

July 22, 2020

To: All CIOs-

On June 20, in response to a customer request, a WaTech Administrator applied an automated retention policy within the Shared Tenant beginning the deletion of Teams Chat data more than one day old and initiating an [incident](#) in the environment. Upon discovery, WaTech Administrators were able to disable the policy and worked with Microsoft to recover 1.2 TB of Teams Chat data.

When the issue was discovered, WaTech staff began placing [litigation holds on Teams Chat data](#) to preserve as much of the content as possible before it was permanently deleted from the SubstrateHolds folder. This effort was partially successful. However, due to tool capabilities, it was not possible to put all the Teams Chat data on hold as a single action, so WaTech staff placed holds by groups of users.

Although we were able to save and recover a significant portion of data, Microsoft does not have a tool to restore Teams Chat data back to the original location within the end user's Teams client. According to Microsoft's Engineering Team, this is how the 'retention with delete' policies are designed. Because Microsoft is not able to move the chat data back to their original location, the recovered data is stored in a [SubstrateHolds](#) folder. Microsoft is developing a restore feature that will be rolled out to Government Community Services (GCC) tenants in the future.

Microsoft's Engineering Team provided a report to WaTech of user mailboxes that had at least one Teams message permanently deleted from the SubstrateHolds folder between June 20 - 25. Microsoft and WaTech have identified 42 accounts that have lost data and 1,337 accounts that have potentially lost data. At this time, we cannot determine the amount of data that was lost.

For the data that was recovered, WaTech has exported and downloaded the data. If an agency would like the Teams Chat data that was recovered, please submit a ticket to support@watech.wa.gov.

At this time, Teams Chat data across the Tenant is on Litigation Hold and the retention is set to keep indefinitely. A Service Notice will go out prior to removing the Litigation Hold.

We apologize for the user and records impacts of this incident. Thank you for your patience as we work through the learning curve and define a path forward. If you have any questions, please contact Angie Sherrer, Cloud Services Manager at angie.sherrer@watech.wa.gov.