



## Records Retention Policy

Adopted by the Executive Committee: March 4, 2019

### Purpose

To ensure the most efficient and effective operation of the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC), we are implementing this Records Retention Policy. The records of CVRPC are important to the proper functioning of CVRPC. Our records include virtually all of the records produced by CVRPC employees, whether in electronic or paper form. Thus, items such as interoffice emails, desktop calendars, and printed memoranda are records that are considered important under this policy. If an employee is ever uncertain as to any procedures set forth in this policy (e.g., what records to retain or destroy, when to do so, or how), it is the employee's responsibility to seek answers from the Executive Director.

The goals of this policy are to:

- 1) Assist employees in complying with the Vermont Public Records Act (1 VSA Subchapter 3);
- 2) Retain important documents for reference and future use;
- 3) Delete documents that are no longer necessary for the proper functioning of CVRPC;
- 4) Organize important documents for efficient retrieval; and
- 5) Ensure that CVRPC employees know what documents should be retained, the length of their retention, means of storage, and when and how they should be destroyed.

This Policy is consistent with or exceeds the General Record Schedules (GRS) developed by the Vermont State Archives and Records Administration (VSARA) to provide consistency in recordkeeping by Vermont public agencies for common functions and activities.

### Definitions

*Records* - all business records of CVRPC (used interchangeably with “documents”), including written, printed, and recorded materials, as well as electronic records (i.e., emails and documents saved electronically).

*Permanent/Archive* - Documents will be retained permanently. They will be archived upon reaching obsolescence, expiration, supersession, completion/closure.

*Timed Retention* (Ex. 10 years) - Retained for specified time following obsolescence, expiration, supersession, completion/closure. After which time they will be destroyed (general, unless noted as “Shred”), unless otherwise noted.

*Limited Retention* - Documents destroyed (general, unless noted as “Shred”) following obsolescence, expiration, supersession, completion/closure, unless otherwise noted.

### **Emails as Public Records<sup>1</sup>**

Email messages are “official records” if they are made or received in the conduct of CVRPC business. Such business may be the provision of services, delivery of programs, development of policies, making of decisions, performance of commission functions, and other similar types of transactions.

Examples of messages sent by e-mail that typically *are records* include:

- policies and directives,
- correspondence or memoranda related to official business,
- work schedules and assignments,
- agendas and minutes of meetings,
- drafts of documents that are circulated for comment or approval,
- any document that initiates, authorizes, or completes a business transaction, and
- final reports or recommendations.

Examples of messages that *typically do not constitute records* are:

- personal messages and announcements,
- copies or extracts of documents distributed for convenience or reference,
- phone message slips, and
- announcements of social events.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from a policy developed by the Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission

### ***The Method of Archiving***

Archiving will be done by the user; and these emails will be stored on the user's PC for user's designated time period (quarterly, annually, etc), through a folder structure in their native email client. Archiving by the user must follow the guidance under "Time and Content." At year-end, IT staff will back up the entire archive to DVD and then the files may be deleted from the user's PC. To protect against catastrophic failure during the year, we will continue to back up PC's to tape on a weekly basis.

Emails will be archived based on their content. Within their email software, each user should set up a series of subfolders that will allow for easy drag-and-drop filing of official emails. Once an email is read, it should either be filed in the subfolders or deleted in accordance with the required retention period. (For an example of a possible file structure, see attached)

### ***Time and Content***

The content of an email will determine the length of time it is to be archived.

#### Personal

**Emails of a personal nature should be deleted immediately after reading.** Please keep in mind that *all* e-mail messages *including personal communications* may be subject to discovery proceedings in legal actions. There is no expectation of privacy on email communications.

#### Ephemeral

**Ephemeral, or transitory, emails must be stored for a minimum of thirty days.** Ephemeral or Transitory emails consist of those records that are created primarily for the informal communication of information, as opposed to communications designed for the perpetuation or formalization of knowledge. *Transitory messages do not set policy, establish guidelines or procedures, certify a transaction, or become a receipt.* The informal nature of transitory messages might be compared to the communication that might take place during a telephone conversation or verbal communications in an office hallway.

#### Administrative Support Records

**These files must be kept for at least one year.** Records of a general facilitative nature created or received in the course of administering programs. Included are such records as:

- Correspondence of a routine or repetitive type, such as requests for information;
- Inter-office or inter-departmental communications which do not subsequently result in the formulation of policy;

- Reference materials, sometimes of a technical nature, used but not created by the office;
- Daily, weekly, or monthly office activity reports which are summarized in annual reports or which relate to routine activities (including work progress or statistical reports prepared in the office and forwarded to higher levels);
- Personnel data of office that is duplicated in departmental personnel record;
- Purchase orders, payment vouchers, travel expense statements or similar financial documents that are duplicated in department/division fiscal office files;
- Daily, weekly, or monthly work assignments (including duty roster files) for office staff;
- Calendars, appointment books, schedules, logs, diaries, and other records documenting meetings, appointments, telephone calls, trips, visits, and other daily activities of employees; and
- Unpublished calendars of events and activities.

**If hard copies are created and filed elsewhere, administrative support records need not be saved.**

Policy and Program Records (Primary Mission Files)

**Policy and Program Records generally need to be retained permanently under specific record schedules and may be transferred to the State Archives at some time during their life cycle.** These records document the formulation and adoption of policies and procedures and the implementation or management of the programs or functions of the office or department. Included are such records as:

- Policies and procedures developed by the office or a program that govern the operation of the agency;
- Correspondence with citizens or other government officials regarding policy, procedure development, or program administration;
- Annual, ad hoc, narrative, or statistical reports on program activities, achievements or plans;
- Organizational charts and mission statements;
- Studies regarding office or program operations;
- Circular letters, directives or similar papers addressed to subordinate units or staff concerning policies, procedures or programs;
- Records related to significant events in which the office or program participated; and
- Photographs, published material, and other record forms.

## Employee Responsibility

Federal and state laws require CVRPC to maintain certain types of records for particular periods. Failure to maintain such records could subject an employee and CVRPC to penalties and fines, obstruct justice, spoil legal evidence, and/or seriously harm CVRPC's position in litigation. Thus, it is imperative that employees fully understand and comply with this, and any future records retention or destruction policies and schedules, *UNLESS* an employee has been notified by CVRPC, or if an employee believe that (1) such records are or could be relevant to any future litigation, (2) there is a dispute that could lead to litigation, or (3) CVRPC is a party to a lawsuit, in which case employees *MUST PRESERVE* such records until CVRPC's legal counsel determines that the records are no longer needed.

All business records shall be retained for a period no longer than necessary for the proper conduct and functioning of CVRPC. All retention periods listed in this Policy are from the calendar year end plus the retention time listed unless otherwise noted.

## Retention Schedule - Office Operations and Planning Records

### Accounting/Financial Records

Description	Retention
Accountants' audit reports and management letters	Permanent/Archive
Bills of sale for important purchases	Permanent/Archive
Canceled checks and stubs, for important payments	Permanent/Archive
Cash books	Permanent/Archive
Charts of accounts	Permanent/Archive
Payroll records and related documents	Permanent/Archive
Financial statements (year end)	Permanent/Archive
General and private ledgers	Permanent/Archive
Financial journals	Permanent/Archive
Bank statements – Shred	10 years
Deposit slips – Shred	10 years
Check registers – Shred	10 years
Cancelled checks and stubs, general – Shred	10 years
Financial statement cards – Shred	10 years
Accounts payable and receivable ledgers and schedules	7 years, if audited
Expense analyses	7 years

Description	Retention
Vouchers for payments to vendors, employees and related parties - Shred	7 years
Fiscal records – grant materials, supply order forms, unless otherwise required by grant	7 years
Miscellaneous money (income) receipts	7 years, if audited
Paid bills	7 years, if audited
Tuition invoices and receipts	7 years, if audited
Fiscal records, and until audit	4 years
Cash balance document register	4 years
Social Security withholding report sheets	4 years
Deduction authorization	4 years, after cessation of employment
Federal Form 1099-Misc	4 years
Federal Form 501 (Federal Tax Deposit Without Income)	4 years
Federal Form 941 (Employer's Quarterly Federal Tax Return)	4 years
Federal Form W-2d (Withholding Statement showing annual wages paid and income and FICA taxes withheld)	4 years
Federal Form W-3 (Reconciliation of Quarterly Returns of Income Tax Withheld on Wages)	4 years
Federal Form W-4 (Employee's Withholding Exemption Certificate), after cessation of employment	4 years
Social Security Withholding Report Sheets (Forms OAR S-3a, S-3, SSA-3963-C1)	4 years
State Form VW-100 (Withholding Exemption Certificate)	4 years, after cessation of employment
State Form VW-102 (Withholding Statement Showing Annual Wages Paid and Income Withheld)	4 years
State Form VW-105 (Reconciliation of Quarterly Returns, Form VW-110 and VW-102)	4 years
State Form VW-110 (Quarterly Return of Income Tax Withheld)	4 years
Petty cash vouchers	3 years

<b>Description</b>	<b>Retention</b>
Budget comparisons, monthly	3 years
Trail balance sheets	3 years, if audited
Purchase orders	3 years, if audits are completed
Bank reconciliations - Shred	1 year
Purchase orders	1 year
Requisitions	1 year

### *Administrative Records*

<b>Description</b>	<b>Retention</b>
Contracts and leases (current/major)	Permanent/Archive
Legal correspondence	Permanent/Archive
Deeds and mortgages (if applicable)	Permanent/Archive
Insurance records	Permanent/Archive
Minutes, bylaws and certificate of incorporation	Permanent/Archive
Property records and appraisals (if applicable)	Permanent/Archive
Tax records	Permanent/Archive
Trademark registrations (if applicable)	Permanent/Archive
Reports, annual or similar	Permanent/Archive
Accident reports and claims (settled cases) – Shred	10 years
Contracts and leases (expired) - Shred	7 years
Inventories (if products, materials, and supplies)	7 years
Notes receivable ledgers and schedules	7 years
Time recording documents	7 years, if audited
All materials related to an internal investigation	7 years
Insurance policies – Liability	7 years, if no claim pending
Internal audit reports	7 years
Unemployment Compensation Reports (Employer's Contribution, Quarterly Compensation, Insurance Wage and Separation)	4 years
Insurance policies – Fire (expired)	3 years, if no claim pending
Insurance policies – Professional Practices (expired)	3 years, after close of any pending claims
Equipment orders, after grant closeout approval	3 years
Agreements (formal, interagency, memorandums of understanding)	3 years, then archived permanently
Policies	3 years, then archived permanently

Description	Retention
Procedures	3 years, then archived permanently
Tape, video and other recordings of all meetings (regular or special)	3 years, after minutes have been approved
Digital recordings for informational purposes	3 years
Authorizations – Shred	3 years
Vacation and leave requests	1 year
Equipment warranties, after expiration	1 year

### *Personnel Records*

Description	Retention
Personnel records, annual evaluations, correspondence directed to an employee, application paperwork, personal history information, polygraph results, written and physical standards, all other hiring documentation	50 years from date of hire
Employment applications - Shred	3 years
Training records	3 years
Applications for employment, resumes	3 years
Employment history, after termination of employment - Shred	3 years
Personnel records, annual evaluations, correspondence directed to an employee, application paperwork; personal history information, polygraph results; written and physical standards, all other hiring documentation	1 year if not hired

### *Other Records*

Description	Retention
Reports, annual or similar	Permanent/Archive
All Municipal Plans and Bylaws, whether proposed, adopted, or superseded	Permanent/Archive
Correspondence (substantive administrative value, policy development related, memoranda of decisions) – then archived	3 years
Miscellaneous internal reports	3 years
Plans (strategic) – then archived	3 years



Description	Retention
Studies – then archived	3 years
Bids – Shred	3 years
Contracts (including grant agreements) – then archived	3 years
Decisions (contract selection) - Shred	3 years, after grant closeout approval
Certificate of Appointment as Representative by Governor	3 years
Elections - candidate and nomination statements	3 years
Legal notices	1 year, after grant closeout letter received
Agendas	1 year
Calendars	1 year
Press Releases	1 year
Correspondence (day to day office administration, general internal, interagency, routine public)	1 year, if not noted elsewhere in this policy
Grant funded project files and deliverables	1 year, after grant closeout letter received and unless grant requires otherwise
Drafts	Limited
Reference sources	Limited
Elections - official return of vote form and copies of votes and elections,	90 days if uncontested, and one copy preserved in hard copy file
Elections - summary sheets for election tabulations	90 days after election

## Retention Schedule – Infrastructure Records

### *Planning and Project Development Records*

Description	Retention
Applications – certificates and formal statements of qualification, significant supporting materials	Life of asset ends plus 6 years
Decisions – written approvals or disapprovals including selection justifications, substantive correspondence and relevant supporting materials, life of asset ends plus 6 years	Life of asset ends plus 6 years
Agreements – formal written agreements including MOUs	Until expired plus 6 years

<b>Description</b>	<b>Retention</b>
Authorizations - notices to proceed, permits	Until expired plus 6 years
Legal notices	Until project completion approval received plus 1 year
Plans – final conceptual drawings and maps, reports, specifications and estimates	Life of asset ends plus 6 years
Reports and studies – related to development including performance and expenditure reports	Life of asset ends plus 6 years
Supporting material – public comments, schedules, meeting transcripts	Life of asset ends plus 6 years
Tier II Reports (Hazardous Materials EPCRA Compliance Tier II Program)	10 years

### **Construction Records**

<b>Description</b>	<b>Retention</b>
Written evidence of final decision, including engineer and project manager approvals, acceptances and changes, substantive correspondence and relevant supporting material	Life of asset ends plus 6 years
Declarations that certify a condition has been met related to the construction of infrastructure	Life of asset ends plus 6 years
Notes used for written or recorded evidence of field or site visits	Life of asset ends plus 6 years
Plans – drawings, reports, includes as built and schedules	Life of asset ends plus 6 years
Reports – construction, closeout, inspection, operation manuals, wage rate reports, or similar	Life of asset ends plus 6 years
Supporting materials not specified elsewhere for Life of Asset	Life of asset ends plus 6 years

### **Conclusion**

This policy will require active participation from all staff. If you have any questions or issues, please discuss them with the Executive Director. This program is a statutory requirement of the CVRPC, and your efforts in making the system work are greatly appreciated.