Completing the Online RM-3 Form

Documenting the authorized destruction of public records is required by the Code of Virginia §42.1-86.1. It also provides agencies at all levels of Virginia government with a layer of defensibility when questions arise regarding a records existence or disposition. Proper documentation shows that records were disposed of in accordance with Library of Virginia (LVA) Records Retention and Disposition Schedules, and with records management best practices.

For *An Overview of Records Destruction*, please see the fifth Records Management Training video.

To initiate the authorization of records destruction, the Form Creator will:

1) Open the online Certificate of Records Destruction

2) Under *Organization Information*
   a) Click the *State Agency or* Locality dropdown box and select either *State Agency* or *Locality / Regional Entity* (hereafter all referred to as "agency")
   b) Click the *Agency Name* box that appears and select the agency.
      i) If the agency name is not found, then that indicates the agency is not on file with the LVA's Records Management Section.
      ii) This may be confirmed via the RO Contacts Search page. An agency designates a RO by correctly completing and submitting the *Records Officer Designation and Responsibilities (RM-25 Form)*, found at the bottom right of the Forms page.
   c) If this authorization for destruction is for records of the agency as a whole, rather than those of a division or department, proceed to step "f."
   d) As needed, select from their respective dropdown boxes the appropriate *Division/ Department* (*Dept.)* and any appropriate *Sub-Department* (*Sub-dept*.).
      i) For state agencies and regional entities, *Dept.* will not be populated and *Sub-dept.* will not appear if no RO has been respectively designated and the department/.
      ii) For localities, *Dept.* will be populated with a standard set of county, city, and town departments.
         (1) For localities that have designated ROs for other non-standard *Depts.* and *Sub-depts*., those will likewise appear in their respective dropdown boxes.
      iii) *Other* may be chosen from under *Departments* and another department name typed into the *"Other" Department Name* free-form field that appears.
         (1) If there is no agency-wide RO designated, *Other* will appear in the *Dept.* box, but will not be a useable option, as no name will appear in the "Designated Records Officer" box.
         (2) There is no "Other" Sub-department.

e) If an agency needs to add departments or sub-departments, advise your RO, who will forward the request to the agency's LVA records management analyst.

f) Select the appropriate Designated Records Officer (RO).

i) If "Depts" (and, as needed, "Sub-Depts") are selected, and there are ROs designated respectively, the agency-wide RO(s) will appear at the bottom of the dropdown box, above which will be the "Dept." RO(s), above which will be any "Sub-dept" RO(s). Select the RO that conforms to your agency's guidance.

ii) If no RO appears, or the RO expected to appear does not, then that is an indication that the RO's account no longer contains a valid email address. The agency/office RO should notify the assigned LVA analyst about this.

3) In the *Approving Official* freeform fields, enter the name, e-mail address twice (for validation), and title of the person agency/dept/sub-dept who will know whether there is a hold (litigation, audit, FOIA, request, investigation, etc.) in place or be reasonably aware of one forthcoming, that would require the continued retention of these records. This person's approval of the form will affirm that no holds are in place or are reasonably anticipated. The *Title* field does not accept any type of punctuation mark. [Note: an incorrect e-mail address here will irrevocably prevent the form from getting to the approving official.]

4) Complete all fields under *Organization Address* using the agency's preference for a physical or mailing address. The central contact information for the agency may be used, or that for the dept/sub-dept responsible for the records.

5) Under *Records to be Destroyed*:

a) Click *Add New Record*.

b) Select the *Schedule* and *Series* for the records subject to destruction

i) The optional *Series Notes* field may be used to indicate an internal title used for these records.

c) Indicate the records' *Begin* and *End* dates. Approximate, if needed. Dates may be entered in MM/DD/YY format.

d) Select the *Volume Unit*.

i) For paper or other analog records, choose *Cubic Feet*. You may wish to consult the LVA's Volume Equivalency Table for help in estimating the cubic footage.

ii) For electronic records, choose an appropriate byte unit.

e) Type the number that represents the "Volume Amount" of records that will be destroyed, going out no further than two decimal places.

f) Choose the appropriate *Destruction Method.*

i) For analog records that require confidential destruction, the options are *Burned, Pulped, Shredded,* and *Media Destruction* (for audio/video tapes, film, etc.).

(1) For series allowing non-confidential destruction, the same options are available, plus *Recycled* and *Trashed*.

ii) For electronic records that require confidential destruction, the options are *Overwritten, Degaussed* (for magnetic media), and *Physically Destroyed* (destruction of the drive, disc, or other storage media containing the records).
(1) The same options are available for non-confidential destruction, plus *Deleted.*

g) Optional *Location*: type brief indication of where the records have been stored.
h) Click the *Add New Record* button, if needed, to include up to fifteen (15) series per form. The Form Creator may remove a record entry prior to submitting this form.
i) Destruction of records in the same series should be entered into a form only once, unless there is a gap in the date ranges or both analog and electronic destruction is being reported for the same series.

6) Under *Form Creator, e*nter your name, e-mail address twice (for validation), telephone number, and title in the respective fields. The *Title* field does not accept any type of punctuation mark. [Note: an incorrect e-mail address entered here will irrevocably prevent the process from moving forward]

7) Click the "Submit Completed Form" button at the bottom of the form.
   a) A web page will thank you for submitting the certificate and ask you to check your inbox for a verification e-mail in order to proceed. Close the browser/tab.

8) Open the verification e-mail that arrives in your inbox.
   a) Click the *Confirm Email* button. This ensures that the Form Creator actually has access to this e-mail address (a security measure).
   b) Receive a message in a new browser window that the form has been sent to the Approving Official designated in step 3. Close browser/tab and delete the e-mail.

For the Approving Official (AO) to affirm records for / withhold records from destruction:

9) The AO will:
   a) Receive an email containing the subject "Approving Review Required for RM-3 *#FormNum* ~~from *Form Creator's Name*~~"
   b) Open the e-mail to confirm the Form Creator's (FC) name and e-mail address.
      i) If they are not recognized, close the e-mail, delete it, and do nothing more.
      ii) If they are recognized, click the *Begin Approving* button to open a web form.

10) Review all entries created by the FC for accuracy and any holds.

11) <u>If the form appears accurate and there are no current, pending, or reasonably anticipated holds</u> (audits, subpoenas, FOIA requests, investigations or any other reason to delay destruction) on these records, then under *Affirmation*:

i) Click the check box that affirms that there is no reason to withhold the records from destruction
ii) Click the *Approve Certificate* button.
iii) Close the browser window containing the message that the form has been sent to the Records Officer for approval.
iv) Delete the FC e-mail.
v) The process continues at Step 14.

If the Approving Official (AO) determines that the form contains inaccuracies or record series for which a hold is in place or anticipated:

12) the AO will:
   a) Click the flag next to any or all respective, inaccurate field(s).
   b) Enter a brief *Reason for Flagging* in the appearing text box(es).
   c) Click the *Return for Revision* button that now appears at the bottom of the form.
   d) Close the browser window indicating the form has been sent to the creator for editing.
   e) Delete the FC e-mail.

13) The FC will:
   a) Receive the e-mail containing the subject *Edits Required for RM-3 #FormNum*
   b) Open the message and click the *Begin Editing* button.
   c) Scroll through the form to identify the flagged fields.
      i) If a flag appears next to all of the series under *Records to be Destroyed,* with the text box(es) indicating that all series are subject to a hold, then the FC will:
         (1) Close the browser window and delete the AO e-mail.
         (2) Receive an e-mail in eleven (11) days containing the subject *Reminder: Edits Required for RM-3 #FormNum*.
            (a) If the hold has been lifted, resume the process.
            (b) If the hold has not been lifted, retain the e-mail.
            (c) If the hold is lifted within the next sixty-four (64) days, return to the *Reminder:* e-mail and complete the process.
            (d) If the hold is not lifted within the next sixty-four days:
               (i) Delete the e-mail that will arrive containing the subject *Form ID #FormNum has been removed due to inactivity*.
               (ii) Delete the *Reminder:* e-mail, ending the process here.
      ii) If the form can be corrected, the FC will:
         (1) Complete the corrections
         (2) Click the *Submit Completed Form* button at bottom of the form.
         (3) Close the browser window that indicates the edits have been sent to the AO.
         (4) Delete the AO's *Edits Required* e-mail.
         (5) The process returns to Step 9.

14) **After the Approving Official has affirmed that there are no holds**, the Records Officer (RO) will:
    a) Receive an email, subject "Officer Review Required for RM-3 #*FormNum*~~ from *FCname*~~"
    b) Open the e-mail and confirm the FC and AO names and e-mail addresses are accurate.
    c) Click the *Begin Approving* link to review the form for completeness and accuracy.

15) If **no** incompleteness or inaccuracies are found:
    a) Enter any optional notes in the *Records Officer Notes* free-form field.
    b) Under *Final Destruction Authorization Recipient*, click the radio button to designate who will affirm the records' destruction, the FC or the RO. This should be the person with the specific knowledge of when the records were destroyed.
    c) Under *Affirmation*, if the statements can be affirmed, click the check box.
    d) Click *Approve Certificate.*
    e) Close the browser indicating *the final email has been sent to confirm the records have been destroyed* and delete the AO e-mail.
    f) *The process moves to Step 17*

16) If **any** incompleteness or inaccuracies are found:
    a) Click the flag next to the errant field(s) and enter a brief *Reason for Flagging*.
    b) Click the *Return for Revision* button at the bottom of the form.
    c) Close the browser window indicating the form has been sent to the creator for editing.
    d) Delete the AO e-mail.
    e) The process returns to Step 13, omitting sub-step c) i).

17) Either the FC or the RO affirming destruction will:
    a) Receive the e-mail "Records Destruction Affirmation for RM-3 #*FormNum"*
    b) If needed, open the e-mail and click *View* Records to review the records authorized for destruction.
    c) Close and hold the e-mail until the records have been destroyed.
    d) Shortly following destruction, best practice is the same day, open the e-mail and click *View Records.*
    e) At the bottom, under *Affirmation,* click the check box and then *Affirm Destruction*
    f) Close the browser window confirming destruction and delete the affirmation e-mail.

18) Following the affirmation of destruction, the Form Creator (FC) and the Records Officer (RO) will receive an e-mail with the subject, "Records Destruction Form #*FormNum* has been completed"
    a) Open the e-mail and click on the "View Completed Form" button

b) A browser window will open, displaying the completed form and a *Print Form* button at the top.
c) The completed form may be reviewed and printed to paper or pdf, or not at all. The agency will no longer have to keep a copy. All forms completed via this process will be available on the Completed RM-3 Forms webpage.
d) Close the browser form and delete the *Destruction Form* e-mail.

General Notes:

1. After eleven (11) days of inactivity at any step in the process, the person in the role at which the process has stalled will receive an e-mail which will contain the same subject line as the initial message preceded by *Reminder:* If the inactivity occurs the first time the process goes to the Approving Official, the Form Creator will be copied.
2. On the seventy-fifth (75th) day of inactivity, the person in the role at which the process has stalled, as well as the Form Creator, will receive an email containing the notification that *Form ID #FormNum has been removed due to inactivity.*
3. Along with the Completed RM-3 Forms webpage, there is also a dashboard from which In-Progress forms may be monitored. Tip: After either search form has been filled out, and the *Search Forms* button clicked, the results page may be saved as a favorite or bookmark and then used as a shortcut to your frequently viewed pages.