

## Record Retention and Destruction – Sample Policy

Area Agency on Aging shall have written policies and procedures approved by the *Governing Board* regarding the retention and access to all financial and programmatic records, supporting documents, statistical records, and other records. (Virginia Administrative Code 22VAC5-20-560).

The Record Retention and Destruction policy should indicate compliance with all state and federal requirements established to retain and destroy agency records. This includes the Department for the Aging, federal programs which the agency administers, and local requirements. The agency may include compliance with the Virginia Public Records Act, 42.1-85 of the *Code of Virginia*.

The policy should designate the position that is the agency's Records Officer.

The policy should indicate the types of records covered, typically. Most policies apply to all records regardless of the media in which it is captured (e.g.: paper or electronic).

Portions of the following is taken from VDA's Policy on Record Retention/Destruction.

Records should be properly destroyed once the deadline for maintaining the records has passed. All records containing sensitive data will be properly destroyed. Paper documents will be shredded with a cross cut shredder. Electronic sensitive documents will be destroyed according to Virginia Information Technology Agencies (VITA) Policy.

### **Definition:**

**Record:** A document, regardless of physical form or characteristics, created or received in the conduct of official business. This includes electronic records such as e-mails.

**General Guidance:** The following categories are a general guide to be followed when deciding how long to retain documents. Commonwealth of Virginia regulations address the destruction of records containing Social Security numbers. These regulations are described in the Virginia Administrative Code [17VAC15-120-10](#), [17VAC15-120-20](#), and [17VAC15-120-30](#). This statute provides specific guidelines for the destruction of paper and electronic records, including methods of destruction and vendor requirements. Agencies should be aware of the *Code of Virginia's* requirement that records containing "identifying information" be destroyed within six months of the expiration of the records retention period."

**Temporary Daily Documents** – attendance records, telephone messages, phone lists, etc.

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*Retain as long as administratively necessary, then destroy or retain until superseded, obsolete or rescinded, then destroy.*

**Correspondence** – Incoming and outgoing letters, memoranda, faxes, notes and their attachments, in any physical format including, but not limited to, paper and e-mail.

*Retain five (5) years after the date of the document or e-mail or five (5) years after the issue is resolved, then destroy.*

**Internal and External Web Pages** – *Retain superseded pages for 2 years, then delete or destroy.*

**Periodic Reports and Interim Documents** – Program logs, position applications, exit interviews, vehicle logs, equipment maintenance inspections, food temperatures, dietary records, sanitation inspections, safety records, routine incoming and outgoing correspondence, information system access forms, Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests, etc.

*Retain three (3) years or until audit, whichever is longer, then destroy.*

**Information System and Financial Records** – Information system databases, audit reports, bank records, deposit documentation, ledgers, expenditure documentation, fixed assets, payroll information, tax documents, Contracts, Memorandums of Understanding and Agreements, insurance documents, monitoring reports, meal counts, accident reports, constituent correspondence, legal action, grant acceptance or approval, litigation case files, etc.

*Retain five (5) years after the final report or until any questioned audit cost is cleared, whichever is later, then destroy.*

**Employee Personnel Records**

*Retain ten (10) years after separation, then destroy.*

**Historical Documents** – AAA Articles of Incorporation, AAA IRS federal tax determination letter, agency head directives outlining policy, Attorney General's office legal opinions, agency policies and procedures, etc.,

*Retain in permanent file.*

Historically significant photographs of special ceremonies, occasions, events, and facilities.

*Retain permanently in agency.*

**Boards/Commissions/Council**

Audio recordings of meetings.

*Destroy after minutes are transcribed and approved.*

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Materials reviewed or used by the board/commission/conference. Also includes other items presented to the board/commission/conference or introduced by board/commission/conference members.

*Retain 3 years then destroy.*

Meeting minutes.

*Retain permanently in agency.*

**Special Gift or Donation Records**

*Retain five (5) years after expiration of grant or gift, final disposal of item, expenditure of funds, or in accordance with terms of grant or gift, or as long as administratively useful, whichever is greater; then destroy.*