

Records Management Guide

Alabama Office of the Governor: Communications Office

Creating, Managing, and Transferring Public Records to the ADAH

Public officials – that is, anyone working at any level of government – are legally obligated to create and maintain records that adequately document the business of their agencies (Code of Alabama 1975 § 36-12-1 through 36-12-5). By transferring records to the Alabama Department of Archives and History (ADAH), state agencies ensure transparency and compliance while building public confidence in Alabama’s governing institutions.

All Alabama governors transfer their administration’s records to the ADAH for preservation and access upon leaving office. The Communications Office creates records that serve as the most visible legacy of the Office of the Governor. After transfer to the ADAH, these records are considered to be the highest priority for public access. By following the records management guidelines in this document, the Communications Office will protect the legacy and transparency of the Office of the Governor and help to provide prompt access to our state’s historical records.

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Permanent, Temporary, Transitory, and Non-Records

Permanent Records

Permanent records have enduring historic value and are transferred to the Alabama Department of Archives and History (ADAH) at the end of the administration.

Archivists determine what records are permanent based on content, not format. Most permanent records created by the Communications Office are electronic and include a variety of formats such as Microsoft Word documents, PDFs, JPEGs, videos, and emails. Permanent records appear in the Office of the Governor's Records Disposition Authority (RDA) in the Permanent Records List (pages 10-11) and in **BOLD ALL CAPS** (pages 12-20).

The permanent records produced or managed by the Communications Office may include, but are not limited to:

- Photographs and Audio/Visual Recordings
- Proclamations, Commendations, and Appreciations
- Public Relation Files and Press Release Files
- Speech Files
- Special Project, Task Force Files
- Executive Orders
- Website and Other Social Media Sites

Temporary Records

Temporary records are kept for a designated period of time and then destroyed. Refer to the Office of the Governor's RDA for the minimum records retention for temporary records. Presuming no litigation or other hold is in effect, temporary records may be destroyed after satisfying the retention requirements listed in the RDA.

Temporary records often detail administrative functions and may relate to managing documentation, finances, human resources, facilities, and resources. They appear in the Office of the Governor's RDA in **bold** (pages 12-20).

Temporary records are not transferred to the ADAH; however, the State Records Center will retain an agency's temporary records and keep track of the authorized destruction dates for a small monthly fee. When the temporary records are eligible for destruction as listed in the RDA, the State Records Center will send a Destruction Form to be signed and returned. Agencies must ensure that no litigation hold or other cause should prevent the destruction of otherwise eligible temporary records.

Destruction of both paper and electronic temporary records must be documented. Complete and signed documentation must be submitted along with the Annual RDA Implementation Report (due every January 15 for the previous fiscal year). For more information and to access a sample State Records Destruction Form, visit the Records Management section of the Alabama Department of Archives and History website.

Transitory Records

Transitory records are records of temporary usefulness that do not need to be filed. They are produced or received in the course of routine actions, in the preparation of other records which replace them, or for convenient reference. A record is transitory if it does not need to be retained to meet legal or fiscal obligations and does not provide evidence of an activity. Transitory records may be deleted or destroyed at any time, without documentation of the destruction. Like permanent and temporary records, transitory records may exist in any format or medium (paper or electronic).

Examples of transitory records include:

- Working documents, such as drafts or preliminary versions
 - Exception: Where a final draft does not exist, the latest draft should be retained
 - Exception: Drafts that differ substantially from the final version demonstrate the author's decision-making process and should be retained for their research significance
- Duplicate records where the "official" copy is maintained by a "responsible party"
 - Includes duplicates of email messages. A designated "responsible party" must file an official copy of the email message to a recordkeeping system. The responsible party could be (1) the originator of the email, (2) the main recipient, or (3) the designated recordkeeper for a workgroup
 - Includes duplicates of meeting agendas, minutes, and packets for a board/committee managed by another agency
- Non-auditable surplus, such as blank forms, stationery, or templates
- Routine emails such as requests for meetings and thank you messages
- Notices of internal social events, such as baby showers

Non-Records

Non-records do not contain information that is related to the Office of the Governor's operations or activities.

Examples of non-records include:

- Reference materials sent for informational purposes only, such as catalogs, trade journals, and other publications received that require no action and do not document government activity
- Listserv and newsgroup messages that have no substantive business value
- Unsolicited/Spam email that have no substantive business value

Non-records may be deleted or destroyed at any time, without documentation of the destruction.

General Guidance for Records Creation and Maintenance

Naming Electronic Files

Following a few simple naming conventions makes electronic files easier to find and helps protect the files for long-term preservation and access at the ADAH.

Use the following tips:

- Avoid using special characters such as spaces, commas, and periods in file names. Use underscores instead of spaces. Special characters in file names can cause files to become corrupt and irretrievable before they come to the ADAH.
- Choose descriptive but concise file names. For example, use:
2017_05_19_NGADinner_Remarks
 - NOT:
Remarks_May19
(not descriptive enough)
 - NOT:
2017_05_19_NationalGovernorsAssociationDinnerBusinessMeeting_Remarks
(not concise)
- Format dates consistently. The ADAH recommends a Year_Month_Date format. For example:
 - 2017_05_19_NGAMemo
 - NGAMemo_2017_05_19

Clearly label all files with dates so that no matter how the file is copied, the creation or last edited date remains intact. Consider indicating the final version with the word “Final” in the file name:

- 2017_05_19_NGADinner_Remarks_Final

Organizing Electronic Files

The ADAH recommends using a shared drive, which allows multiple users to access the same files. Staff members should ensure that records are saved to the appropriate location on the shared drive. If multiple staff members work in the same folder on the shared drive, everyone should use the same organizational and naming approach to avoid confusion.

Whether dealing with paper or electronic records, using folders helps with organization. When sorting electronic records, consider making the highest-level folders correspond with the types of permanent records listed in the RDA. Then, create sub-folders based on subject, date, event, or other organizational approach. No matter the approach, consistency is key. Begin organizing

electronic records as they are created to avoid a heavy workload at the end of the administration.

Managing Email

Record retentions are determined by content, not format or storage location. Sending or receiving a work-related email message via a personal email account does not change that email's permanent record status. Any records created in the course of government business and contained in a personal email account must still be transferred to the ADAH at the end of the administration. For this reason, it is best to keep personal and work email separate. Using a work email account to make social plans, do personal banking, etc., risks having private information retained and transferred to the ADAH as part of the historical record.

Organizing Email

Create a folder scheme in your inbox and outbox to better organize and find emails. Ideally, this folder scheme should mirror the way files on the office's shared drive are organized. Consider making the highest-level folders correspond with the types of permanent records listed in the RDA. Then, create sub-folders based on subject, date, event, or other organizational approach. Again, no matter the approach, consistency is key.

Photographs

Organizing Photographs

Store all photographs in a central structure on a shared drive. File names and organization should help the user identify the event at which the photograph was taken, as well as any people in the photograph.

The ADAH cannot capture photographs posted online. Photographs posted online on the Office of the Governor's website or any other communication platform or social media site (such as Instagram or Flickr) should be saved with other photographs on a hard drive or server to ensure that the photograph is preserved.

Contextual Information for Photographs

A photographer may be given information about the event, location, and attendees. Create a supplementary text file, Word document, scanned notes, or other similar file within each event folder that provides this essential contextual information for future researchers.

Editing Photographs

Photographers often choose the best photograph(s) of a series for press releases, distribution, social media posts, and general dissemination. These photographs may go through an editing process. The edited photographs should be kept in the same folder as the original photographs within a subfolder entitled "Edits."

Use the template below to name and organize photographs.

- GovernorLastName_Photos
 ○ GovernorLastName_2018_10
 - 2018_10_27_AlabamaFootball
 - 2019_10_27_AlabamaFootballContext.docx
 - IMG_0990.cr2
 - IMG_1000.cr2
 - IMG_1001.cr2
 - IMG_1005.cr2
 - IMG_1010.cr2
 - Edits
 - IMG_0990_Edited.jpg
 - IMG_1010_Edited.jpg
 - GovernorLastName_2019_02
 - 2019_02_01_ProclamationDay
 - 2019_02_01_ProclamationDayContext.txt

- IMG_9760.jpg
 - IMG_9761.jpg
 - IMG_9762.jpg
 - IMG_9763.jpg
 - Edits
 - IMG_9761_Edited.jpg
 - 2019_02_12_SpeechElection
 - 2019_02_15_FamilyPhotos
 - 2019_02_15_FamilyPhotosContext.pdf
 - IMG_0330.cr2
 - IMG_0335.cr2
 - IMG_0441.cr2
- GovernorLastName_2019_03
 - 2019_03_05_DisasterDeclaration
 - Edits
 - 2019_03_15_MontgomeryKiwanisClubSpeech
 - Edits
 - 2019_03_19_HelenKellerStatue
 - 2019_03_19_HelenKellerContext.docx
 - IMG_0759.cr2
 - IMG_0768.cr2
 - IMG_0777.cr2
 - IMG_0781.cr2
 - IMG_0782.cr2
 - Edits
 - IMG_0768_Edited.jpg
 - IMG_0782_Edited.jpg
 - 2019_03_22_ChiliCookoff
 - 2019_03_27_ProclamationDay
 - Edits

Deleting Photographs

Deleting extraneous photographs is not required, but highly recommended.

Minor Variations: Photographers often take multiple photographs to ensure the best product, resulting in multiple highly similar photographs with only minor variations in focus, lighting, or angle. All but one of the highly similar photographs may be deleted.

Speeches: Photographers should retain photographs that portray the governor’s speech style and provide a visual representation of how the governor speaks (flourishes of hands, different faces representing laughing or serious).

Background Figures: Event or meeting photographs may involve crowds or movement, and the people in view may change slightly from photograph to photograph. To ensure adequate representation of those present at events or photo-ops, consider included background figures before deleting highly similar photographs.

No Identifiable Subject or Purpose: Many photographs such as accidental shots, blurry shots, or lighting test shots may give no context to the event or people present. These photographs may be deleted.

Unflattering Photographs: People prefer not to be displayed in an unphotogenic manner. Photographs can capture faces in awkward positions (eyes closed, mouth contorted, etc.). If the only photograph of a subject at a certain event is the unflattering one, it should be kept. If there are multiple photographs of the subject at a certain event, the unflattering photographs may be deleted.

Shooting in Double: If a photographer shoots in double format, the ADAH prefers to receive photographs in JPEG format only. The ADAH will accept a raw format if it is the only format available. If the JPEG is edited, retain both the raw format and edited JPEG format.

Audio/Visual Recordings

If the Communications Office has raw video footage and an edited, final version of a video, only the final version of the video should be transferred. Raw video footage of which an edited, final version exists is a transitory record and may be deleted.

The ADAH does not capture videos, images, or documents posted online. Videos posted online to the Office of the Governor's website or any other communication platform or social media site (such as Instagram or YouTube) should be saved with other videos on a hard drive or server to ensure the video's preservation.

Scripts created for videos released to the public should be saved as a separate document within the same folder.

The ADAH prefers files to be in AVI or MP4 format.

Use the template below to name and organize audio/visual recordings.

- GovernorLastName_Videos
 - GovernorLastName_2019_02
 - 2019_02_06_DecaturRobotics.avi
 - 2019_02_11_FarmersMarketDay.avi
 - 2019_02_20_100DayPressConference.mp4
 - 2019_02_27_TornadoDamage
 - 2019_02_27_TornadoDamage01.avi
 - 2019_02_27_TornadoDamage02.avi
 - 2019_02_27_TornadoDamage03.avi
 - 2019_02_27_TornadoDamage04.avi
 - 2019_02_27_TornadoDamage_Script.docx
 - GovernorLastName_2019_03
 - 2019_03_04_DomesticViolence.mp4
 - 2019_03_15_RuralMedicalScholars.avi
 - 2019_03_27_Unemployment
 - 2019_03_27_Unemployment.mp4
 - 2019_03_27_Unemployment_Script.PDF
 - 2019_03_30_ProjectCrossroadsLimestone.mp4

Proclamations

Proclamations are official documents created to commemorate a specific day, week, or month that raises awareness about an issue or celebrates a milestone.

While proclamations may be posted on the Office of the Governor's website, these documents should be saved in a central folder titled "Proclamations" using the following organizational file structure and file naming convention. The ADAH collects the final signed and sealed versions of proclamations.

Use the template below to name and organize proclamations.

- GovernorLastName_Proclamations
 - 2018
 - 2018_11_18_AlabamaCapitolPoliceDay.pdf
 - 2018_11_22_ThanksgivingDay.pdf
 - 2018_12_01_AlabamaChristmasTreeMonth.pdf
 - 2018_12_03_NationalComputerScienceEducationWeek.pdf
 - 2018_12_07_PearlHarborRemembranceDay.pdf
 - 2018_12_15_WreathsAcrossAmericaDay.pdf
 - 2019
 - 2019_01_01_YearofReconciliationandCivility.pdf
 - 2019_01_22_NationalDayOfRacialHealing.pdf
 - 2019_02_01_ChildrensDentalHealthMonth.pdf
 - 2019_02_01_GumDiseaseAwarenessMonth.pdf
 - 2019_02_01_CareerAndTechnicalEducationMonth.pdf
 - 2019_02_09_NationalCourtReportingandCaptioningWeek.pdf
 - 2019_02_18_SchoolBoardClerkAppreciationWeek.pdf

Commendations and Appreciations

The Office of the Governor creates commendations and appreciations with the goal of honoring people and/or celebrating events.

The ADAH recommends creating Excel spreadsheets for each year which list the names of all commendations and appreciations issued, with the following fields: last name, first name, date, and type.

The ADAH collects the final signed and sealed versions of commendations and appreciations, along with the Excel spreadsheets.

Recommendation letters for commendations and appreciations may be received either by email or by traditional mail. Use the following naming and organizational template for commendations and corresponding nomination letters that are either born-digital (for example, an email saved to PDF) or digitally imaged.

- GovernorLastName_Commendations
 - 2019_CommendationsList.xlsx
 - 2019_01
 - 2019_01_11_DoeJaneAppreciation.docx
 - 2019_01_20_SmithJohnAppreciation.docx
 - 2019_02
 - 2019_02_23_HallLutherCommendation.pdf
 - 2019_02_23_HallLutherNomination.pdf

Public Relations Files, Press Release Files, Remarks and Speech Files

The records listed below may be maintained in electronic folders organized either by event or by series (for example, Agendas and Speeches).

Public Relations and Press Release Files

Press releases communicate important information about an event and serve as the official statement on the matter addressed. While these press releases may be uploaded to the Office of the Governor website, the Communications Office should maintain all press releases in their original format, such as Word or PDF, within a shared drive.

Remarks and Speech Files

These records contain drafts and final copies of remarks and speeches given by the governor at various functions (legislature, meetings, interviews, conventions, or other public functions) on different subjects (inaugural address, the State of the State address, state budget, etc.). Drafts of remarks and speeches that differ substantially from the final version demonstrate the author's decision-making process and should be retained for their research significance.

As seen below, (1) public relations and press release files and (2) remarks and speech files should be part of an event file created within the folder for each month of a governor's administration.

Each file should be named with the posting or speech date and a concise description.

- GovernorLastName_PublicityFiles
 - GovernorLastName_2019_02
 - 2019_02_06_DecaturRobotics
 - 2019_02_06_DecaturRobotics_Agenda.docx
 - 2019_02_06_DecaturRobotics_Background.pdf
 - 2019_02_06_DecaturRobotics_MediaAdvisory.pdf
 - 2018_02_06_DecaturRobotics_PressRelease.docx
 - 2019_02_06_DecaturRobotics_Remarks.pdf
 - 2019_02_06_DecaturRobotics_Speech_Draft.pdf
 - 2019_02_06_DecaturRobotics_Speech.pdf
 - 2019_02_11_FarmersMarketDay
 - 2019_02_11_FarmersMarketDay_Agenda.pdf
 - 2019_02_11_FarmersMarketDay_Background.pdf
 - 2019_02_11_FarmersMarketDay_MediaAdvisory.pdf
 - 2019_02_11_FarmersMarketDay_Remarks.docx
 - GovernorLastName_2019_03

- 2019_03_20_100DayPressConference
 - 2019_03_20_100DayPressConference_Agenda.pdf
 - 2019_03_20_100DayPressConference_MediaAdvisory.docx
 - 2019_03_20_100DayPressConference_Remarks.pdf
 - 2019_03_20_100DayPressConference_RemarksHandwrittenNotes.pdf
- 2019_03_27_TornadoDamage
 - 2019_03_27_TornadoDamage_PressRelease.pdf
- 2019_03_28_JobsReport
 - 2019_03_28_JobsReport_Statement.pdf

Website(s)

Official websites are important sources of information about public officials and their work. Accordingly, these sources are designated as permanent records in the Office of the Governor's RDA.

Since 2005, the ADAH has captured "snapshots" of the Office of the Governor's website through a process called web crawling. The crawls capture the website approximately two times a year. The ADAH uses a service called Archive-It to perform these crawls.

Please note that records like press releases, executive orders, speeches, proclamations, videos, photographs, and other material posted on a website will NOT be captured by Archive-It. ***The ADAH cannot preserve documents, images, or video posted on websites.*** Files posted on a website should be saved with other records of the same type on a hard drive or server in the folder to which they belong (Photographs, Press Releases, etc.). Create a document detailing contextual information for future researchers, such as event name, city, location, and names of persons pictured in website images, and captions. Context documents should be stored alongside posted content files in a shared drive.

The staff member responsible for the website should contact the ADAH to ensure that the ADAH has a complete list of URLs for all website(s) being used. Please notify Becky.Hebert@archives.alabama.gov if the website undergoes a significant redesign or other major changes, such as altering the website's URL or adding a new tab of content.

To view preserved webpages, visit <https://archive-it.org/organizations/62>.

Social Media

Like websites, social media platforms provide crucial information about public officials and their activities. As of 2019, the Office of the Governor maintains Instagram, Facebook, Flickr, Twitter, and YouTube accounts.

Since 2005, the ADAH has captured “snapshots” of the Office of the Governor’s social media through a process called web crawling. The crawls capture a day or two of the social media’s appearance approximately four times a year. The ADAH uses a service called Archive-It to perform these crawls.

The Office of the Governor staff member responsible for the social media site should contact the ADAH to ensure that ADAH staff have a complete list of URLs for all social media sites being used. The ADAH requires a complete list but may not capture every social media site.

As stated in regards to the Office of the Governor’s website, records that are posted to social media (public relations materials, videos, speeches, etc.) will NOT be captured by the ADAH. ***The ADAH cannot preserve images, video, or documents from social media sites.*** Images posted on a social media site should be saved with other records of the same type on a hard drive or server in the folder to which they belong (Photographs, Press Releases, etc.).

As part of the Annual Records Disposition Authority (RDA) Implementation Report (due every January 15 for the previous fiscal year), the Office of the Governor is required to perform an annual export of its social media data, including Instagram, Facebook, Flickr, Twitter, YouTube, and any other social media platform in use. Some platforms, such as Facebook, offer multiple export format options (for example, HTML and JSON). Perform an export in every possible format. When possible, customize the scope of the export to transfer only public-facing data. In Facebook, for example, export posts, photos and videos, stories, and profile information, but do not export direct messages.

The ADAH can provide guidance for all social media platform exports. Contact Becky Hébert, State and Local Records Coordinator, at (334) 353-5039 or Becky.Hebert@archives.alabama.gov with questions about format preferences and the export process.

Special Project and Task Force Files

This series includes files on special projects, commissions, and/or task forces that the Governor initiated or with which the Governor was involved.

If the Office of the Governor works on a special project or task force in conjunction with another agency, the agencies involved should determine a “responsible party” for maintaining files including, but not limited to, meeting agendas, minutes, and packets. Duplicates of files for which another agency is responsible are transitory records and need not be retained.

The appropriate shared drive file structure for these records is exemplified below.

- GovernorLastName_TaskForces
 - AlabamaDrugEnforcementTaskForce
 - DrugEnforcementTaskForce_MeetingFiles
 - 2017_05_30_DrugEnforcementTaskForceAgenda
 - 2017_05_30_DrugEnforcementTaskForceMinutes
 - 2017_05_30_DrugEnforcementTaskForcePacket
 - 2017_06_09_DrugEnforcementTaskForceAgenda
 - 2017_06_09_DrugEnforcementTaskForceMinutes
 - 2017_06_09_DrugEnforcementTaskForcePacket
 - DrugEnforcementTaskForce_Reports
 - 2017_06_DrugEnforcementTaskForceInterimReport.pdf
 - 2017_11_DrugEnforcementTaskForceFinalReport.pdf

Executive Orders

Signed and sealed executive orders and executive order amendments made accessible on the Office of the Governor's website should be saved in a separate file to ensure preservation.

The Legal Office maintains paper Executive Orders and is responsible for transferring them to the ADAH.

Electronic executive orders should be organized and named according to the below model, so that records will be sorted by their three-digit executive order numbers. Please follow the continuous numbering convention established by Governor Kay Ivey in Executive Order 707. A table listing executive orders according to their old and new numbers is available here:

http://www.archives.alabama.gov/executiveorders/executive_order_rename_2017_02.pdf.

- 2017_GovernorLastName_ExecutiveOrders
 - ExecutiveOrder_No606Amend01_Economics_20170821.pdf
 - ExecutiveOrder_No710_CourtMartial_20170817.pdf
 - ExecutiveOrder_No711_VoterRegistration_20170911.pdf

Records Management and Transfer for Exiting Staff Members

Files (both paper and electronic) created during the course of your work with the Office of the Governor are public records. Public records may not be deleted, destroyed, or removed unless authorized by the Office of the Governor's Records Disposition Authority (RDA). Many public records are permanent and must be transferred to the Alabama Department of Archives and History (ADAH) for preservation.

Before leaving your position as a staff member with the Office of the Governor, contact Becky Hébert at Becky.Hebert@archives.alabama.gov to receive instructions on preparing your records for your departure. Ms. Hébert will work with you and the Office of the Governor Records Liaison to ensure that you are legally compliant with recordkeeping practices as outlined by the RDA. Files should be transferred upon the end of employment or at the end of the administration.

The ADAH will provide archival boxes and instructions on transferring permanent records. Your electronic records should be kept and organized in the centralized file structure on the department's shared drive. See instructions below, provided by Alabama's Office of the Governor IT staff, for transferring any files from your office desktop.

1. Create a compressed (zipped) folder on your desktop.

- Right click anywhere on the desktop (the screen that comes up when you log in or turn the computer on).
- Use your mouse to hover over the word "New."
- Click on the words "Compressed (zipped) Folder."
- Name the folder using the following format: LastnameFirstnameOfficesection
 - For example: DoeJohnPress or DoeJaneAppointments

2. Move your files to the new folder you just created.

- If you have individual documents that you have not organized in folders, use the mouse to drag and drop the files into the new folder one by one. Select the file by clicking once and then holding down to move it with your mouse to the new destination.
- If you have organized your files into folders, move entire folders by using the mouse to drag and drop the folder into the newly created folder. Select the folder you want to move by clicking once and then holding down to move it with your mouse to the new destination.

3. Drag and drop the zipped folder to My Documents on a shared drive.

If you have any questions, please contact Becky Hébert, State and Local Records Coordinator, at (334) 353-5039 or Becky.Hebert@archives.alabama.gov.