
Email: [Pbrown@paigecompany.com](mailto:Pbrown@paigecompany.com)  
Website: [www.paigecompany.com](http://www.paigecompany.com)  
Contract Number: [GSS17458A-STORAGEBOX](#)

## Preparing Records for Transfer

Remove the following items from the records prior to placing them into the storage boxes.

- Notebooks and spiral binders (plastic and metal)
- Binder clips
- Hanging file folders
- Computer printout binders
- Hard-back books
- Rubber bands (rubber bands turn to glue and also tear documents and folders)
- Audio or videotapes, CDs and DVDs, and microfilm or microfiche (these mediums are transferred separately)
- Newspapers and newspaper articles, clippings, etc., which contain a high level of acidity, must be photocopied for preservation purposes. The photocopy must capture the names of the newspaper, the article, the author, and the date. Please be sure to remove the original clipping and replace it with the photocopy.

## Completing the Transfer Document and Content List

- A. Place the records in the box using the following methods.
  1. Only one records series may be included in the boxes for each Transfer Document. Do not mix different record series in the same box.
  2. All boxes must contain lids, intact handles and be in good structural condition.
  3. The records/folders must be in sequential order: Alphabetical, Numerical, Alphanumeric, etc. For records arranged chronologically, the earliest date should be in the front of the box. If records are arranged alphabetically, place “A” in the front of the box.
  4. All records must be in upright file folders so that the labels are facing the front of the box.
  5. Labels must be legible, visible and secured to the top of the file folder.
  6. To prevent damage to the records, do not over-pack or under-pack boxes. Leave approximately two inches of space in the front or rear of the box. If a box is only partially filled, please contact the Records Analyst so that a spacer can be inserted to keep the records upright.
  7. Strictly monitor and/or restrict access to the boxes once they have been prepared for transfer. If records are removed, use out-cards as place holders.

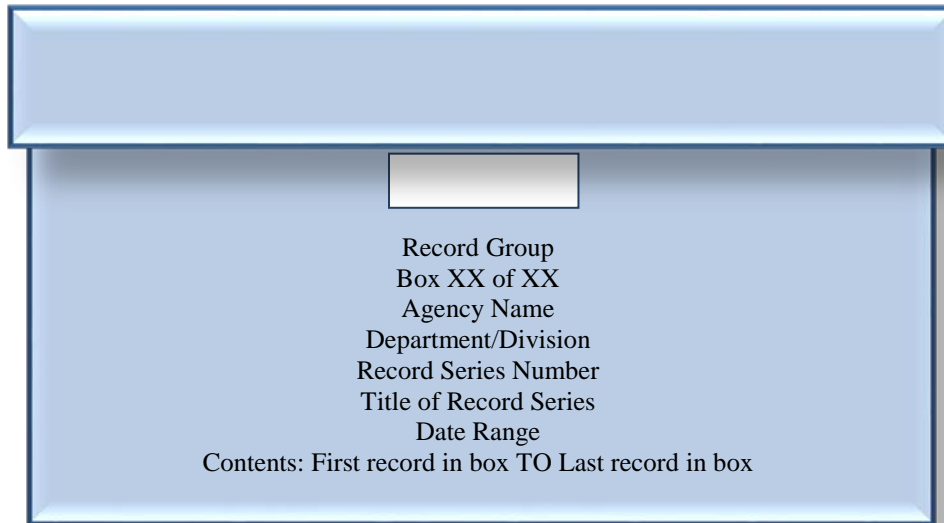
- B. To ensure the accuracy of all records, the agency must review and verify that the records in the box are in proper sequential order and coincide with the records listed on the content list. The Archives will not be able to fulfill record requests if records are not included on the content list, properly labeled or placed out of order.
- C. The content list is a detailed Microsoft Excel spreadsheet that lists each record being transferred in sequential order. This list will serve as the finding aid to locate the files. All content list templates are created by the Archives and must contain a minimum of 2 to 3 identifiers. The content list must remain as a single workbook with only one tab. Please do not modify the spreadsheet or use any abbreviations, acronyms, all-caps, colors, different fonts, tables or special characters. Contact the Records Analyst assigned to assist your agency to obtain the templates. The Archives does not accept handwritten, faxed or scanned content lists.

	A	D	E	F	G	H	I	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V
	RG	RC_Series	Begin_Year	End_Year	Dept_Organization	Division	Office	Series_Name	Case_Number	Defendant_LastName	Defendant_FirstName	Defendant_MiddleName	Defendant_Suffix	DOB	Disposition_Date	Box_Num	Barcode	TD_Num	Comments
2	1217	CR-001	1996	1998	Superior Court	Prothonotary	Sussex County	Criminal Case Files	9602023456	Smith	John	A	Jr	01/28/1958	2059	01 of 05			
3	1217	CR-001	1996	1999	Superior Court	Prothonotary	Sussex County	Criminal Case Files	9602023457	Williams	Kyle	B		08/21/1972	2060	01 of 05			
4	1217	CR-001	1996	1998	Superior Court	Prothonotary	Sussex County	Criminal Case Files	9603023458	Adams	Amy	M		09/25/1965	2059	01 of 05			
5	1217	CR-001	1996	2000	Superior Court	Prothonotary	Sussex County	Criminal Case Files	9604023460	Carter	James	E	Sr	06/22/1963	2061	01 of 05			

- D. Agencies will prepare a [Transfer Document](#) for all records being transferred to the Archives for permanent preservation. The originating agency will prepare the Transfer Document in Microsoft Word format in accordance with the [User's Guide for Transfer Form](#), which is located on the Archives website. When entering information, do not use abbreviations, hyphens to separate names or special characters to separate the beginning and ending files.

### Labeling Acid Free Boxes

- A. **Use a Pencil** to write the information on the front of the boxes. ***Do not use pen or marker***, as the ink will hinder the Archives' ability to preserve the box and protect the records. Please do not use abbreviations or write on the lids or any other surface of the boxes. Do not attach anything (labels, paper, stickers, tape, etc.) to the surface or lids of the boxes.
- B. On the front of the box (directly under the handle), handwrite the information below **in pencil only**. Please do not use abbreviations.
  1. Record Group Number: List the record group number assigned to your agency.
  2. Agency Box Number (e.g. 1 of 10, 2 of 10, 3 of 10, etc.)
  3. Agency Name: List the name of your agency.
  4. Department/Division/Section: List the department, division, and or section of your agency.
  5. Record Series Number and Title: List the records series number and title. This information can be found in the retention schedule. The record series title must correspond with the title listed in the retention schedule.
  6. Date Range of Records: List the earliest date and the latest date of the records for each box (e.g. 2001 – 2004).
  7. Contents: List the name of the first record in the box “to” the name of the last record in the box (e.g. if the files are in alpha order and the first file in the box is Abbot, Amy and the last file is Cox, Fred, you would list Abbott, Amy to Cox, Fred; if the files are in numerical order and the first file in the box is 010100001 and the last file is 02120087, you would list 010100001 to 02120087).



## **Submitting the Transfer Document and Content List to the Archives**

Record's Officers and Authorized Agents, as designated by the agency, will email the Transfer Document(s) and the content list together, in their original format, to their assigned Records Analyst. Once the documents are reviewed and approved, Archives staff will email a copy of the content list and instructions on scheduling a date for the agency to deliver their boxes to the Archives facility. Upon receipt of this information, the agency is required to print the content list, which will be formatted with page breaks that separate the contents of each box. The printed content list must be placed in the appropriate box.

## **Delivering Records to the Archives**

After the transfer request is approved, and the content list, provided by the Archives staff, has been printed and placed into the appropriate boxes, the agency may contact the Archives to schedule a delivery date. Agencies are responsible for transporting their records to the Archives loading dock, located at the rear of the facility. The loading dock is only accessible from Legislative Avenue. Please ring the door bell, which is located at the top of the stairs on the right side of the loading dock area, to notify Archives staff of your arrival. When transporting records, ensure that the boxes are securely braced to prevent them from falling over and spilling their contents and only use enclosed vehicles that can be locked.

Once the records are in the custody of the Archives and have been completely processed, a copy of the master content list that includes barcode numbers will be provided to the Records Officer and/or Authorized Agent. Agencies are required to permanently retain the transfer document and content list since the barcode number(s) will be the most efficient way to locate the records should they be needed.

## **Access and Ownership**

All records held at the State Records Center are the property of the originating agency and are only available to that agency. During this period, the agency is responsible for responding to all requests for information including customer inquiries, Freedom of Information (FOIA) requests, subpoenas, etc. Once records are transferred to the Archives for permanent preservation, the records become the property of the Delaware Public Archives and will not be returned to the agency. However, the agency may request a copy or certified copy of the records.



## Requesting Records

To request records, agencies must complete the [Records Service Form](#) in Microsoft Word format, as provided on the website. When completing this form, it is imperative that agencies include the storage facility barcode number, name of storage facility, agency box number, records series number, date of records, record title and description. This information may be found on the agency's master content list. All Record Service forms are submitted via email to Ready Records ([rrecords@delaware.gov](mailto:rrecords@delaware.gov)). Please note that all records in the State Records Center, including pre-archival records, remain under the control of the creating agency; however, once the records are transferred to the Archives for permanent preservation, the records become the property of the Archives and the original record will not be returned to the agency.

Deliveries to New Castle County are completed each Tuesday, while Kent and Sussex County are completed each Thursday. This schedule may vary due to inclement weather, holidays, emergencies, etc. Agencies may choose to pick-up their records, but must inform Ready Records staff in advance. Records may only be picked up by the requesting Records Officer, Authorized Agent or their designee. Individuals picking up the records are required to present a valid State of Delaware driver's license or State Identification Badge for identification purposes.

## Returning Records to the Archives

**Under no circumstances should records be placed in State mail or any other mail service.** Once the agency is ready to return their record(s) or box to the Archives, they will send an email to Ready Records ([rrecords@delaware.gov](mailto:rrecords@delaware.gov)). Please include the following:

1. Point of contact
2. Record group number and agency name
3. Physical address
4. Storage facility box number (barcode)
5. Record series number and record title

Upon receipt of your email, an Archives courier will pick-up the records and/or boxes on the next scheduled delivery date.