

# HOW TO USE RETENTION SCHEDULES

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A legend explaining the information presented in the retention schedule; please read this for an explanation of every column.

The specified retention period applies regardless of the media of the record: If a record is stored on paper and electronic format (a computer file on a hard drive), **all electronic and paper records should be destroyed (or deleted / erased) after the specified period of time has elapsed** and authorization to destroy has been obtained.

**Copies** or duplicates of records should never be retained longer than the prescribed period for the official (original) record, and drafts and copies should be destroyed as soon as they are no longer required.

The term "records" shall include documents, instructions, books, microforms, electronic files, magnetic tape, optical media, or papers as defined by the California Public Records Act.

## **STRUCTURE: CITYWIDE, DEPARTMENTS & DIVISIONS**

The City-wide retention schedule includes those records all departments have in common (letters, memorandums, purchase orders, etc.). These records are NOT repeated in the Department retention schedule, unless that department is the Office of Record, and therefore responsible for maintaining the official (original) record for the prescribed length of time.

Each department has a separate retention schedule that describes the records that are unique to their department, or for which they are the Office of Record. Where appropriate, the department retention schedules are organized by Division within that Department. If a record is not listed in your department retention schedule, refer to the City-wide retention schedule. An index will be provided for your reference.

## **BENEFITS**

This retention schedule has been developed by Diane R. Gladwell, MMC, an expert in Municipal Government records, and will provide the City with the following benefits:

- Reduce administrative expenses, expedite procedures
- Free filing cabinet and office space
- Reduce the cost of records storage
- Eliminate duplication of effort within the City
- Find records faster
- Easier purging of file folders
- Determine what media should be used to store records

For questions, please contact the City Clerk.

## **AUTHORIZATION TO DESTROY RECORDS:**

Destruction of an official (original) record that has exceeded its retention period must be authorized according to City Policies & Procedures prior to destroying it.

- If there is a **minimum** retention ("**Minimum 2 years**"), destruction of the document must be authorized before it is destroyed, as it is an official (original) record.

Copies, drafts, notes and non-records do NOT require authorization, and can be destroyed "When No Longer Required."

- If there is **NOT** a minimum retention ("When No Longer Required"), it does NOT need to be authorized prior to destruction, as it is a preliminary draft / transitory record or a copy.

On every page of the schedules (near the top, just under the column headings) are important instructions, including instructions regarding holds on destroying records. "**Litigation, complaints, claims, public records act requests, audits and/or investigations suspend normal retention periods (retention resumes after settlement or resolution).**"