

**WEST PIERCE FIRE & RESCUE
STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINE**

DATE: JANUARY 1, 2011

REVISED: SEP 2023

GUIDELINE: RECORDS MANAGEMENT

NUMBER: 218

APPLICATION: ALL PERSONNEL

The purpose of the Standard Operating Guideline is to provide direction relative to public records created or received in the conduct of District business. Records shall be maintained in accordance with Washington State retention rules and laws. Additionally, public records will be made available to members of the public, when requested, in accordance with the requirements of RCW 42.56.

A. DEFINITIONS:

1. **Digital Media:** Any electronic communications created on a computer or device; including but not limited to, voicemail, text messages, photos, or video.
2. **District Business:** Any communications, including but not limited to, electronic communications, voicemail, text messages, photos and video that are non-transitory. Such district business is subject to the Public Records Act and shall be archived as appropriate.
3. **District owned images:** Photographs, digital photographs/images, video recordings, electronic files containing a graphic image or series of images, audio recordings associated with images, as well as any digital reproductions or copies of such photographs, digital photographs, digital images, video recordings, audio recordings, or files, owned by the District by virtue of the fact that they were taken and/or created in the course of district business.
4. **Patient Health Information:** As defined in SOG 223 – HIPPA Standards.
5. **Privacy Officer:** The Director of Administrative Services/Finance shall serve as the District's Privacy Officer. The Privacy Officer shall be responsible for receiving complaints and providing individuals with information on the District's privacy practices.
6. **Transitory Business:** Information of temporary, short-term value, and/or that is not needed in evidence of a business transaction do not require retention. Examples of Transitory Business:
 - (a) Setting work meetings or requesting job-related phone calls
 - (b) Noting the sender has completed a task (i.e. "The hydrant has been repaired.")
 - (c) Informing a co-worker or supervisor the sender will be late to work or a meeting, is taking the day off, etc.

- (d) Asking another employee to take some form of action (i.e. "Can you please take your vehicle to the shop for maintenance?")
- (e) Supervisor's performance notes that are not shared with the employee.
- (f) Personal notes, draft documents, any information that is later included in another record.

B. REQUESTS FOR PUBLIC RECORDS:

1. Members of the public may request public records during normal business hours, 0830-1630, Monday through Friday, excluding holidays.
2. Requests for patient health information shall be handled in accordance with this guideline and SOG 223 – HIPPA Standards.
3. Fees for searching records shall be levied only when the person making the request cannot clearly identify the document or record requested. Within five (5) business days of receiving the request for records, the District will respond by either providing the record; or
 - (a) Acknowledging the District has received the request and providing a reasonable estimate of the time the District will require to respond to the request; or
 - (b) If the request for records is denied, a written reason for denial must be given. Upon any written denial of a request for a public record, or portion thereof, the employee who denied the record shall promptly notify the Fire Chief or designee, who shall refer the request and denial to the District's attorney. The District's attorney shall then consider the matter and make a recommendation to affirm or reverse the denial of the public record request. In any case, a final decision by the Fire Chief or designee will be returned within two business days following the original denial of the request.
4. Only employees of the District designated by the Fire Chief or designee shall be responsible for receiving requests for public records. Only such designated employees shall be responsible for copying requested records, or supervising the inspection by the member of the public of the records requested.
 - a. Public records shall be made available for inspection and copying in the location in which they are filed and maintained, but without disruption of essential functions of the District office.
 - b. If records requested for inspection are voluminous, prior arrangements should be made for a convenient time for the District employee to assist and supervise the inspection so that essential functions of the office are not disrupted.
 - c. If the member of the public is inspecting the records in such a manner as to damage, alter, or substantially disorganize the records, inspection shall cease immediately.
 - d. If an individual inspecting records attempts to remove them from the prescribed location or is disrupting the essential functions of the District, inspection shall cease immediately.

- e. Records produced for inspection and/or copying will be returned to their original location. Under no circumstance will a record be removed unless authorized by the Fire Chief or designee.

5. Prior arrangements must be made to listen to an electronic audio file.

C. COPYING COSTS

1. Fee schedule for costs associated with provision of requests for records:

Inspection:	
No fee	Inspection of agency records on agency public internet website or scheduled at agency office
No fee	Accessing or downloading records the agency routinely posts on its public internet website, unless the requestor asks the agency for records to be provided through other means (the following copy charges below then apply).
Copies	
15 cents/page	Photocopies, printed copies of electronic records when requested by the requestor, or for the use of agency equipment to make photocopies.
10 cents/page	Scanned records, or use of agency equipment for scanning.
5 cents/each	For electronic files or attachments uploaded to email, or cloud-based data storage service, or other means of electronic delivery.
10 cents/gigabyte	Records transmitted in electronic format or for use of agency equipment to send records electronically.
Actual Cost	Digital storage media or devices: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CD • DVD • Thumb drive • Other
Actual Cost	Postage or delivery charges – Specific amount based upon postage/delivery charges for specific mailings or deliveries.
Copy charges above may be combined to the extent more than one type of charge applies to copies responsive to a particular request.	

2. A receipt shall be given for all funds received, by check or cash, for copies provided. A duplicate receipt shall be retained at the District.

C. PROTECTION OF PUBLIC RECORDS:

1. All employees should protect district records from damage, disappearance, disorganization or disruption.
2. Any person who unlawfully removes, alters, mutilates, destroys, disorganizes, conceals, erases, obliterates, or falsifies any public record of the District shall be subject to prosecution. Furthermore, any employee who shall commit any of these acts shall be subject to discipline.

D. RECORDS RETENTION:

1. The District's Privacy Officer or their designee shall be responsible to ensure records are maintained in accordance with applicable laws and rules.
2. All District records shall be maintained based on the schedules set forth from the Secretary of State, Washington State Archives, Washington State Local Government Common Records Retention Schedules.
3. All records shall be administered in alignment with applicable sections of RCW Chapter 40 and WAC 434.



Fire Chief