

Records Management and Retention
USA Mission Fields Best Practice
10/10/2018 v3

The purpose of records management is to provide the church with effective policy and guidelines for the systematic control of important documentation. These practices affect records held in congregations, mission centers, campgrounds and other church subsidiaries and are followed to satisfy the church's business, legal, and historical needs.

One important concept to remember in managing church records is their ownership. All records created, received or maintained by mission center officers, congregation officers or church employees in relation to the Church's mission, goals, and objectives; organization, initiatives, and operations; and activities, heritage or legacy are church property. Proper handling and retention of these records (hard copy and electronic) is an important responsibility of church representatives and leaders (that includes: mission center presidents, mission center financial officers, pastors, congregational financial officers, recorders, and subsidiary board officers).

Non-records not subject to these guidelines include:

- books, newspapers, magazines and other publications used solely for reference purposes
- business forms, form letters, and templates
- unsolicited brochures, flyers, mass mailings
- personal correspondence and files not related to their assigned duties for the church
- preliminary drafts of correspondence and documentation
- duplicate copies of official records

For questions regarding records management in the USA, please contact your Field Support Minister. The Records Retention Summary is on page 3 of this document.

Details on Definitions

1. Hard Copy and Electronic records

- a. Hard copies are printed, hand-written, or photographic material.
- b. Electronic records are computer documents, spreadsheets and presentations. Also, email is an official record, so use of a church server (either mission center or world church) is highly recommended versus using a personal email address. If a church email address is not available, a separate folder for church-related correspondence is recommended. Note: "shredding" electronic records refers to using industry standards in securing confidential information held on portable storage devices.

2. Storage Methods

- a. Hard copy records should be stored in a water-resistant container in an area not easily accessible to people not authorized to review the records. In mission centers and congregations with centralized offices, these areas typically are lockable file cabinets. In home offices, this area typically is an indoor storage space. If neither of those spaces are available, commercial storage should be a part of the jurisdiction's ongoing expense. The container should be labeled on the exterior with a brief description of the contents, the name of the person creating the label, the date of the container being sealed and the date the contents should be destroyed.

- b. Electronic records should be on a church-owned server address (for email and document storage). When a new leader assumes the role, all files should be available for them to review and take ownership. If a church-owned server is not available and personal email/storage is necessary, the records should be kept in folders separate from personal files so their entire contents can be transferred to the new leader taking on that responsibility.
3. Legal Files
 - a. Service Provider and Employment Contracts
 - b. Dispute Correspondence
 - c. Real Estate files: purchase; sale; additions; remodeling; etc.
 - d. Wills, Estates, Trusts
 - e. Any other documents identified by the Office of General Counsel as essential
 4. Confidential Files on Participants and Priesthood Actions
 - a. Participation Plans for people with known potential endangerment issues
 - b. Documentation on situations with people who created significant issues and concerns
 - c. Documentation on priesthood calls
 - d. Documentation on priesthood releases
 5. Mission Center Conference Minutes, Reports and Other Documentation
 - a. Conference brochures (hard copy or electronic)
 - b. Official minutes recorded by the appointed secretary (hard copy or electronic)
 - c. Program and officer reports, if not included in the conference brochure
 - d. Hand-outs pertaining to conference business not included in the conference brochure
 6. Congregational Financial Officer and Pastor Records
 - a. Used offering envelopes people used to enclose a check or cash
 - b. Shelby quarterly statements
 - c. Shelby annual contribution statements
 - d. Printed updates on mission center or congregational finances
 - e. Expense receipts and reimbursement (including oblation) requests
 - f. Expense invoices for utilities, office supplies, lawn mowing, building cleaning, etc.
 - g. Long-term oblation reports
 - h. Ordination recommendation forms
 - i. Recorder input documentation
 - j. Bank statements, copies of cancelled checks (hard copy or electronic)
 - k. Paycom (or other approved payroll system) input documentation and reports
 - l. Annual financial statements with budget and actuals and audit reports
 - m. Newsletters
 - n. Congregational business meeting minutes
 7. Camping and Retreat Medical Records
 - a. Event registration forms
 - b. Event incident reports

Retention schedule for Mission Centers, Campgrounds, Subsidiaries, and Congregations

Immediately send to Legal (Office of General Counsel):

- Contracts and legal files
- Real Estate files: purchase; sale; additions; remodeling; etc.
- Wills, Estates, Trusts

Immediately send to World Church Secretary:

- Confidential membership and priesthood actions

Immediately send a copy to the IHQ Archives:

- Mission Center conference Minutes, Reports, and other documentation about conference

Items to keep for one year after the audit is complete, then shred:

- Used offering envelopes
- Monthly or quarterly reports
- Requests for World Church reimbursements
- Routine expense invoices and receipts (utilities, offices supplies, etc.)
- Oblation records unless mission center officers give approval to keep longer
- Priesthood recommendation and approval from ordination date
- Membership data entered into Shelby (one year from date entered)

4 years then shred:

- Camp Medical Forms – Forms of attendees listing medical problems and information (note: unless state or local laws indicates a longer retention time period)

5 years then shred:

- Bank statements and cancelled checks
- Tax reports
- Personnel/Payroll records for local jurisdiction employees from date of termination

10 Years then shred:

- Yearly contributor statements (paper or electronic copies)
- Invoices and receipts for equipment, material, and work with warranties.
- Check stubs and registers

15 years then shred:

- Year-End Financial Statements and Audit Reports
- Ledgers and accounts documenting congregation assets
- Congregational records (Correspondence, insurance, etc, not including items of historical value that should be sent to the IHQ Archives)

Send to IHQ Archives when no longer used by local jurisdictional entity and may be of historical interest or value:

- Administrative and Financial records
- Scrapbooks and previous historian materials
- Guestbooks
- Congregation secretary minutes
- Membership and attendance records
- Photographs