



North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources

Michael F. Easley, Governor
Lisbeth C. Evans, Secretary

Office of Archives & History
Jeffrey J. Crow, Deputy Secretary

PUBLIC RECORDS REQUIRING HUMAN-READABLE PRESERVATION DUPLICATES

The Department of Cultural Resources (DCR) is charged by the General Assembly with the administration of a records management program (N.C.G.S. §121-4 (2) and §132-8.1) and the maintenance of “a program for the selection and preservation of public records considered essential to the operation of government and to the protection of the rights and interests of persons” (§132-8.2). Those records are designated as permanently valuable, and are identified in the records retention and disposition schedules issued by the Department for use by local governments, state agencies, licensing boards, independent commissions, universities, and community colleges.

Offices with permanent records shall create a preservation duplicate of those records as described in §132-8.2: “Preservation duplicates shall be durable, accurate, complete and clear...”

It is the Department's policy that preservation duplicates should be either a paper or microfilm copy of the original records. Permanent records with certain characteristics require preservation duplicates that are human-readable.

Some examples of these characteristics include:

- Affect multiple people, without regard to relation
- Have significance over a long span of time
- Document governance
- Document citizenship
- Available for routine public inspection

Examples of records with these characteristics:

- Minutes of governing bodies at the state and local levels are the basic evidence of our system of governance, and are routinely provided for the public to read.
- Records, such as deeds and tax scrolls, about land document changes in ownership and condition. Counties maintain offices expressly for the purpose of making those records available to the public. Other records in local and state governments document potential public health hazards, such as hazardous materials spills.
- Adoptions, marriages, and divorces document changes in familial relationships and document citizenship. Though adoptions are confidential (not available for public inspection), they document citizenship and changes in inheritance and familial succession.
- Court records, such as wills, estates, and capital cases, affect people within and across family groups, are made available for public inspection, and often involve transactions related to the examples above.

Paper and microfilm are human-readable media, independent of computer technology. The “Uniform Photographic Copies of Business and Public Records as Evidence Act” (N.C.G.S. §8-45) recognizes microfilm as a legally acceptable replacement for original records. International standards for manufacture, production, use, and storage are available to strengthen the reliability of microfilm. The Department issues the *Microfilm Technical and Legal Procedures* guide to assist offices in learning about these standards. Acceptable environmental conditions for paper and microfilm are similar to those of normal office environments. Records in paper or on film may be secured with simple lock-and-key mechanisms. Computer technologies play an important role in the production and management of records, but they are generally unsuitable for long-term preservation. Records on paper or on film may be used in the absence of hardware, software, technical expertise, and even electricity.

Non-permanent records with the characteristics described above are not affected by this policy. This policy does not prohibit the use of computer technology for the creation, management, or storage of records.

ARCHIVES AND RECORDS SECTION — GOVERNMENT RECORDS BRANCH

<http://www.ah.dcr.state.nc.us/records/>

MAILING ADDRESS:
4615 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, N.C. 27699-4615

Telephone (919) 807-7350
Facsimile (919) 715-3627
State Courier 51-81-20

LOCATION:
215 N. Blount Street
Raleigh, N.C. 27601-2823