



IDAHO STATE
**HISTORICAL
SOCIETY**



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HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Government Records Policy

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Governor Brad Little

Idaho State Historical Society
Janet Gallimore, Executive Director

Idaho State Archives & Records Center
A Division of the Idaho State Historical Society
2205 Old Penitentiary Road
Boise, Idaho 83712
Phone: 208.334.2620
Email: public.archives@ishs.idaho.gov
<http://history.idaho.gov/idaho-state-archives>

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Background

Idaho State Historical Society

Created in 1881 and established as a state agency in 1907, the Idaho State Historical Society (ISHS) is an extraordinary system of cultural and historic resources comprised of the Idaho State Historical Museum, Idaho State Archives, Idaho State Historic Preservation Office, and Historic Sites Program. ISHS preserves and promotes Idaho history.

Idaho State Archives

The Idaho State Archives serves as the repository for permanent, inactive records for state agencies, Idaho counties, and cities. The Idaho State Archives (ISA) and Research Center provides public access to records of fiscal, administrative, legal, and long-term research value to the citizens and government of Idaho. ISA preserves a large and unique collection of materials that relate to the history of Idaho and the Pacific Northwest, including photographs, books, maps, manuscripts, oral histories and government records.

Idaho State Records Center

The State Records Center provides storage and retrieval of active records under retention for primarily state agencies.

Merger of State Archives and Records Center

The State Archives, created by legislation in 1947, and Records Center, by Administrative Rules in 1989, merged operations in 2012 under [House Bill 599](#). The State Records Center and the State Archives remain two separate entities under the direction of the Idaho State Historical Society. The State Archives collects only permanent, inactive, records from county, city and state agencies, while the State Records Center collects active records primarily from state agencies.

CHAPTER 1: PURPOSE AND POLICY

Purpose of Government Records Policy

The government records policy was created to ensure that the Idaho State Archives fulfills its statutory obligations regarding government records for the state of Idaho. The Idaho State Archives is a division of the Idaho State Historical Society which is governed by Idaho Statute [67-4126](#). Subsections within this statute charge the Idaho State Archives to:

- (6) To facilitate the use of Idaho records for official reference and historical research.
- (8) To accept from any state, county, or city, or any public official, any official books, records, documents, original papers, newspaper files, printed books, or portraits, not in current use. When such documents are so accepted, copies there-from shall be made and certified under the seal of the society upon application of any person, which person shall pay for such copies reasonable fees established by the society.
- (9) To require that any state, county, or city, or any public official, deposit official books, records, documents, or original papers, not in current use, which are of definite historical importance, in the society for preservation and to provide methods whereby such materials, which have no significance, may be destroyed.
- (12) To have and use an official seal.

This document will provide state agencies, counties and cities with a clear understanding of what records will be accepted by the Idaho State Archives for permanent storage, how records shall be transferred to the Archives and how to access records once they are housed at the Archives.

Policy (Retention Schedules and Accession of Records)

The Idaho State Archives preserves records of administrative, fiscal, legal and long-term research value. ISA only accepts permanent, inactive records with definite historical significance. Permanent records are defined by county, city and state retention schedules. However, not every record listed as permanent in these retention schedules is stored at the Archives. Some permanent records are better served by remaining at the local jurisdiction or the State Records Center. For a list of permanent government records accepted by the Archives, **please see Appendix 1**.

Policy (Best Practices)

ISA preserves and provides access to collections under its stewardship in accordance with best practices guidelines as specified by Society of American Archivists (SAA), National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), and the Council of State Archivists (CoSA).

Policy (Certification of Documents)

ISA will provide certified copies of documents in its collections. This certification attests that a given record was 1) submitted by a state, county, or city government entity and 2) accessioned and is held by ISA. Any additional certification is outside the scope of ISA.

CHAPTER 2: GOVERNMENT RECORDS PROGRAM, GOALS AND ACTIVITIES

Goals

- To promote best practice and collaboration in records management among state and local government agencies
- To establish uniformity in standards, guidelines and retention policies
- To preserve and provide access to public records
- To deliver quality customer service to the citizens of Idaho and their government agencies
- To preserve Idaho's historical and future historical records

Program Activities

- Oversee the daily operations of the State Archives and Records Center
- Collect, provide access, manage and preserve the permanent records of state and local government
- Maintain a records management database
- Provide a secure and environmentally controlled facility to assure the long-term preservation of the State's permanent records. Vault rooms have restricted access
- Provide records/information access for citizens and their government agencies
- Apply current and relevant public records laws
- Provide efficient delivery of records to agencies
- Consult with government officials and employees on the disposition of records
- Provide records training for government officials and employees
- Certify records
- Identify and evaluate records requiring essential preservation and conservation
- Provide a secured archival reading room for researchers to examine original archival records
- Provide public access to the Merle W. Wells Research Center
- Provide equipment to read microfilm and microfiche
- Provide web-based access to information about our collections, operations, policies and procedures
- Provide government agency staff members a designated work area with access to ISA copy or scanning equipment (copy fees may apply)

CHAPTER 3: PROCEDURES FOR TRANSFERRING RECORDS TO ISA

Preparing Records for Transfer

Retention Schedules

Refer to your agency's retention schedule to verify the record is permanent. Consult **Appendix 1** of the Government Records Policy to see if that permanent record is eligible for transfer to the Idaho State Archives. The links below may provide reference (if you require assistance, contact the State Archives).

1. State agency retention schedules

<http://www.history.idaho.gov/idaho-records-center-retention-schedules>

2. Idaho Association of Counties retention schedule

<http://www.idcounties.org/index.aspx?nid=364>

3. Association of Idaho Cities retention schedule

Currently unavailable online - Contact the AIC

Type of Box Needed for Storage at the State Archives

Records requiring long-term preservation and storage require a quality box to store them in. The Archives requires a standard-sized, acid-neutral or acid-free, durable box sized 15" length x 11.5" width x 10.5" in height. Archival acid-neutral boxes are available for sale from ISA at cost. Your order can be placed by calling ISA at (208) 334-2620.

For oversized books and ledgers, contact the Archives for transfer information.

How to pack files in boxes

- Pack records in the same order that they are filed in the office
- Leave space within the container for ease of reference (about 2" - 3" of working space per box)
- Face letter-size documents toward the front (printed end) of the box
- Face legal-size documents toward the side of the box (left side of printed end)
- Limit boxes to one type of record series within a box
- Remove or replace hanging file folders with plain folders

- Remove materials from binders and place the records in folders in the same order
- Provide notification about condition of records, such as fragile, unique/rare records or records requiring special archival attention
- Boxes must include a list of any missing files by file number
- Each case file should be in a separate folder (don't send boxes of case files not in folders)
- Boxes ideally should weigh no more than 35lbs

Labeling Records Boxes/Numbering Records Boxes

- Label boxes on the end of the box (below the handle) in the center
- Using a marker or pencil, clearly identify the name, division or other organizational unit
- Identify the type of records within the box
- Identify the year or year range of records within the box
- Identify the file number range within the box
- Number the boxes with consecutive, unique numbers – for example:
 - 1, 2, 3, etc
 - 1993-1, 1993-2, 1993-3, etc.
- The box number should be the last data item listed on the label
- Leave the upper left corner and lower right corner blank
- Refrain from writing any information on the lid



Archives staff can provide label templates or examples upon request. The above information will be entered into our records management database and is essential to providing efficient reference service.

Box Inventories

Each records box shall contain an inventory of all files within the box. The list shall be submitted with the records transfer form and an additional copy placed inside each box. If available, provide an electronic copy of the inventory lists.

Archives staff can provide inventory templates or examples upon request.

Filling Out the Record Transfer Form

- Request transfer form from the Archives or from the Archives website at: <http://www.history.idaho.gov/idaho-state-records-management>
- Use the Transfer Form as a cover sheet and attach a copy of each box inventory
- Please note that a standard records box is 15" length x 11.5" width x 10.5" in height and is equal to one cubic foot of records
- Please keep a copy of the transfer form for your files
- Include the Transfer Form with the records at the time of transfer or send it electronically before transfer of the records

Records that are Exempt from Disclosure

Records exempt from disclosure will not be transferred into the Idaho State Archives. Contact the State Records Center for storage alternatives.

Records Transfer Approval Process

The Idaho State Archives does not perform box pick-up for records that will be transferred to the Archives. State agencies, cities and counties are responsible for the transfer of material to the Archives.

Before any transfer of records to the Idaho State Archives, box inventories, retention schedules and transfer sheets will be reviewed and approved by ISA. The transferring agency shall ensure:

- Use of approved records box (acid-neutral, etc.)
- Records boxes are labeled as instructed
- Coordinated with ISA a delivery schedule, including time, date, volume (number of boxes) for transfer.

For questions, contact the Idaho State Archives at 208-334-2620 or public.archives@ishs.idaho.gov

Agency Interfile

All interfiling of materials shall be done by the creating agency. Personnel from the creating agency will be given access to needed material, as well as a workspace, to perform the interfiling required.

Internal Archives Process Once Records Have Been Transferred

Once records are transferred to the State Archives, the materials are accessioned by archivists in accordance with best practices, which include:

- Application of an 8-digit accession number is assigned to each box
- Records ingestion, essential processing of collections begins
- Boxes transition from the loading dock into the archival vaults

- Boxes are arranged by agency and box-order number
- An assigned archives collection number is notated on each box (each government agency has an assigned archival number)
- A vault location is assigned to each box
- All information from the box label is documented and entered into our records management database
- Extracted ingestion information is secured and uploaded into our master database
- Records boxes are located into the assigned shelf locations
- Upon request, archives staff can provide an agency with a copy of records inventories from our records management database relevant to their agency
- Any records identified as requiring the preservation measures may be evaluated at this time

CHAPTER 4: REQUESTING RECORDS FROM THE STATE ARCHIVES

Idaho Public Records Law

All records requests to the Idaho State Archives are subject to Idaho Public Records Law.

Additional Information for Agencies Requesting Records

Access

Records stored at the Idaho State Archives can be accessed onsite at the Idaho State Archives.

Civil and Criminal Records

For civil and criminal files, the Idaho State Archives is authorized to copy divorce decrees and judgments of conviction. If any other documents are needed, the entire file will be sent back to the creating agency for completion of the request.

Offsite Request Procedure

Offsite requests are sometimes needed to facilitate agencies official use of a record stored at the archives. Please note that historical records in need of preservation can only be viewed on site. Records needing preservation will be identified by the archives staff on a case by case basis.

Records can only be returned to the creating agency.

Where to Submit Requests

- Requests can be made to ISA preferably by email at public.archives@ishs.idaho.gov or by phone at (208) 334-2620
- Please provide as much advance notice as possible when making a request

Information to Include When Making a Request

- First and last name of the person making the request
- Name of agency, county or city
- Contact information including telephone number, email and mailing address
- Type of record
- Appropriate name or title of record
- File number when applicable

- Year when applicable
- Description when applicable
- Records box number
- Identification of document or documents with appropriate title and date
- Type of delivery: U.S. Certified Mail, statehouse mail, overnight mail, pick up, email or onsite access (Any record being mailed via U.S. Mail will only be sent certified mail. The requesting agency will be billed by the ISHS fiscal office for reimbursement)
- Outgoing mail is picked up each business day at approximately 10:00am MT
- Inform staff if a record or records will be permanently removed or returned to Archives

Onsite Request Procedure

Merle W. Wells Research Center

The Merle W. Wells Research Center serves as the public's point of access to archival materials. The location and hours of the Idaho State Archives can be found at:

<http://www.history.idaho.gov/archives-hours-location>

Records Request Procedures

- Submit a completed Request Form to a staff member at the Reference Desk and view materials in the Reading Room. Reading Room Policies and Procedures have been created in accordance with best practice to protect the archival materials
- Certain agency files, while available for review by the public, may include restricted documents. When this situation occurs, Archives staff members will redact the necessary information in accordance with Idaho Public Records laws. Due to the redaction process, providing public access to a file may be delayed
- As a best practice measure, most commonly for older and fragile documents being requested for review, condition issues come to our attention. At this time, staff determines any necessary preservation measures that may be required for the document

APPENDIX 1: COMMON GOVERNMENT RECORDS STORED AT THE ARCHIVES

Definition of a Record

A Record is a document produced during the routine course of business which notes the occurrence of a consequential event or activity within the official scope of a particular government entity. A record can exist in a number of formats, including various sizes of paper (original or photocopy), microfilm or any microform, electronic media, optical disk media, CD, Mylar, sepia, blue line, photograph, audio or video tape, punched cards, books or maps.

Requirements for Storage at the Idaho State Archives

ISA collects only permanent, inactive and historically significant records.

Permanent Records

Permanent records are defined by county, city and state retention schedules.

Inactive Records

A series, type or kind of records accessed more than once per month for official agency business is considered active. This does not include requests for records made by the public at the Research Center. If a series, type or kind of record is accessed more than once per month for official agency use (e.g., divorce decree for Social Security, final judgment for background screening), it will be flagged as active. Active records will be analyzed by the Archives staff to determine whether that series, type or kind of record needs to be returned to the creating agency. Active records transferred to the Archives will be returned to the creating agency at its expense.

Historically Significant

ISA determines historically significant materials based on their fiscal, administrative, legal and long-term research value.

Records Not Available for Transfer

According to [Idaho Court Administrative Rules 37 and 38](#), the Idaho State Archives does not accept juvenile or sealed records.

How to determine if a record has value

Fiscal Value

These records document the honest and responsible conduct of financial affairs and financial standing and obligations. These records are essential to understand and transact business.

Administrative Value

Without a proportion of records which document the details of administration, the creators of the records (or their successors) could not operate. It would not be possible to plan, organize, make decisions or to ensure consistency and continuity.

Legal Value

These records form proof of an event or agreement. Obligations, commitments, rights and delegations of authority fall into this category. Without these records there is no security or foundation for decision-making.

Long-Term Research Value

Records of this type allow the context of the records creator to be understood. Social, political, economic, educational and recreational activities and the relations to the wider community are documented through these records.

Common County Records Stored at the Archives

Assessor's Office

Assessment Rolls (50 years or older)
Maps

Clerk/Auditor/Recorder (50 years or older)

Marriage License Applications
Annual Audit Reports
County Ordinances
County Resolutions
Election Abstracts

Check Warrant Registers
Levies for Taxing Districts
Articles of Incorporation
Assumed Business
Deeds
Deeds of Trust
Marriage Licenses
Military Discharges
Mortgages
Survey Plats
Synopsis

Coroner

Death Records

Court Records

Court records are typically the most active of any records stored at the Archives. Before identifying records for potential transfer to the Archives, please review ISA's policy regarding "inactive records." If the files are accessed more than once per month, they are considered active and should be held at the local jurisdiction until they are no longer accessed. Records that become active will be returned to the creating agency at its expense.

- **Civil Cases**

Probate, Estates, and Wills that are 50 years or older

- **Criminal Cases and/or Inmate Records**

Due to the volume of criminal and inmate records the state archives can only accept notorious and/or historically significant case files/inmate records

The following list provides criteria that should be considered when evaluating whether a record should be considered for transfer to the Idaho State Archives. ISA staff will advise and select records for transfer based on their historical significance to Idaho history:

Did the case/inmate attain contemporary public notoriety?

Did the case/inmate receive significant media coverage?

Did the case/inmate cause local agencies to develop or utilize new methods or technologies?

Is the case/inmate frequently cited in scholarly or professional literature or other resources?

Has the case/inmate caused a change in policies or laws?

Did the case/inmate affect a large portion of the community?

Was the case/inmate controversial?

Was the case/inmate generally viewed by the community as important or significant?

Was the case/inmate the subject of a well-known book or feature film?

Did the case/inmate incur large restitution amounts?

If a case/ inmate file meets one or more of the above criteria, the Idaho State Archives should be contacted to discuss the disposition of the record.

County Commissioners

(15 years or older)

County Commissioners' Minutes

Ordinances

Resolutions

Audit Reports

Various Board and Commission Minutes

Emergency Management

Maps

Law Enforcement

(15 years or older)

Police Report Photographs

Veteran's Educational Benefits

Parks and Recreation/Waterways

Maps

Planning and Zoning

(15 years or older)

Applications (actual)

Code Area Change

Developers' Agreements

Final Plats

Maps: Zoning

Maps: Flood Plain

Plat Maps

Treasurer's Office

(50 years or older)

Tax Rolls

Common City Records Stored at the Archives

City retention schedules can vary from city to city. The Idaho State Archives will evaluate each records transfer on an individual basis to determine records that are permanent, inactive and historically significant. There are some record types listed in Idaho Statute [50-907](#) designated as permanent for all cities. Of those records types, the Archives accepts:

- Adopted meeting minutes of the city council, boards and commissions
- Ordinances and resolutions
- Fiscal year-end financial reports
- Records affecting the title to real property or liens thereon
- Cemetery records of lot ownership, headstone inscriptions, interment, exhumation and removal records, and cemetery maps, plot plans and surveys
- Poll books, excluding optional duplicate poll books used to record that the elector has voted, tally books, sample ballots, campaign finance reports, declarations of candidacy, declarations of intent, and notices of election
- Official records of public officers