Records Management Guidance
Standard Work Development

One key to success is ensuring that managing records is a part of work we are already doing (rather than extra steps). Because of that, it is important to include the steps about how we manage records into all documentation of our work processes; including standard work and standard operating procedures.

This document provides some guidance, considerations, and tips to incorporate about records management when developing standard work. Note that the Records Management Program staff are **not** experts on standard work and process documentation; for general questions about standard work development, refer to other resources.

Benefits of documenting standard work:

- Helps support lean / continuous improvement
- Provides clear directions
- Provides clear expectations
- Saves time

Documents that *can* incorporate records management into standard work:

- Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and Process documentation
- Document Templates
- File Plans
- Software/application requirements and contracts

Tips and Tricks:

- **Link to other SOPs or job aids**, rather than repeating or recreating content (don't reinvent the wheel!)
- Include **screenshots** if applicable
- Use **any format** works for you and your team
- Use language that is **clear** and **concise**, and don't skip over any steps!

Things to consider (more details on pages 2-4):

- Process mapping
- Roles and responsibilities
- Expectations
- Storage locations (and applications/tools used)
- Folder structure
- File naming conventions
- Metadata
- Version control (what to do with drafts, when to finalize)
- Record copy vs. duplicates
- Managing retention
- Environmental
- Equity and Social Justice
- Accessibility

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Consideration	Details	Pro Tip
Process Mapping	<u>When</u> in the process are there steps that involve records? Many people assume that recordkeeping happens at the <u>end</u> of each process, yet usually many functions have steps involving records *throughout* the process, and the standard work should reflect that.	
Roles and **responsibilities**	<u>Who</u> is responsible for taking certain actions with records? It can be helpful to clarify whether individual people are supposed to perform certain steps vs. whether it is an expectation for all staff.	
Accountability and Expectations	<u>What</u> specific expectations are there, if any? These can include timelines.	**Pro Tip:** If your process requires staff to file records to Content Manager (or any other location), include expectations for *when* that should happen.

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Storage locations/tools	Where should records be stored throughout their lifecycle? Some countywide examples include: - Outlook (emails) - OneDrive (generally files being drafted by one person, and shared by up to 3 different people) - SharePoint - Teams - Content Manager - EDMS/iLinx - Shared drives etc.	**Pro Tip:** Use Content Manager, especially for inactive records. **Pro Tip** : When possible, avoid moving records between systems unless necessary. **Pro Tip**: when engaging with vendors and contractors, review any draft contracts to ensure that any generated records will remain in the custody and control of county agencies.
Database considerations – lifecycle management	If your records will live in a database, how will database records be managed from creation through end of life? Records in databases have the same recordkeeping requirements as those stored elsewhere. Including but not limited to: - Prevention from loss or damage through the end of their legal retention period - The ability produce records in the event of a public records request (PRR) or litigation - The ability disposition at the end of their retention period	**Pro Tip:** Include lifecycle records management language in system requirements documents when procuring new technology. **Pro Tip:** Include records management guidance in user manuals. **Pro Tip:** Ensure records can be exported from the database if needed for PRR or transfer to the King County Archives

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Folder structure	How should the records be organized? It's helpful to identify how folders should be created and organized, including naming conventions, use of subfolders, and other details.	**Pro Tip:** Keep folder structure as flat and simple as possible. **Pro Tip:** Avoid subfolders unless necessary. Use naming conventions for folders. **Pro Tip:** Consider including retention categories as part of folder names/structure.
File naming conventions	What should the files be named?	**Pro Tip:** consult our Document Naming Conventions
Metadata	What other details (information, tags, etc.) should be added to the records? Depending on the location/tool you are using, there might be additional options to tag.	**Pro Tip:** avoid having a Title that is *different* than the File Name.
Version control	When does a record become finalized? And what should happen with drafts?	**Pro Tip:** most drafts are considered transitory and should be destroyed, rather than retained after the final is created. Consider adding steps for deleting transitory records as needed.

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Primary copy vs. duplicates	How do you determine which version if the official/primary copy of a record? Should anything happen to any duplicates or copies that *are* retained?	Pro Tip: avoid retaining duplicate copies of records.
Managing retention	Content Manager manages/calculates the retention for you. If you use another tool though, how will you manage retention over time and ensure the records go through timely disposition?	Pro Tip: Use Content Manager, which manages retention for you. Pro Tip: If applicable, make sure to identify when records become *inactive*. Pro Tip: Consult retention schedules and/or the Records Management Program to ensure correct retention.
Environmental	Where possible, avoid processes that require printing records and instead consider moving to processes that are digital. Even for digital records, avoid saving unnecessary records in the first place that need to be stored and backed up.	

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Equity and Social Justice	King County is committed to addressing issues with equity and social justice. As such, public records play an important role in that work. Who is included or excluded from a process? Whose stories are documented for posterity? Are the records actually accessible to everyone?	
Accessibility	If your process results in the development or creation of records, is there anything that can or should be done to ensure that the records are accessible to all users? Including those with vision impairments, hearing impairments, cognitive impairments, and many others.	**Pro Tip**: refer to guidance in [Accessibility Best Practices](#)

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