

# General Guidance for Teams: Public Records

For Elected Officials and City Employees

Microsoft Teams is a tool that can enhance productivity, especially when teleworking. Here are some tips and guidance for you to follow as you and your workgroup incorporate using Teams as one of your work tools.

Remember all recorded communications (email, texts, IM's, video, etc.), documents, or other written materials created or used as part of your job are a public record. All public records must be managed and retained according to the City's [Records Retention Schedules](#). With few exceptions, all public records must be available for public records requests and litigation. You may only delete records that are [transitory](#).

Here are a few specific points to remember:

- **Anything recorded is a public record.**  
This includes all chats, files, emojis, recorded meetings, and other work product generated on any platform, whether City-managed or using a third-party application. These records are provided to the public upon request.
- **This is not your Personal Facebook account.**  
Communicate with the same level of professionalism that you would use in any other City document. Remember the public may read these later.
- **Conversations intentionally recorded are public record.**  
**DO NOT RECORD CALLS OR MEETINGS UNLESS YOU HAVE EVERYONE'S CONSENT AND THE MEETING WOULD NORMALLY BE REQUIRED TO BE RECORDED.** If you must record a meeting, you need to inform everyone verbally and in chat (in case people have muted the conversation) before recording.
- **Personal cell numbers are NOT a public record and should be safeguarded.**  
The City can redact this information in future public records requests but keeping them out of the public record is the best protection. Remember to delete personal phone numbers and e-mail addresses when forwarding or replying to emails to stop them from being shared publicly by accident. Also, *please identify when the number is personal to help with future redaction.*
- **Refer to the [General Guidance for Teleworking](#) document for information about public records and teleworking.**  
You may also find information on the [Technology for Teleworking](#) page.
- **Do not delete meetings from your calendars, these too are public records.**  
While the content of the meeting may be privileged, the fact the meeting was held is not. Likewise, all notes and chats created within the meeting should be preserved.
- **Your workgroup should review how they handle records.**  
Whether using Microsoft Teams, Skype for Business, or any other means of communicating, collaborating, or managing your work, be sure to follow best practices. Archives and Records Management and the City Attorney's office are available to answer your questions about public records.

**Public records management questions:** Archives and Records Management Division of the City Auditor's Office, 503-865-4100 or [parc@portlandoregon.gov](mailto:parc@portlandoregon.gov)

**Public records requests questions:** City Attorney's office - Jenifer Johnston 503-823-3077 or [Jenifer.johnston@portlandoregon.gov](mailto:Jenifer.johnston@portlandoregon.gov)