



MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY
Office of Compliance and Enterprise Risk Management

Compliance Tip of the Month

Why is Records Management Important?

As we continue logging records into our Records Retention Database (“Database”), it is important to remember the reasons MTSU, as a State institution, began a Records Management system. The following information is provided courtesy of Mrs. Carroll Lewis, who is our Director of Business and Financial Compliance/Records Officer.

Our institutional Records Management Program (“RMP” or “Program”) documents MTSU’s process of recording, retaining, and destroying records. Specifically, the RMP is a way for our University to: (1) comply with state and federal regulations regarding retention of institutional records; (2) identify the types of records produced within MTSU; (3) determine the useful life of records; (4) determine a destruction date for records based on record type; (5) review records to determine their historical value; (6) determine if certain records should be transferred to the University Archives; and (6) ensure MTSU’s preparedness for internal and/or external auditing.

To aid in our Program, as well as to align with State regulations, MTSU approved [Policy 129 – Records Retention and Disposal of Records](#). Departments/Divisions have been assigned Records Coordinators (“RCs”) to assist in determining record types, records retention periods, and records destruction dates and methods.

As a reminder, the Records Destruction dates for 2018 are scheduled for October 22 - 23, 2018, from 9:00am to 12:00pm at the MTSU Warehouse. For additional information regarding the procedures for the annual Records Destruction days, please contact Carroll Lewis at RDRetention@mtsu.edu, or you may contact Mrs. Lewis directly at Carroll.Lewis@mtsu.edu.

Records Retention FAQs

The following are answers to some frequently asked questions pertaining to records retention and MTSU’s Program:

Q: Why are records important?

A: State records are public records, and each State agency is legally required to maintain its records pursuant to the State’s Records Management Division and the Public Records Commission.

Q: What is “Records Retention”?

A: Records Retention (a part of the Records Management process) is the process of maintaining and preserving public records in accordance with State of Tennessee regulations, as well as in accordance with the requirements set forth by the State’s Records Management Division.

Q: Why is Records Management important?

A: Good records management practices improves efficiency, reduces costs, protects institutional/public records, and preserves institutional history.

Q: What is a “record”?

A: “Public records” or “records” are any paper documents, letters, photographs, microfilms, microfiche, electronic files, emails, films, sound recordings, and/or other material, regardless of physical form or characteristics, made or received pursuant to law or ordinance in connection with the transaction of official business by any governmental agency. (T.C.A. 10-7-301(6)). Hard drives, thumb/jump drives, and other forms of electronic data also are considered records.

Q: What is a “copy”?

A: Any document that is not an original document, or any document that has been photocopied. However, when a paper document is scanned into the University systems (e.g. Banner, PeopleAdmin, MTSsource, etc.), the scanned version of the document (that is maintained in the University’s systems) becomes the original document for MTSU’s purposes. **Note:** A copy *is not* a record pursuant to the guidelines of the State’s Records Management Division.

Q: What is an archived record?

A: Some records have an enduring, historical relevance. Once historical documents have exhausted their retention period, those records may be transferred to MTSU’s Albert Gore Research Center for preservation, which houses our University’s Archives. MTSU’s University Archivist is Ms. Donna Baker. For additional information regarding the preservation of historic, institutional records, Ms. Baker can be reached at Donna.Baker@mtsu.edu.

Q: What is an “RDA”?

A: Records Disposition Authorizations (“RDA”) are records guidelines, which are reviewed, and approved, by the State’s Records Management Division. The RDAs provide guidance regarding record types, categories, and retention periods. RDAs are accompanied by records descriptions and are assigned State-wide numbers and/or State-wide University numbers.

Should you have additional questions or concerns regarding Records Management and/or require training on MTSU’s Records Retention Database, please contact us at our records retention email – RDARetention@mtsu.edu. You may also contact MTSU’s Director of Business and Financial Compliance/Records Officer directly at Carroll.Lewis@mtsu.edu.

Thank you, and have a great semester.

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