

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP): Administrative Records Retention and Archiving Policy

This SOP defines the **administrative records retention and archiving policy**, detailing the procedures for systematically storing, managing, and disposing of administrative documents. It ensures compliance with legal requirements, promotes efficient information retrieval, safeguards sensitive data, and supports organizational continuity. The policy covers classification of records, retention schedules, secure archiving practices, access controls, periodic reviews, and proper disposal methods to maintain the integrity and confidentiality of administrative information.

1. Purpose

To establish standardized procedures for the retention, archiving, access, review, and disposal of administrative records within the organization, in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, and internal policies.

2. Scope

This SOP applies to all employees, contractors, and third parties who create, manage, access, or dispose of administrative records held by the organization in both electronic and physical formats.

3. Definitions

- **Administrative Records:** Documents related to the management and operation of the organization (e.g., correspondence, reports, contracts, meeting minutes).
- **Retention Schedule:** A timetable specifying how long different types of records must be kept.
- **Archiving:** The process of transferring inactive records to storage for long-term preservation.
- **Disposal:** Secure and irreversible destruction of records after retention period.
- **Access Controls:** Procedures and technologies to limit record access to authorized individuals only.

4. Responsibilities

- **Records Manager:** Oversees implementation of the retention and archiving policy.
- **Department Heads:** Ensure department staff comply with retention and archiving requirements.
- **Employees:** Properly classify, store, and manage documents in accordance with this SOP.

5. Procedures

5.1 Classification of Records

1. Identify and categorize records based on content, sensitivity, legal requirements, and business needs.
2. Assign a classification label (e.g., confidential, internal, public) to each record type.

5.2 Retention Schedules

Record Type	Retention Period
General Correspondence	3 years
Contracts & Agreements	7 years after expiration
Financial Records	7 years
Policies & Procedures	As long as in effect + 5 years
Meeting Minutes	Permanently

5.3 Secure Archiving Practices

- Store inactive physical records in secure, designated storage areas with controlled access.
- Archive electronic records in approved systems with appropriate backup and disaster recovery measures.

5.4 Access Controls

- Restrict access to records based on classification and job responsibilities.
- Regularly review and update user permissions for record storage systems.
- Log all access to sensitive records for auditing purposes.

5.5 Periodic Reviews

- Conduct reviews of archived records annually to ensure records are retained and disposed of according to schedule.
- Update retention schedules as needed based on regulatory or organizational changes.

5.6 Proper Disposal Methods

- Shred or incinerate physical documents containing sensitive or confidential information.
- Permanently delete electronic records, ensuring they are unrecoverable.
- Maintain a log of all disposed records, including date and method of disposal.

6. Compliance and Audit

- Compliance with this SOP is mandatory. Non-compliance may result in disciplinary action.
- Audits may be conducted at any time to ensure adherence to retention and archiving procedures.

7. Review and Revision

This SOP shall be reviewed annually and updated as necessary to reflect changes in legal or regulatory requirements or organizational structure.

8. References

- Applicable national and state records management laws and regulations
- Organizational Information Security Policy
- Data Protection Policy