

Records Maintenance and Release

803.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidance on the maintenance and release of office records. Protected information is separately covered in the Protected Information Policy.

803.2 POLICY

The Ottawa County Sheriff's Office is committed to providing public access to records in a manner that is consistent with the Ohio Public Records Act (ORC § 149.43).

803.3 CUSTODIAN OF RECORDS

The Sheriff shall designate a Custodian of Records. The responsibilities of the Custodian of Records include but are not limited to (ORC § 149.43):

- (a) Managing the records management system for the Office, including the retention, archiving, release and destruction of office public records.
- (b) Maintaining and updating the office records retention schedule, including:
 1. Identifying the minimum length of time the Office must keep records.
 2. Identifying the office division responsible for the original record.
 3. Making a copy of the current retention schedule readily available to the public.
- (c) Identifying records or portions of records that are confidential under state or federal law and not open for inspection or copying.
- (d) Establishing rules regarding the processing of subpoenas for the production of records.
- (e) Ensuring the availability of a current schedule of fees for public records as allowed by law.
- (f) Preparing a notice that incorporates this policy and ensuring that it is displayed in conspicuous places in all locations where office records are available to the public.
- (g) Maintaining current information on the office website that relates to public records release.
- (h) Ensuring that records are organized and maintained in such a manner as to make them available for inspection or copying.
- (i) Selecting appropriate public records, if any, to publish on the office website.

803.4 PROCESSING REQUESTS FOR PUBLIC RECORDS

Any office member who receives a request for any record shall route the request to the Custodian of Records or the authorized designee.

803.4.1 REQUESTS FOR RECORDS

The processing of requests for any record is subject to the following (ORC § 149.43):

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- (a) The Office is not required to create records that do not exist.
- (b) When a record contains material with release restrictions and material that is not subject to release restrictions, the restricted material shall be redacted and the unrestricted material released.
 - 1. A copy of the redacted release should be maintained in the case file for proof of what was actually released and as a place to document the reasons for the redactions. If the record is audio or video, a copy of the redacted audio/video release should be maintained in the office-approved media storage system and a notation should be made in the case file to document the release and the reasons for the redacted portions.
 - 2. The requester shall be notified of any redaction in the public record if the redaction is not plainly visible.
- (c) If a request is ambiguous or overly broad, or if the Custodian of Records cannot reasonably identify what public records are being requested, the request may be denied.
 - 1. The requester shall be provided with an opportunity to revise the request and shall be informed by the Custodian of Records of the manner in which records are maintained by the Office and how the records are accessed in the ordinary course of business.
- (d) A person requesting records may be asked to make a request for records in writing to expedite processing of the request and may be asked for his/her identity. Prior to such a request, the person shall be told that:
 - 1. There is no requirement to provide a written request.
 - 2. There is no requirement to provide his/her identity.
 - 3. There is no requirement to disclose the intended use of the records.
 - 4. The purpose of the written request or disclosure of the person's identity or intended use would benefit the person making the request by enhancing the ability of the Custodian of Records to identify, locate or deliver the records requested.
- (e) Fees for copies or the cost of delivery of the records to the requester via mail should be paid in advance.
- (f) If a request is denied, either in whole or in part, the Custodian of Records shall provide the requester with an explanation setting forth the reason(s) for the denial, including the legal authority relied upon in making the determination. If the initial request was in writing, the explanation shall also be provided in writing.

803.5 RELEASE RESTRICTIONS

Examples of release restrictions include:

- (a) Any personal identifying information, including an individual's photograph; Social Security and driver identification numbers; name, address, and telephone number; and medical or disability information that is contained in any driver license record,

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motor vehicle record, or any office record, including traffic collision reports, is restricted except as authorized by the Office, and only when such use or disclosure is permitted or required by law to carry out a legitimate law enforcement purpose (18 USC § 2721; 18 USC § 2722; ORC § 4501.27; ORC § 149.45).

- (b) Victim information that may be protected by statutes, including photographs or images of victims as prohibited by ORC § 149.43 (ORC § 2907.11).
- (c) Juvenile-related information that may be protected by statutes (ORC § 149.435).
- (d) Confidential investigatory records of the Office that pertain to a law enforcement matter of criminal, quasi-criminal, civil, or administrative nature if release would create a high probability of disclosure of any of the following (ORC § 149.43):
 - 1. Identity of a suspect not yet charged with an offense to which the record pertains.
 - 2. Identity of an information source or witness to whom confidentiality has been reasonably assured. This also includes information provided by an information source or witness if the release would tend to disclose the person's identity.
 - 3. Confidential investigatory techniques, procedures, or specific investigatory work product.
 - 4. Information that would endanger the life or physical safety of a member, crime victim, witness, or confidential information source.
- (e) Certain types of reports involving but not limited to child abuse and molestation (ORC § 2151.421) and adult abuse (ORC § 5101.61).
- (f) Records pertaining to the residential or family information of peace officers and dispatchers (ORC § 149.43).
- (g) Personally identifiable information of a program participant of the Ohio Secretary of State's address confidentiality program (ORC § 149.43).
- (h) Restricted portions of recordings made by a dashcam or a member's body-worn camera as provided in ORC § 149.43(A)(1). Certain recordings may be disclosed with the consent of the subject of the recording or the subject's representative pursuant to the requirements of ORC §149.43 (H)(1).
- (i) Telephone numbers for a person involved in a motor vehicle accident or a witness of a crime as provided in ORC § 149.43.
- (j) Any other information that may be appropriately denied by ORC §149.43(A)(1).

803.5.1 ENHANCED RECORDS ACCESS BY JOURNALISTS

- (a) Journalists, as defined in ORC § 149.43, are entitled to enhanced access to certain records not available to the general public provided:
 - 1. The request is in writing.
 - 2. Journalists identify themselves by name, title, and employer's name and address.
 - 3. Journalists establish and sign a request that the information sought is in the public interest.

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(b) Records available to journalists but not the general public include:

1. Personal residential addresses of a deputy or dispatcher of this office (ORC § 149.43).
2. The business name and address of a spouse, former spouse, or child of a deputy of this office, only if employed by a public office (ORC § 149.43).
3. Coroner records pursuant to ORC § 313.10.
4. The name, county of residence, and date of birth of a person for whom the sheriff issued, suspended, or revoked a permit for a concealed weapon (ORC § 2923.129).
5. The names, addresses, and telephone numbers of workers' compensation claimants (ORC § 4123.88).
6. Limited information about minors involved in a school vehicle accident (ORC § 149.43).

803.6 SUBPOENAS AND DISCOVERY REQUESTS

Any member who receives a subpoena duces tecum or discovery request for records should promptly contact a supervisor and the Custodian of Records for review and processing. While a subpoena duces tecum may ultimately be subject to compliance, it is not an order from the court that will automatically require the release of the requested information.

Generally, discovery requests and subpoenas from criminal defendants and their authorized representatives (including attorneys) should be referred to the County Prosecutor, Prosecuting Attorney or the courts.

All questions regarding compliance with any subpoena duces tecum or discovery request should be promptly referred to legal counsel for the Office so that a timely response can be prepared.

803.7 RELEASED RECORDS TO BE MARKED

Each page of any written record released pursuant to this policy should be stamped in a colored ink or otherwise marked to indicate the office name and to whom the record was released.

Each audio/video recording released should include the office name and to whom the record was released.

803.8 SECURITY BREACHES

Members who become aware that any Ottawa County Sheriff's Office system containing personal information may have been breached should notify the Records Clerk as soon as practicable. The Records Clerk shall ensure the required notice is given to any resident of this state whose unsecured personal information is reasonably believed to have been acquired by an unauthorized person (ORC § 1347.12).

Notice shall be given in the most expedient time possible but not later than 45 days following its discovery or notice of the breach consistent with any measures necessary to determine the scope

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of the breach, including which residents' personal information was accessed and acquired and to restore the reasonable integrity of the data system. Notice may be delayed if notification will impede a criminal investigation or jeopardize homeland or national security but notice shall be made once it is determined that disclosure or notification will not compromise the investigation or jeopardize homeland or national security (ORC § 1347.12).

For the purposes of the notice requirement, personal information includes an individual's first name or first initial and last name in combination with any one or more of the following (ORC § 1347.12):

- (a) Social Security number
- (b) Driver's license number or Ohio identification card number
- (c) Full account number, credit or debit card number, in combination with and linked to any required security code, access code, or password that would permit access to an individual's financial account

If the breach reasonably appears to have been made to protected information covered in the Protected Information Policy, the Records Clerk should promptly notify the appropriate member designated to oversee the security of protected information (see the Protected Information Policy).

803.9 SEALED RECORDS OR EXPUNGEMENT

Expungement orders or an order to seal records received by the Office shall be reviewed for appropriate action by the Custodian of Records. The Custodian of Records shall expunge or seal such records as ordered by the court. Records may include but are not limited to a record of arrest, investigation, detention, or conviction. Once expunged or sealed, members shall respond to any inquiry as though the record did not exist.

803.10 TRAINING

The Custodian of Records and any member who may be responsible for access or release of public records shall attend training approved by the Ohio Attorney General, such as that provided by the Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police (OACP).

The Custodian of Records and all office members shall acknowledge and sign that they have read and received a copy of this policy (ORC § 149.43).