



CITY OF HOUSTON

Administrative Procedure

Subject: **Electronic Records Storage Certification**

A.P. No.

8-5

Effective Date:

July 12, 2012

1. AUTHORITY

- 1.1 Article VI, Section 7a of the City Charter; Chapter 2, Article IV, Division 5 of the Code of Ordinances; Texas Local Government Code §§201.001 (Local Government Records Act), & 205 (Electronic Storage of Records); Tex Admin. Code Title 13, Chapter 7 (Electronic Records Standards and Procedures); Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC) Electronic Records Standards and Procedures, Local Government Bulletin B.

2. PURPOSE

- 2.1 To provide a process whereby departments that desire to maintain electronic records as the official City record (rather than maintaining paper records) receive certification to do so in compliance with TSLAC standards.

3. OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 To provide guidelines for certification of electronic systems used to maintain records electronically.

4. DEFINITIONS

Electronic storage – The maintenance of City record data in the form of digital electronic signals on a computer hard disk, magnetic tape, optical disk, or similar machine-readable medium. For the purpose of this policy, thumb drives and external hard drives are not recognized as an electronic storage medium.

Local government record – Any document, paper, letter, book, map, photograph, sound or video recording, microfilm, magnetic tape, electronic medium, or other information recording medium, regardless of physical form or characteristic and regardless of whether public access to it is open or restricted under the laws of the state, created or received by a local government or any of its officers or employees pursuant to law, including an ordinance, or in the transaction of public business. The term does not include:

- (A) Extra identical copies of documents created only for convenience of reference or research by officers or employees of the local government;

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- (B) Notes, journals, diaries, and similar documents created by an officer or employee of the local government for the officer's or employee's personal convenience with the following exceptions: inspector's journals, arrest and investigation notes, and written notes on regarding a patient's medical condition are City records;
- (C) Blank forms;
- (D) Stocks of publications that have no historical value such as news papers, magazines reference materials, pamphlets and bulletins;
- (E) Library and museum materials acquired solely for the purposes of reference or display;
- (F) Copies of documents in any media furnished to members of the public to which they are entitled under Chapter 552, Government Code, or other state law; or
- (G) Any records, correspondence, notes, memoranda, or documents, other than a final written agreement described by Section 2009.054(c), Government Code, associated with a matter conducted under an alternative dispute resolution procedure in which personnel of a state department or institution, local government, special district, or other political subdivision of the state participated as a party, facilitated as an impartial third party, or facilitated as the administrator of a dispute resolution system or organization.

Local government record data – The information that by law, regulation, rule of court, ordinance, or administrative procedure in a local government comprises a local government record as defined by Local Government Code §201.003.

Source document – The local government record from which local government record data is obtained for electronic storage. The term does not include backup copies of the data in any media generated from electronic storage.

5. SCOPE

- 5.1 This Policy applies to all City departments.

6. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 6.1 Departments are responsible for following the City Records Management Retention Plan. A department that wants to store local government records and local government record data electronically must complete an “Electronic Records Storage Authorization Request for Certification and Acceptance” of the electronic records system in which the records will be stored. Departments must receive certification of compliance with TSLAC standards for electronic records in accordance with Local Government Bulletin B, Electronic Records Standards and Procedures, prior to relying on electronic storage as the official record.
- 6.2 The Administration & Regulatory Affairs Department (ARA), Records Management Division, will provide assistance and support to departments requesting certification, will process the authorization request, and will provide documentation of certification of compliance when certification requirements have been met.

7. POLICY

- 7.1 Once certification requirements are met and verified by the Records Management Division, the digitized version of a record shall be treated as the official City record and all other physical copies may be destroyed.
- 7.2 Retention periods are not affected by the manner in which the record is maintained.

8. PROCEDURE

- 8.1 Each department that desires to maintain records in electronic format instead of paper/hard copy shall contact ARA's Records Management Division for assistance in completing the application for certification found on ARA's Records Management Archival Forms webpage: <http://choice.cityofhouston.net/ara/archive.html>.
- 8.2 The application forms generated from this webpage shall be sent to the Records Management Division for review and processing. Until certification is approved, the department will continue to maintain a paper/hard copy of all documents.
- 8.3 An index to local government record data stored electronically must provide the same information required by state law for an index to the source document.