



## DIOCESE OF ALLENTOWN

### RECORDS RETENTION POLICY

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#### I. Introduction

- A. The Diocese of Allentown, including all parishes, Catholic schools, and institutions, creates, maintains and preserves records (“Church records”) every day to assist in fulfilling the pastoral mission of the Church. Records are the principal means of recording the pastoral activity of the Church. Bearing this in mind, the Secretariat for Temporal Affairs has prepared this Records Retention Policy (“Policy”) as a normative guide for Diocesan administration staff and Church personnel in parishes, schools, and other affiliated entities of the Diocese, in determining the manner and length of time for maintaining records. When indicated, records to be destroyed must be done so in a permanent manner (shredding or otherwise destroyed). This policy describes many types of records, and it is important that those responsible for establishing, maintaining, and preserving records appreciate the importance of all types of records and consistently follow the guidelines.
- B. This Records Retention Policy was created with reference to the 1983 Code of Canon Law, and best practices in record retention. The list of Church records included is lengthy, but not definitive. If questions arise regarding records retention issues, please contact the Secretary for Temporal Affairs for additional information.

#### II. Records Retention Overview

- A. Purpose. This Records Retention Policy defines which records must be retained for ecclesiastical, canonical, legal or historical purposes, and the retention period for each type of record. Adherence to the established retention schedule is a priority for the Diocese so that: (1) vital records are protected and retained; (2) the Diocese reduces its costs associated with maintaining and storing records; and (3) data management and storage operations are enhanced and more efficient.
- B. Scope. All Church records created, received, used or maintained by the Diocese and its parishes, schools or institutions are the property of the Diocese of Allentown. This Records Retention Policy applies to all Church personnel of the Diocese and all parishes, schools, and institutions of the Diocese of Allentown. For those legal entities such as non-profit corporations and charitable trusts that maintain independent civil law status, this policy is advisory in nature.



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#### C. Definitions.

1. The word “records” used in this Policy refers to all recorded information, documents, letters, maps, books, photographs, films, sound recordings, tapes (magnetic and otherwise), electronic data processing records, e-mails sent and received, electronic data banks and other documentary materials created, received, maintained or preserved by any department, office or Church personnel in the course of ministry, transaction of business, or in pursuit of legal obligations.
2. “Church Personnel” is defined as clergy, religious, seminarians, employees, and volunteers.

#### III. **Retention and Disposal Schedule.**

- A. The attached Exhibit “A” lists various types of records and their retention and disposal schedule.
- B. For those records which are to be retained pursuant to the retentional and disposal schedule (Exhibit A), records should be filed/boxed by year—all records that are seven years old are boxed together, six year old records boxed together, etc. All boxes should be labeled as to fiscal year- Year End 6/30/10, Year End 6/30/11, etc. An inventory sheet should be prepared listing all items located in each particular box. Separate boxes should contain all permanent records and be marked as such.
- C. Boxes containing permanent records are to be stored separately from boxes containing records to be destroyed.

#### IV. **Electronic Communications—Automatic 90 Day Sweep**

- A. The fact that a record is electronic or email should not affect its retention. The schedule to be followed should be determined by the content of the record. For example, an email about finance matters would follow the schedule for financial records. An email about Tribunal matters would follow the schedule for Tribunal records. A personal email, or spam would not be a record at all and should be disposed of.
- B. Emails may be filed in electronic folders or printed and filed as paper documents based on their content.



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#### **V. Retention Periods**

Retention periods in this Policy are absolute, except with legally halted by official notice. They are not minimum guidelines. There are no exceptions.

#### **VI. Electronic Records**

Records generated and/or stored electronically, including e-mails, are subject to these policies in the same manner as printed documents. Retention decisions will be based on the content of the electronic record in the same manner as a printed document. As is the case with all records, they must be accessible and retrievable for the stated retention period.



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### Exhibit "A"

ITEM	Retention Period				
	1 Yr.	3 Yrs.	4 Yrs.	7 Yrs.	Permanent
<b>ACCOUNTING AND FISCAL</b>					
Accounts Payable Invoices				X	
Accounts Payable Ledger				X	
Accounts Receivable Ledger				X	
Balance Sheets					X
Bank Deposit Slips				X	
Bank Statements/Reconciliation				X	
Bonds and Records					X
Budget and Cost Files				X	
Capital Asset Record				X AFTER DISPOSAL	
Cash Receipts Journal				X	
Check Registers				X	
Checks: Cancelled, Payroll				X	
Checks: Cancelled, Voucher				X	
Cost Accounting Records				X	
Expense Reports, Employee				X	
Financial Statements, Periodic		X			
Financial Statements, Certified					X
General Ledger					X
<b><u>Invoices:</u></b>					
Legal					X
Capital Repair					X
Office Equipment				X	
All Other				X	
<b><u>Payroll Records:</u></b>					
Payroll Register			X		
Time Sheets			X		
Employee Earnings Record			X		
Forms W-2, W-2G, and 1099- Misc.			X		
Petty Cash Records				X	
Purchase Order Numbers					X AFTER EXPIRATION
Purchase Requisitions				X	



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	1 Yr.	3 Yrs.	4 Yrs.	7 Yrs.	Permanent
<b>ADMINISTRATIVE</b>					
Annual Reports to Chancery					X
Annual Reports to Diocese/Parish					X
Audit Reports— Public/Government					X
Audit Reports—Internal					X
Bequest and Estate Papers					X
Census Records					X
Legal Correspondence					X
Liturgical Ministers' Schedules		RETAIN UNTIL SUPERCEDED			
Mass Intention Books					X
Official Correspondence ( <i>re: diocesan/parish policies and directives</i> )					X
Parish Administrative Manual					X
Parish Council Minutes					X
Parish Finance Council Minutes					X
Parish Historical File					X
Rosters of Parishioners					X
<b>CEMETERY</b>					
Account Cards					X
Account Reports					X
Burial Cards					X
Burial Contracts					X
Burial Records					X
Cemetery Administration Manual					X
Lot Maps					X
<b>COMMUNICATIONS/CORRESPONDENCE</b>					
Anniversary Books					X
Parish Bulletins					X



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<b>INSURANCE</b> <i>Note: records concerning allegations of sexual abuse of minors are to be retained in accordance with the statute of limitations, 42 Pa. C.S. § 5533 (b)(2) which provides for a statute of limitations of 37 years from the date of the minor victim reaching the age of majority (18). Such records are therefore to be retained until the minor victim in question reaches age 56, a period of one year beyond the expiration of the statute of limitations. Records concerning allegations of sexual abuse of adults between the ages 18 to 24 at the time of the alleged abuse are to be retained until the adult victim in question reaches the age of 31, a period of one year beyond the expiration of the statute of limitations.</i>					
Accident Reports, Claims, Litigation				X	
Accident Reports, Claims, Litigation (under the age of 18- not involving sexual abuse allegations)				** UNTIL THE CHILD HAS TURNED 21 YEARS OF AGE Pursuant to 42 Pa. C.S. § 5533 (b)(1)	
Accident Reports, Claims, Litigation (under the age of 18) involving sexual abuse allegations				** UNTIL THE MINOR VICTIM HAS TURNED 56 YEARS OF AGE Pursuant to 42 Pa. C.S. § 5533 (b)(2)	
Accident Reports, Claims, Litigation involving allegations of sexual abuse of adults (ages 18-24)				** UNTIL THE ADULT VICTIM HAS TURNED 31 YEARS OF AGE Pursuant to 42 Pa. C.S. § 5533 (b)(2)	
Diocesan Self – Insurance Manual					X
Insurance Policies					X
Legal Correspondences					X
Letters of Credit				X	
<b>PARISHONER CONTRIBUTION RECORDS</b>					
Annual Summaries				X	
Donor Lists					X
Gift Substantiation Letters				X	
Offertory Tally Sheets				X	
Parish Data Bases ( <i>run a report for each parish before restructure</i> )					X
Weekly Detail				X	
Year- End Computer Back-up					X



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<b>PERSONNEL</b>					
<i>Note 1: A personnel file should be maintained for each current employee and should contain the information listed below.</i>					
<i>Note 2: Clergy personnel files are exempt from this policy.</i>					
Applications, Resume, Other Pre-Employment Docs (hired)				X AFTER TERMINATION	
Applicants, Resume, Other Pre-Employment Docs (not hired)	X				
Attendance Records				X AFTER TERMINATION	
Employment Contracts				X AFTER TERMINATION	
File, Individual Employee				X AFTER TERMINATION	
File, Volunteer				X AFTER SERVICE	
Job Descriptions				X AFTER TERMINATION	
Documents Relating to Promotion, Demotion, Discharge, Termination, Transfer, Leave of Absence, Accommodations, Medical Restrictions, Benefits, Work Performance, Training, Compensation				X AFTER TERMINATION	
Medical Records <i>(Note: Must be retained separately from Personnel file in a confidential file that can be <u>only</u> accessed by representatives of Human Resources)</i>				X AFTER TERMINATION	
<b>REAL ESTATE</b>					
Asbestos Abatement/Hazardous Material Removal Records					X
Appraisals					X



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<b>REAL ESTATE cont.</b>					
Architectural Drawings					X
Blueprints					X
Deeds, Mortgages					X
Industrial Appraisal Reports					X
Leases					X
Office Equipment Contracts				X	
Property Purchase/Sale Documentation (i.e. settlement sheets, etc.)					X
Maintenance/Service Provider Contracts					X
Underground Storage Tank Records					X
<b>SACRAMENTAL RECORDS</b>					
Baptismal Register					X
Confirmation Register					X
First Communion Register					X
Death Register					X
Marriage Register					X
Marriage Preparation Files					X
<b>TUTITION RECORDS</b>					
Annual Summaries				X	
Year-end Computer Back-up					X