

Electronic Public Records Policy

In an effort to make electronic records more accessible to the public, the North Carolina General Assembly enacted N.C.G.S. 132-6.1. This section requires every public agency to create an index of computer databases; the section applies to all databases compiled or created by the agency since July 1, 1997. This index is to be a public record and shall include, at a minimum, the following information about each database: a list of the data fields; a description of the format or record layout; information as to the frequency with which the database is updated; a list of any data fields to which public access is restricted; a description of each form in which the database can be copied or reproduced using the agency's computer facilities; and a schedule of fees for the production of copies in each available form.

The form, content, and guidelines for this index have been developed by the North Carolina Division of Archives and History.

The Division of Archives recommend that each agency designate an electronic records officer, whose responsibilities are as follows:

- to serve as the County's primary contact regarding database indexing guidelines and requirements,
- to develop uniform procedures for handling user requests for electronic records,
- to facilitate communications between the Division of Archive and History and the department's staff directly responsible for meeting the requirements of N.C.G.S. as defined in this policy,
- and to compile a county-wide index for distribution.
- This policy directs that the Information Services Director shall serve as Electronic Records Officer.

In addition, the Randolph County Information Services Policy Committee shall make primary decisions about the agency's overall electronic public records management in accordance with recommendations from the Division of Archive and History. It is important to note that neither the Committee nor the Electronic Records Officer has the overall responsibility of insuring compliance with N.C.G.S. 132-6.1. Compliance can only be accomplished with the help and cooperation of every County employee who operates a computer. To assist the Electronic Records Officer, County employees must complete a database inventory annually. For it to be effective, the creation and maintenance of this index must be a team effort. Furthermore, it is recommended that all vendor-supplied software purchased contain indexing information as part of the purchase.

This policy was created in cooperation with the Randolph County Staff Attorney. To the extent that this policy affects the public's access to records under N.C.G.S. 132-9, an official or employee who acts pursuant to this policy is deemed to be acting under the advice of an attorney.