Fire District Records Management

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Board of Fire Commissioners

- Has exclusive management and control of records
- Must adopt MU-1 – Record and Retention and Disposition Schedule
- Fire District Secretary = Fire District Records Management Officer (“RMO”)
- RMO coordinates & oversees Records Management (“RM”) plan

Districts & Departments

- Separate organizations, but extremely interdependent
- Include Department records in the RM plan
- Departments should turn over records to RMO on a regular basis (at least yearly)

Types of Records

- Any media
  - Paper
  - Digital (including work-related email from a private email address)
  - Magnetic tape
  - Optical disks
- Single copy of any publication your organization produces

Retention & Disposition Schedule

- MU-1
- Period of time to retain records
- Allow for disposal of records in a timely, systematic manner
- Based on administrative, legal, fiscal & research needs

Historical (Archival) Records

- Kept forever
- Designated as “permanent”

Disposal

- After meeting legal retention period, records can be
  - Destroyed
  - Donated to another organization
- Adopt formal procedure for regular disposition of records
- RMO may request early disposal of records that have been substantially damaged or pose a hazard to human safety, health, property

How to Dispose

- NYS law does not require specific disposal method
- Confidential records must be disposed of properly
- Publication #41 – Retention and Disposal of Records: How Long to Keep Records and How to Destroy Them
- NYS confidential wastepaper & recycling contract

Starting Your RM Plan

- What do you need?
- Must be able to easily find what you need
- Must comply with MU-1
- Must comply with Freedom of Information Law (“FOIL”)

Where to go – What to do

How Much Space?

- What does <u>your</u> District need?
- Inventory current records
  - Active records: Referred to on a regular basis
  - Inactive records: Used infrequently, but must be kept
- Allow for growth of inactive records

1962-1966
INCIDENTS 1991
INCIDENTS 2000
INCIDENTS 2007
ACCIDENTS 2011
Vouchers 2011
2007 Treasurer
Trans 09
2012 Vouchers Bus
Treasurer
33250
#33250

Map tower

STATION 1
STATION 2
DISTRICT MAPS
TOWER
HQ
33250
33250
33250
33250
BANKERS BOX

33250
Talk-n-Tone

1962-1966
33250
INCIDENTS 2011
#33250

Sharing space with server

Smaller district active files

Walk thru area – securely locked

Ideal Conditions

- Space under District control **or**
- Team up with other municipality thru municipality agreement
- Limit access to space to authorized personnel
- Secure private & confidential information
- Fire suppression

Not Ideal Conditions

- Temperature
- Humidity
- Open flames
- Water leaks, flooding
- Direct sunlight
- Pests
- Truck bays, equipment store rooms
- Existing office space

No idea what is here

Active files

Active files locked

Active file

Usability

- Records should be easy to locate and use
- Establish logical organization / layout
- Avoid bags & non-stacking boxes
- Label boxes, filing cabinets, etc.
- The sooner the records are managed, the easier it will be to locate them

Usability

- Create an inventory of your records
  - Subject Matter
  - Chronological
  - Date the material went to inactive records

- When a record is removed for a specific reason, insert library card for ease of replacing file and for current location of the file

On Whose Dime?

- Budgetary limits
- Short-term & long-term financial consideration
- Budgeting considerations

LGRMIF Grants

- Local Government Records Management Improvement Fund
- Grants available for inventory & needs assessment
- Apply in April, awarded in June
- Complete work within one year

NYS Grants

- Remodeling existing rooms
- Improve space
- Shelving for inactive records storage
- Must follow NYS rules for boxes & shelving
- NYS holds grant guidance workshops & how to set up RM program
- Request on-site visit from the regional rep

NYS Grants – Boxes & Shelving

- Standard 10” x 12” x 15” boxes
  - Easy to handle
  - Easy to store
  - Cost effective ($2 to $6 each)
- Shelving unit: 44”w x 88”h x 32”d
  - Holds 42 boxes; 48 if using top shelf
- Map towers in same size with adjustable shelves

Office Environment

- Keep active records in the office environment
- Remove inactive records from the office environment to make room for every day operations
- It’s very easy to keep inactive records “in the office”, but doing so limits your everyday operations

This is extreme – but not impossible garages and cellars come to mind

Examples of cluttered office environment

Note chemicals and uniforms

Wrap Up

- Essential mission sentence
- RM needs to be part of planning discussion
- Assess your needs related to RM
- RMO must be aggressive and persistent or RM will always be perceived as a lower priority

Wrap Up

- If you don’t have a program, make a plan
- Identify needs
- Review with needs board of fire commissioners
- What can be done to improve an existing RM programs?
- Each year a budget time, review RM program & request funds to implement new ideas or maintain the current program