

ARIZONA CODE OF JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION
Part 1: Judicial Branch Administration
Chapter 5: Automation
Section 1-507: Protection of Electronic Records in Paperless Court Operations

A. Definitions. In this section, the definitions set out in section 1-504 apply. In addition:

“Administrative record” means any record created or received by a court that does not pertain to a particular case or controversy filed with a court. Administrative records include any record maintained by any board, committee, commission, council, or regulatory body, including records of the regulation and discipline of attorneys.

“Case management system” (CMS) means the information system that captures, maintains and provides access to data related to court cases over time, enabling systematic control of records through their lifecycle. It is often connected to a document management system that stores case-related documents electronically.

“Case record” means any record pertaining to a particular case or controversy.

“Closed case” means any case file record that is no longer subject to modification.

“Cloud-hosted” refers to data storage or computer applications that reside on remote servers outside of court premises and accessible using the Internet.

“Courts” means courts or clerks of court.

“Electronic record” means any record that requires the aid of a computer to be read, including imaged documents and files, whether stored in an EDMS or a CMS.

“Electronic archive” means an electronic document repository consisting of imaged or e-filed documents associated only with closed cases.

“Electronic document management system (EDMS)” means a collection of computer software application programs and hardware devices that provides a means of organizing and controlling the creation, management and retrieval of documents through their life cycle.

“Offsite” means a temperature-controlled storage location physically located sufficient distance away from the main storage environment that an adverse event that affects the one does not affect the other.

“Online” means the storage of digital data on magnetic disks (such as hard drives) to make it directly and quickly accessible on the network using the application associated with the data.

“Regulatory case record” means any record that pertains to the regulation of a particular professional or business registered, licensed or certified pursuant to rules adopted by the supreme court.

“Storage” means a permanent repository for holding digital data that retains its content until purposely erased, even when electrical power is removed.

B. Applicability. This section is applicable to electronic case records, administrative records and regulatory case records in the custody of judicial entities in Arizona, as defined by Supreme Court Rule 123.

C. Purpose. This section provides minimum technical and document management prerequisites for destruction of paper records for which equivalent electronic records exist.

D. Requirements Applicable to Case Records.

1. General Requirements.

- a. Courts shall not create or store electronic records using systems that employ proprietary designs, formats, software, or media or that require use of non-standard devices to access records, in accordance with ACJA § 1-504(C)(1).
- b. Courts shall preserve all electronic documents so that the content of the original document is not altered in any way and the appearance of the document when displayed or printed closely resembles the original paper without any material alteration, in accordance with ACJA § 1-506(D)(1).
- c. Courts shall preserve evidence and fingerprints in their submitted format – hardcopy items shall not be converted to electronic records for the purpose of storage and electronically submitted items shall not be converted to hardcopy for the purpose of storage.
- d. Printouts of electronic records shall be provided to other courts, as needed, unless arrangements have been made for those courts to receive electronic documents in lieu of paper.

2. Document Management Requirements.

- a. Courts shall use an electronic document management system (EDMS) that complies with ACJA § 1-505, or be granted an exception by Commission on Technology to use a non-conforming system.
- b. If not cloud-hosted, EDMS application data shall reside on at least two physically separate servers each using separate storage. Replication shall be employed not less than daily to maintain synchronization of the application data stores for disaster recovery purposes.
- c. At least six months of full-time production use of an EDMS is required before a court may request authorization to begin destroying the paper records corresponding to electronic records stored on the system, as required by paragraph (F) of this section.

3. Storage Requirements.

- a. If not cloud hosted, courts shall maintain primary and secondary copies of records online at all times using at least two physically separate storage devices configured to ensure the failure of any component will not impact the integrity of the data. New records shall be written simultaneously to all disk arrays. Data replication must be in as near-real-time as possible, not to exceed 30 minutes, within the available network constraints.
- b. For on-premises systems, primary and secondary storage shall be designed with redundant hardware and software to support fast recovery of data. Use of personal computers containing extra hard drives or attached storage devices is prohibited.
- c. Courts shall use redundant network paths to connect workstations and imaging devices to EDMS application servers.
- d. For on-premises systems, courts shall employ uninterruptable power supplies and software that ensure a controlled shutdown of servers after batteries have been in use for at least five minutes.
- e. Courts shall store a tertiary copy of records on highly-secured, immutable backup media. The tertiary copy shall only be accessed through a gateway technology that prevents direct access to the storage media from the system(s) being backed up. Manufacturer's usage specifications and backup system media replacement guidelines shall be followed at all times, in accordance with ACJA § 1-504(G)(2).
- f. At a minimum, the tertiary backup shall be performed daily using automated backup software.
- g. Backups shall be stored in a secure, environmentally controlled, offsite location and retained a minimum of 28 days. Full backups should be made not less than weekly and retained a minimum of 28 days offsite.
- h. Backup and restoration procedures shall be documented and tested for effectiveness.
- i. Scanned records shall appear on the backup media as well as primary and secondary storage before corresponding paper is destroyed.

4. Imaging and Indexing Requirements.

- a. Scanning quality must comply with *Recommended Practices for Quality Control of Image Scanners* (ANSI/AIIM MS44-1988 (R1993)), in accordance with ACJA § 1-504(D)(3).
- b. The EDMS shall be integrated with the CMS or the following categories of metadata (as a minimum) shall be recorded in the EDMS:

- Case number (including type code),
 - Party names,
 - Standard document type identifier,
 - Date of filing, and,
 - Citing agency number, where applicable.
- c. Index entries shall be verified to ensure records are accurately retrieved prior to destruction of any corresponding paper originals. Un-retrievable records shall be rescanned and re-indexed until they prove to be accurately retrieved from the EDMS.

5. Support and Maintenance Requirements.

- a. At least one court employee or contractor must hold a current Hyland Certified OnBase Administrator Expert credential or equivalent certification, including for any approved, non-conforming EDMS.
- b. When any system outage occurs, all records must be available not later than the end of the following business day. If lost, redundancy must be re-established as quickly as is practicable, even if records remain fully available in the non-redundant state.
- c. Records generated by or received by courts shall be preserved in accordance with the applicable records retention schedule. Case records required to be submitted to Arizona State Library, Archives, and Public Records (ASLAPR) shall meet the submittal requirements specified by ASLAPR at the time of submittal, regardless of storage medium. Records destruction is subject to the notification requirements of ASLAPR.
- d. In accordance with ACJA § 1-504(F)(3), courts shall periodically refresh electronic records in order to ensure their accessibility for as long as the applicable records retention schedule requires. Refresh procedures may require recopying of files to new media or storage arrays over time.
- e. Courts shall ensure continued accessibility via a planned migration path so devices, media, and technologies used to store and retrieve records are not allowed to become obsolete and are promptly replaced or upgraded, in accordance with ACJA § 1-504(F)(1).
- f. Courts shall ensure that any new equipment or software replacing that used in an existing system is backward compatible and shall obtain a vendor certification that the system will convert 100 percent of the images and index data to the new system so access to existing electronic records is never impeded, in accordance with ACJA § 1-504(F)(2).

E. Requirements Applicable to Administrative and Regulatory Case Records.

Requirements applicable to case records in paragraph (D) apply to administrative and regulatory case records with the following modifications.

1. If not cloud-hosted, the EDMS application may reside on one server, rather than two separate servers.
2. Copies of the records may be limited to one primary copy and one backup copy. The primary copy of all electronic records shall be maintained online at all times.
3. Servers used for an electronic archive shall be located in a secure, environmentally controlled area.
4. The backup copy of the records shall be stored on highly-secured, immutable, backup media. The tertiary copy shall only be accessed through a gateway technology that prevents direct access to the storage media from the system(s) being backed up. Manufacturer's usage specifications and backup system media replacement guidelines shall be followed at all times, in accordance with ACJA § 1-504(G)(2).
5. At a minimum, a daily, backup of the primary copy of records shall be made using automated backup software.
6. Backups shall be stored in a secure, environmentally controlled, offsite location and retained a minimum of 28 days. Full backups should be made not less than weekly and retained a minimum of 28 days offsite before reuse.
7. When any system outage occurs, all records must be available not later than the end of the tenth business day.

F. Authorization to Destroy Paper Case Records. Any court desiring to implement a paperless case record operation shall obtain advance written approval of its operational policies and EDMS infrastructure as described herein from the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC). The AOC shall provide a form for courts to use to request approval. The form shall include a checklist of audit criteria for electronic records management practices and infrastructure.

1. Courts not using an EDMS on the effective date of this section shall complete and submit a written notice of intent to comply with the requirements of this section prior to purchasing an electronic records management system. The court shall submit the AOC request form after not less than six months of full-time production use of an EDMS.
2. Courts already using an EDMS on the effective date of this section shall submit the AOC request form and indicate the date on which full-scale production use of the installed EDMS commenced.
3. The presiding judge of the county, presiding judge of the court, and, elected clerk of court, if any, shall sign the AOC request form prior to submittal to the AOC.
4. The AOC shall formally review each request, working with court representatives to ensure that all requirements of this section are satisfied and electronic records are adequately safeguarded.

5. The AOC shall notify the court in writing of the authorization to destroy paper records. The authorization shall contain an effective date and a reminder of the audit criteria.
6. Court operational review evaluations shall include management of electronic records at courts granted authority to destroy paper records.
7. Authorization is not needed to destroy paper case records maintained in the central document repository supported by the AOC or other document repository approved by the Arizona Judicial Council or the Commission on Technology, provided the court complies with paragraphs (D)(1)(c)&(d), (D)(4)(b)&(c), and (D)(5)(c) of this section and all related operational requirements of ACJA §§ 1-504 and 1-506.

G. Authorization to Destroy Paper Administrative and Regulatory Case Records. The presiding judge of the county is authorized to approve destruction of paper administrative and regulatory case records maintained by the courts under the presiding judge's supervision. The administrative director is authorized to approve destruction of paper administrative and regulatory case records maintained by the AOC. They shall ensure that the applicable standards and protocols established by paragraphs (E) have been met before approving destruction of paper records. Superior court clerks who meet the requirements of paragraphs (E) are authorized to destroy the paper administrative and regulatory records they maintain without prior approval of the presiding judge.

H. Electronic Archives of Closed Cases in Limited Jurisdiction Courts. Justice and municipal courts that wish to create an electronic archive of closed case files and destroy the corresponding paper records prior to the applicable retention and destruction date shall meet all standards and protocols in paragraph (D), with the following modifications:

1. Copies of the archived records can be limited to one primary copy and one backup copy.
2. On-premises servers used for an electronic archive shall be located in a secure, environmentally controlled area.
3. A daily, incremental backup of the primary copy of records added to the electronic archive shall be made using automated backup software.
4. Courts are not required to have redundant network pathways from end-user devices to the electronic archive.
5. When any system outage occurs, all archived records must be available not later than the end of the fifth business day.

Adopted by Administrative Order 2008-99, effective December 10, 2008. Amended by Administrative Order 2012-07, effective January 11, 2012. Amended by Administrative Order 2016-113, effective November 2, 2016. Amended by Administrative Order 2026-91, effective July 8, 2026.