

Critical Records Guidance

Version 3.0

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 those 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 records which have a vital function in State or County/Local government - critical 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 any records without which government could not function, and any records which citizens must be able to access at any time.

These records need to be specifically identified when working with IARA to create a Records Retention Schedule, so that proper steps can be taken to secure and preserve them, even beyond the usual steps taken to preserve 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. Your Responsibilities

Your responsibilities include determining which records might be critical, managing critical records appropriately, and working with IARA to update your retention schedules to ensure critical records are represented accurately. Conversations about critical records are most effective when people from administrative, legal, financial, information technology, and the creators/users of the records work together.

Ask yourself the following questions. Which of your records:

- 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 discuss: rm@iara.in.gov (for State agencies) or cty@iara.in.gov (for County/Local offices).

III. The Indiana Archives and Records Administration's Responsibilities

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 records may be critical to governing the State of Indiana, and to assess whether any records already designated as critical need to remain as such.

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.

IV. Formats for Critical Records

You can make the decision to retain critical records in an electronic-only format without a paper or microfilm copy when you are confident that your software/system meets the criteria of a [Trustworthy, Accessible, Reliable Digital Information System](#) (see [Section V](#)).

If critical records 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 on readiness and make recommendations, but the final decision rests with you.

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

The Trustworthy, Accessible, Reliable Digital Information Systems (TARDIS) criteria help government agencies and offices assess their readiness to maintain critical records in electronic format. IARA can't decide for you if you meet the criteria – only you can determine that.

If you decide you do not meet these criteria, you can work on strengthening your commitment to the recordkeeping systems you maintain or are seeking to develop. Use the criteria to have conversations internally or with your vendor. See [Section VI: Finding an Alternative](#) for additional information if your system does not meet these criteria.

These criteria were developed in accordance with industry standards, records and information management best practices, and feedback from government agencies and offices.

Criteria

A government office 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 send records scheduled for transfer to the Indiana Archives.
- Is able to destroy records in accordance with the retention period.

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?

VI. Finding an Alternative

If the recordkeeping system you are using does not meet the criteria for a Trustworthy, Accessible, Reliable Digital Information System (TARDIS), you may want to maintain a copy of the records elsewhere. This is not an ideal practice but may be necessary if a vendor or system you are relying on experiences issues and you need an alternative method to ensure you can uphold your legal or mission-centric responsibilities, without overreliance on the vendor or system.

For example, if you contribute records to a system and that system does not meet the TARDIS criteria, as a backup, you might choose to maintain a separate copy of your records on a server that you either manage or own. Or if you manually enter data from paper records into the system, you might choose to digitize your paper records and maintain the electronic copies on a server that you either manage or own. This may be useful as a temporary safety measure for systems that experience regular errors, downtime, or if you find yourself needing to compare the data in the system to your own copy. If you have any questions about how best to maintain your own copy in these circumstances, please reach out: erecords@iara.in.gov.

If you are maintaining a separate copy in your own agency or office, you may want to update your retention schedule to document this separate copy and its retention period. If you need to update your retention schedule to include the copy you are maintaining in-agency/office, please let us know: rmd@iara.in.gov (State) or cty@iara.in.gov (County/Local).

VII. 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 any records not listed as critical. If you have records you think should be re-classified as Critical Records, contact IARA, and we will work with you to update your Records Retention Schedule(s): rmd@iara.in.gov (State) or cty@iara.in.gov (County/Local).
- Survey any records being created by your agency or office that are not listed on your Records Retention Schedule(s). Contact IARA 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 management program up to date. This is the best way to protect not only your Critical Records, but all public records.

APPENDIX A: LIST OF RECORDS DESIGNATED AS CRITICAL

Record Series	Record Series Title	Agency or Office	Level of Government
CL 13-01	Marriage Records	Clerks	County/Local
GEN 23-06	Historical Data on Government Buildings and Properties	County/Local General	County/Local
GEN 23-10	Ordinances	County/Local General	County/Local
GEN 10-01	Minutes	General (County/Local)	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	Deed Records and Indexes	Recorders	County/Local
RE 10-07	Quiet Title Record and Index	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	Mortgage Records and Indexes	Recorders	County/Local
RE 10-13	School Fund Mortgage Record	Recorders	County/Local
RE 10-14	Release of 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
85-3.1.04	Clerk's Report of Wills Probated in Vacation	Judicial	Not managed by IARA
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
2008-34	Child Protection Service Assessment-Substantiated	DCS	State

78-916	Foreign Adoption Program	DCS	State
90-52	Adoption Case Files	DCS	State
91-17	Environmental Review Mitigation Documentation	DNR	State
GRADM-1	Minutes	General (State)	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
81-238	Birth Certificates	IDOH	State
81-239	Birth Index	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
2004-11	Excess Land Records	INDOT	State
84-894	Right of Way Records	INDOT	State
81-1212	Candidate Petitions of Nominations	SOS/SED	State
83-976	Campaign Finance Committee Statements and Reports	SOS/SED	State
84-907	HRM Staff (Human Resources Management System)	SPD	State