Goal of Records Management

- To ensure that records are properly retained for legal, compliance and business purposes, and properly disposed of when no longer needed.
Compliance Overview

Three pieces of legislation necessitate the establishment of a program—

O.C.G.A. § 50-18-99, records management programs for local governments

O.C.G.A. § 50-18-70 et seq, access to public records

O.C.G.A. § 36-9-5 (counties only) storage of county documents

Compliance Overview

O.C.G.A. § 50-18-99 establishes the responsibility of local government to treat all public records as public property and to establish a program for managing its records.

It also requires each local government to:

1. Adopt a retention schedule
2. Approve an ordinance or resolution
3. Appoint a records officer
Compliance Overview

O.C.G.A. § 50-18-70, the Georgia Open Records Act (GORA),

1. Requires that records be retained per retention schedule

2. Encourages the appointment of a GORA officer

Compliance Overview

O.C.G.A. § 36-9-5 requires the secure and safe storage of specific county documents, such as tax records, property records, deeds, and wills.
Implementation

Going from law to implementation –

What the law requires and what should be in place in your office.

Where do I begin?

O.C.G.A. § 50-18-99 establishes the responsibility of local government to treat all public records as public property and to establish a program for managing its records.

It also requires each local government to:

1. Adopt a retention schedule
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Implementation

Policy & Procedure:

• Designation of Records Officer – position not person

• Ownership of Records – agency not individual

• Retention Schedule – how long will records be kept

• Inventory of Records – what you have, where it is, and how long is it kept

Retention of records:

www.georgiaarchives.org

Georgia Records Act requires each local government to adopt a retention schedule and mandates the Secretary of State to issue a common schedule.
Implementation

Records inventory:

Quick reference for the location of information

• What
• When
• Where
• How long

Compliance Overview

O.C.G.A. § 50-18-70, the Georgia Open Records Act (GORA),

1. Requires that records be retained per retention schedule
2. Encourages the appointment of an Open Records Officer
Compliance Overview

Definition of Records

“All documents, papers, letters, maps, books, tapes, photographs, computer based or generated information, data, data fields, or similar material prepared and maintained or received by an agency or by a private person or entity in performance of a service or function for or on behalf of an agency or when such documents have been transferred to a private person or entity by an agency for storage or future government use.”

O.C.G.A. 50-18-70(a)

Implementation

Policies & Procedures governing . . .

• Inventory of Records - identifying open and restricted
• Access to Records – under what conditions may you view the records
• Designation of GORA officer – coordinator for response to request
Implementation

Open Records Officer

Model resolution published by ACCG

1. All written requests directed to position
2. All county websites to display Open Records Officer name and contact
3. Any requests received by other city/county employees to forwarded

Answering a Open Records Request

• 3 days to provide response
• Information needed: which records will contain the information requested; who is their custodian; what is the content of the records (restricted?); where are the records; what is the media of the records
• Tools needed: inventory, schedules, internal procedures for routing request, internal procedures for on-site access to records
• GORA team – records officer/GORA officer, records custodian, attorney
Implementation

Are there other steps that should be taken to secure the records?

• Designation of official hours
• Locked doors
• Patrons ‘in-sight’ at all times
• Inventory of records (know what you have so you can identify what is missing)

Compliance Overview

O.C.G.A. § 36-9-5 requires the secure and safe storage of specific county documents

Specifically, O.C.G.A. 36-9-5(c1) pertains to the following records:
1. records which document property rights and ownership;
2. records which document the latest valuation of property in the county;
3. deeds and wills.
Compliance Overview

O.C.G.A. 36-9-5(c2) These records must be stored:

- in a fireproof safe or vault;
- in fireproof cabinets;
- on microfilm pursuant to standards established by the Georgia Archives; or,
- in a location not more than 100 miles from the county in a data storage and retrieval facility.

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Compliance Overview

O.C.G.A. §36-9-5 (4)

The local fire marshal must monitor county offices to ensure compliance with the provisions of this statute.
Fire Ratings

What the fire marshal can tell you:

• What is the fire rating of the vault?
• What is the fire rating of the vault door?
• What is my primary fire suppression method? If fire extinguishers, how often are they inspected?

Are all your records duplicated and stored offsite?

Looking a Little Deeper!

Policy & Procedure

Safe and secure conditions must also be interpreted into policy & procedure.

Policies such as:
• Usage policy – who can use vault
• Duplication of records
• Transfer procedures – how should records be transferred and where
• Access/reference procedures – who can access
RM Basics - Storage

• Do you operate a storage area?
• What does your storage facility look like?
• Does it look like this?
  • Or . . .

RM Basics - Storage

This?

What’s wrong in this picture?

How would you correct this?
Storage

- Key components:
  - Location
  - Security
  - Shelving
  - Boxes
  - Labeling
  - Eligible records

Additional Resources

In addition to the requirements of the GA Archives to provide retention schedules for local government it also provides records management assistance, review and approve retention schedules, and serve as a coordination point with government agencies.
Records Management

Destruction:

• Media matters
• Paper – landfills, recycling, shredding
• Microfilm – silver reclamation, remove from spool
• Magnetic – overwriting, degaussing (de-magnetizing)
• Witnessing destruction