

*Public Safety Records and
Technology Compliance Solutions*

Brian Cash
Director of Training
June 2019

Does your agency push a lot of paper? Print things out unnecessarily? Create files for records which are already in a system? PRI teaches a lot about the importance of establishing a records management plan. It really shouldn't be a question of whether you should create a records management plan, but rather one of how fast can you get it done. Having a well thought-out, comprehensive plan really does make records management much easier.

I came into law enforcement records management from the sworn side of the house. As a patrol officer, I really had no clue what "Records" did beyond printing and filing my reports. During my detective years, I learned a lot more about the importance of records management as I gained experience working on a couple of major cases. When I made the jump from sworn to Support Services several years later I suddenly gained an eye-opening appreciation for Records.

My agency didn't have a records management plan so I spent my first several months as a Records Manager trying to figure out just exactly what I was supposed to be doing. I trusted that those who held the position before me knew what they were doing and had done a really good job. To this day, I believe that they did. But when they left, all of that job knowledge left with them. Because there was no records management plan, all of our agency's corporate knowledge was slowly slipping away and we started winging it.

About a year into my new job, I noticed the need to do records destruction. Many old case files were well past their required retention. I also noticed reports had different colored dots stuck to them, and it wasn't hard to figure out they had something to do with the status of the records, but what?

I approached my Major who had been the commander over support services during those "dot" days. He didn't know. I asked the former Records Manager who had moved over to IT. She didn't know. I called the now retired Records Manager who, according to the Major, created the dot system. She said the dots had to do with retention, but she didn't remember what colors coincided with which retention period. So there I was starting from scratch- a previously established system of tracking retention was now worthless.

Like you may have experienced, a records management plan documenting current procedure would have saved me a ton of time. It's never good to have to reinvent the wheel every time new records staff are hired. Agencies need continuity in records management, need to protect the integrity of records, and facilitate the smooth transition and training of new records personnel.

Your records, particularly your investigative case files, are the lifeblood of your agency. Your agency cannot do its job without them. So... give them a little TLC and start writing that records management program today. We'll teach you how.

How We Can Help

PRI is a highly specialized management consulting firm that provides criminal justice agencies records management, IT and crime data consulting, training, and project management services. With core competencies in public records compliance, UCR/NIBRS, CJIS, RMS/CAD/JMS systems and records operations, PRI has proudly served over 3500 agencies since 2008.

Focus on your work while we get your records in order, your people on board, and your systems working right.

- Records management assessments, inventory, purge
- Systems integration
- IT project management
- UCR audits and NIBRS conversion
- Training
- Policy