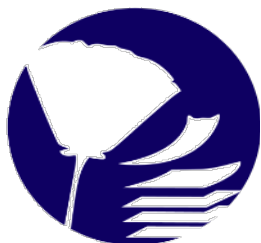


## **Transferring Electronic Records to the California State Archives**



**State Records Appraisal Program  
California State Archives  
1020 O Street, Sacramento CA  
[SRAP@sos.ca.gov](mailto:SRAP@sos.ca.gov)**

## Background

In 1850, with the passage of California's first law, the State Archives became the official repository of the state's historic records. This law directed the Secretary of State to classify, safely keep, and preserve "all public records, registers, maps, papers, rolls, documents, and other writings". Written today, that list would include record types that were unimaginable at that time, such as email, databases, and word processing documents. Given the trends of an increasingly paperless world, these record types are what will document and frame the state's history for future generations.

This guide was put together to assist state agencies with identifying and transferring electronic records to the State Archives. A similar guide is available for transferring paper-based records.

## Identifying Records for Transfer

Within the State Archives, the State Records Appraisal Program (SRAP) identifies records created by state agencies and departments that have long-term, enduring historical value. These identified records must be transferred to the State Archives at the end of their usefulness for a state agency.

As part of the approval process for records retention schedules, the SRAP archivist will review the schedule to determine what record series might have historic value. These series are designated on the retention schedule with a "NOTIFY ARCHIVES" flag, as shown below.

ITEM #	CUBIC FEET*	CA. STATE ARCHIVES USE ONLY	TITLE AND DESCRIPTION OF RECORDS <i>(Double spaces between items)</i>	MEDIA	VITAL	OFFICE
(37)	(38)	(39)	(40)	(41)	(42)	(43)
8	59	<b>NOTIFY ARCHIVES</b>	<b>Committees, Advisory, and Review Records</b> Contains: Public Hearing Documents, Plans & Goals, Conferences, and Related Correspondence	P		Active

## Contacting the SRAP Team

When a record series flagged as "Notify Archives" reaches the end of its retention period, the records **cannot** be destroyed. State agency staff must contact SRAP to discuss transfer of the records to the State Archives.

**Do not send records to the State Archives without first discussing the transfer with a SRAP Archivist.**

SRAP Archivists will collect additional information about these records to determine if they will need to be sent to the Archives. The “Notify Archives” is a designation made by the archivists during the approval process but should not be seen as a final decision about the historic value of the records. After gathering additional information from the agency, SRAP Archivists may determine that records do not require transfer to the State Archives.

### **Confirming Appropriateness of Transfer**

To determine if the record series should be sent to the State Archives, the archivist evaluates the series based on several criteria, including: if the series (or similar record series) have previously been transferred to Archives; the retention schedule and record series information; information about how the records were used and who used them; volume of the records to transfer; restricted or exempted material within the records; and whether the records are paper or electronic. In order to further appraise the records, the SRAP archivist may need to speak to a records custodian knowledgeable about the records' function and content or even require an on-site visit.

For records with archival value, the SRAP archivist will work with the agency to have those records transferred to the State Archives. If the records are determined to not have further value, those records may be disposed of immediately.

### **Completing the Transfer Forms**

For all records requiring transfer to the State Archives, the state agency must complete and submit the appropriate forms to the SRAP Archivist prior to transfer. These forms are the CSA-TL-01–Electronic (Records Transfer Agreement) and the CSA-TL-05 (Electronic Records Survey).

**The State Archives will not accept records transferred with the STD.71 (Records Transfer List), which is used for sending records to the State Records Center.**

### **State Archives Records Transfer Agreement (CSA-TL-01)**

The State Archives Records Transfer Agreement (**CSA-TL-01**) includes information about the transferring agency, record series, and restrictions or exemptions identified within the transfer. This form is for records to be transferred directly to the State Archives.

Government Code section 12274 states that when records are transferred to the State Archives the state agency is to notify the Archives if the record contains information that is not subject to public disclosure or is restricted from disclosure pursuant to the Public Records Act, the Information Practices Act, or other federal or state law.

This information will allow the State Archives to properly store, manage, and provide public access to the records once they are received. The form is used to identify potentially restricted or exempt from disclosure material, what legal codes establish those restrictions, and how to identify the restricted/exempted records. It also includes a Terms of Agreement outlining the change of ownership of the records and that not all records transferred may be permanently retained. Additionally, the Records Transfer Agreement includes a folder list for electronic records which must be completed prior to transfer. Archives staff **will not** accept records without a folder list.

The form and instructions are available on the SRAP portion of the State Archives website.

### **Electronic Records Survey (CSA-TL-05)**

Because electronic records have different characteristics than paper records, the State Archives collects additional information to prepare for, transfer, manage, describe, and provide access to electronic records created by state agencies. State agencies must enter this information on the Electronic Records Survey form (CSA-TL-05).

Information on the form will include: Agency and division name; records series title; records retention schedule approval number and item number(s); file type; volume (in gigabytes and number of files); media carrier; any legal restrictions; encryption; and whether files were digitized (scanned) or born digital. The State Archives also asks that the agency include any additional information such as naming conventions or data dictionaries that will help with the use and management of the records.

### **Preferred Formats**

Some file formats are more desirable for long-term preservation than others. Formats should be non-proprietary and not dependent on specialized hardware or software. Additionally, files should not be compressed with a lossy file format such as JPEG or MP3, but rather a lossless format. Lossless formats can compress a file without degrading or compromising the quality of the file. Examples of lossless formats include JPEG 2000 and WAV. While we can accept most file formats, the State Archives has developed a list of preferred file formats for records transferred.

### **Scheduling the Delivery**

Once the SRAP archivist has reviewed and accepted the transfer agreement and electronic records survey, they will work with the agency staff to determine the best file transfer method. Depending upon the volume, types of records, and security considerations, the transfer may be on physical media (USB drive, etc.) or fully electronic (via the internet).

Physical media will be delivered to our loading dock in downtown Sacramento at an agreed upon time.

## **Media Types**

Files can be transferred using one of several methods. Agencies should consult with the SRAP archivists to determine the most appropriate method.

Some of the common options include:

- Optical Media (CDs/DVDs) – These should be formatted as a data disc
- Hard Drives
- USB Flash Drive – An encrypted drive maybe available for some transfers
- Email – Only for very small transfers with no confidential/restricted records
- FTP/Secure Internet Transfer

## **Preparing Records for Transfer**

Before transfer the agency should:

- Remove empty folders.
- Remove non-records and duplicate records.
- Perform a virus scan.
- Remove encryption or provide an encryption key.
- If possible, calculate checksums for the files to ensure the integrity of the files during transfer.

## **Organizing the Records**

State agencies should transfer records with basic organization. At the top level the records should be organized in folders by the record series that corresponds to the records retention schedule and item number. This basic organization will help ensure a smooth transfer process and that the records make sense when accessed by the public. It will also help you identify non-records and restricted/exempt from disclosure records that need to be flagged. If records do not already have an organization scheme, make an effort to group them in a meaningful way (e.g., chronologically, by division, by project, etc.).

## **Finalizing the Records Transfer**

The agency should retain a copy of the transferred records until notified by the SRAP archivist that the transfer was successful. This validation process typically will take 2-4 weeks to complete. Once notified, the agency should delete any local copies.

## **Ownership of and Access to the Records**

The State Archives assumes the legal and physical control of records after transfer from the state agency. Unlike the State Records Center, *the State Archives does not return records to state agencies.*

Access to records you have transferred can facilitated be done through the Archives Reference Desk (contact: 916-653-2246; [archivesweb@sos.ca.gov](mailto:archivesweb@sos.ca.gov)).

## **Contact Information**

Email: [SRAP@sos.ca.gov](mailto:SRAP@sos.ca.gov)

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## **SRAP Archivists**

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