

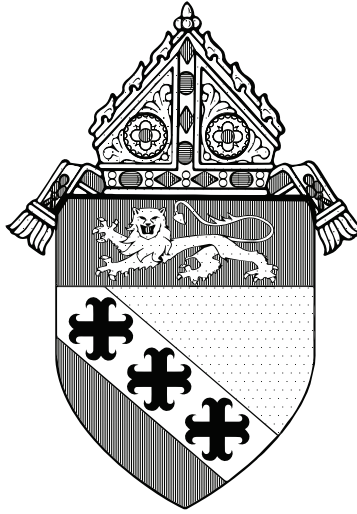
PARISH RECORDS MANAGEMENT



CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF CHARLESTON
OFFICE OF ARCHIVES AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT

Front cover:

St. Matthew Catholic Church, Blackville, South Carolina, circa 1884.
The church was destroyed by fire on March 16, 1887.



PARISH RECORDS MANAGEMENT

Introduction & Records Retention Schedules

Catholic Diocese of Charleston, South Carolina

Office of Archives & Records Management

15 January 2013

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FOREWORD

by Bishop Robert Guglielmo

It is the policy of this diocese to identify, properly arrange, maintain, and safeguard records required to conduct its spiritual and temporal affairs. The publication of this handbook is intended to help parish clergy and personnel satisfy that serious obligation. While it is not being promulgated as particular law, its provisions should be observed. Of course, the dictates of Canon Law as well as federal and state law always apply.

Signed,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Robert E. Guglielmo". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

Most Rev. Robert E. Guglielmo
Bishop of Charleston

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

Basic records management ensures that 1) administrators have better control of records relating to their day to day business, 2) the agency conforms to legal requirements, 3) time and money are not wasted on the retention of unnecessary or obsolete records, and 4) the records concerning the rights, privileges, and history of Catholics in the Diocese of Charleston are protected and preserved.

Records Management Defined

Records management is the systematic control of the recorded information necessary for an organization's operation. Its purpose is to assure that obsolete information is systematically destroyed and that valuable information is protected and maintained in a manner that facilitates its access and use. By eliminating unnecessary information and identifying information of enduring value, offices realize cost and space savings, experience an increase in efficiency, and ensure compliance with laws and regulations.

Obviously, not all records need to be maintained forever. Most have a relatively short "life span," or time period of value, and can be removed from an office on a regular basis. A records retention schedule identifies the life span for record series, which are groups of identical or related records that are normally used and filed as a unit. Record series are appraised to determine how long each must be maintained. The appraisal is based on four values:

Administrative value:

The usefulness of a record in the conduct of an organization's business. These include records that document policy and operations. Policy records are generally retained permanently, while operations records are usually considered short-term.

Legal/Canonical value:

The usefulness of a record complying with statutes and regulations of all civil and canonical jurisdictions. Records having legal value generally document legal or property rights of individuals or of the entity that created or maintained the records.

Fiscal value:

The usefulness of a record in documenting the financial transactions of a company or as evidence of a company's tax liability. Records having fiscal value usually relate to financial transactions and normally have short-term retention. Records documenting fiscal policy may have permanent value.

Historic value:

Records having historic or research value are retained permanently because they provide documentation of key functions, policies, activities, and events of the organization, and/or provide information on associated persons, subjects, and events.

Instructions for Using Records Retention Schedules

Records retention schedules provide guidelines for how long an office or agency should retain groups of related documents, known as record series. A general records retention schedule, like those included in this document, is comprehensive, including records that may potentially be in any or all offices of an organization. As a result, staff may find that they do not have some records listed in the general schedule. *That is not a problem.* The general schedule does not require an office to create all the records listed.

The record retention schedules that follow include record series grouped by classification: Administrative, Financial, Legal, Personnel, Property, and Sacramental. Relevant record series are listed under each classification. Each schedule contains four columns. The first column lists the title of the record series. The second includes a brief description of the records series, and occasionally elaborates retention. The third column defines how long a record series should be retained. The last column states final disposition for the record series, or the final action to be taken.

If your office holds records that are not identified on a retention schedule, please contact the Office of Archives and Records Management.

Office staff should conduct records reviews regularly, usually on an annual basis. Referencing the appropriate record retention schedule, they can identify records ready for transfer (usually to parish archives) or destruction. However, staff should secure the explicit approval of the pastor or parish administrator before records are transferred or destroyed.

Parish Archives

The Code of Canon Law requires each parish to maintain a safe storage area, or archives, for its records of permanent retention (cf. Canon 535 §4). The fundamental requirement for a parish archive is that the records are in a secure location with environmental controls. This is commonly achieved with the use of locked, metal filing cabinet in a low-traffic office space. Ideally, however, the records would be housed in acid-free folders and containers in a secure, dark environment with circulating air at a steady relative humidity between 30% and 40% and a steady temperature between 60° F and 70° F. It is understood that ability to achieve the ideal will vary from parish to parish.

References

Please contact the Office of Archives and Records Management with any questions or concerns about parish records management.

ATTENTION

Records retention periods are subject to change. For the most current retention schedule, please consult the Office of Archives and Records Management.

ADMINISTRATIVE RECORDS

RECORD SERIES	DESCRIPTION	RETENTION	DISPOSITION
Announcement Books	Brief summaries and announcements of parish activities that may be read to congregations during services.	Permanent.	Transfer to parish archives.
Cemetery and Columbarium Records	Record of the individuals interred and all related administrative and financial records relevant to their internment (e.g., burial license, plot deed or title, perpetual care contract, etc.).	Permanent.	Transfer to parish archives.
Census Records	Census of parishioners or Catholics in an area relevant to the parish.	Permanent.	Transfer to parish archives.
Consecration of Altar/ Church	Documentation that a church or altar was consecrated, including any reference to relics.	Permanent.	Transfer to parish archives.
Correspondence, Official	Policy and program planning, official communication, press releases, official statements, discussions relating to strategic initiatives or mission program activities, etc. Also includes substantive correspondence received from such government agencies as the Internal Revenue Service, State Department of Revenue, South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control, etc. on matters related directly to the parish.	Permanent.	Transfer to parish archives.
Correspondence, Routine/Courtesy	Messages, travel arrangements, meetings, appointments, acknowledgements, ordering, transmittals, reminder notices, cover letters, announcements, etc.	No longer than 5 years.	Destroy.
Governing Documents	Constitutions, by-laws, policies, procedures, rules, regulations (final products only) for the parish or parish agency.	Permanent.	Transfer to parish archives.
Incident Report	Records relevant to an accident, injury, or other incident involving a staff member or visitor that has potential to hold the parish criminally or civilly liable.	10 years.	Destroy.
Insurance Claims	Records of accident or injury claims.	10 years.	Destroy.

ADMINISTRATIVE RECORDS CONT.

RECORD SERIES	DESCRIPTION	RETENTION	DISPOSITION
Insurance Policies	See insurance record series in Financial Records.		
Mass Intentions Book	Record of monetary offerings received by a priest for the celebration of a Mass for a particular intention of the donor. This series excludes sacramental offerings/stole fees, which should be recorded in the parish financial accounts.	Until administrative value ceases.	Destroy.
Minutes of Parish Organizations	Official minutes of parish governing or advisory bodies, such as the parish council or the parish finance committee.	Permanent.	Transfer to parish archives.
Photographs	Photographs of parishioners, parish activities, etc. ideally persons and activities are identified (with soft pencil on the back of the print; in the properties summary field of an electronic image).	Limited selections permanently retained, especially photographs with identified individuals and activities.	Transfer to parish archives.
Publications	Final published product of the parish or a parish agency, e.g., anniversary booklets, newsletters, parish bulletins, parish histories, directories, or other special publications.	Permanent.	Provide one copy to parish archives.
Recordings, Audio/Video	Recordings of special events of the parish. although audio and video recordings have become extremely easy and inexpensive to produce, they are difficult and expensive to maintain and ensure continued access. Media formats change often, requiring migration from one format to the next. Selections of recordings for inclusion in parish archives should be limited.	Limited selections permanently retained.	Transfer to parish archives.
Reports, Parish Annual	Statistical and demographic information of the parish. Usually compiled on an annual basis and submitted to the chancery.	Permanent.	Transfer to parish archives.

ADMINISTRATIVE RECORDS CONT.

RECORD SERIES	DESCRIPTION	RETENTION	DISPOSITION
Subject Files	Records organized in files by subject. Such files may often be working/transitory materials that can be destroyed once their administrative value ceases. However, if the subject matter is substantive, the materials should be transferred to parish archives.	Selections permanently retained.	Transfer to parish archives.

FINANCIAL RECORDS

RECORD SERIES	DESCRIPTION	RETENTION	DISPOSITION
Accounts Payable	File copies of invoices submitted by various vendors supplying goods and services to parish. information includes invoice: vendor name, address, date of purchase, purchase order (if any), invoice number, description of item(s) or service(s) purchased, amounts, total; check copy: vendor name, address, date of check, check number, and amount.	7 years.	Destroy.
Accounts Receivable	N/A.	7 years.	Destroy.
Accounts, Chart of	N/A.	Permanent.	Transfer to parish archives.
Audit	N/A.	Permanent.	Transfer to parish archives.
Balance Sheets, Annual	N/A..	Permanent.	Transfer to parish archives.
Balance Sheets, Quarterly/Monthly	N/A.	2 years if parish produces an annual balance sheet; otherwise permanent.	destroy if parish produces annual balance sheet; otherwise transfer to parish archives.
Banking Records	Cancelled checks and deposit slips written by the parish, along with statements issued by the bank. information includes checks: date, to whom paid, amount, check number, authorized signature; bank statements: list of checks for one month period, dates, beginning balance, ending balance; and deposit slips: date, amounts of deposits, and total deposit.	7 years.	Destroy.
Bid File	Record of each bid submitted by vendors selling goods and/or services to the parish. information may include request for quotation, bid award letter, bid invitations, correspondence, etc.	until administrative value ceases.	Destroy.

FINANCIAL RECORDS CONT.

RECORD SERIES	DESCRIPTION	RETENTION	DISPOSITION
Bonds	N/A.	2 years after date of cancellation.	Destroy.
Budgets	Approved and revised materials. Working materials may be destroyed once their administrative value ceases.	Current year plus 2 years.	Destroy.
Capital Projects	Records of capital projects undertaken by the parish. Includes summary documents, not working documents.	Permanent.	Transfer to parish archives.
Certificates of Deposit	N/A.	2 years after redemption.	Destroy.
Check Registers or Check Stubs	N/A.	7 years.	Destroy.
Development and Fundraising Campaigns Records	Retain donor lists, case statements, correspondence, minutes, and planning documents; destroy receipts and letters of acknowledgement after 7 years.	Selections permanently retained.	Transfer selections to parish archives. Destroy the remainder.
Employee Benefits Trust (Health and Life Insurance)	Bills and spreadsheets to detail employees' health, dental, long-term disability, and life insurance. Spreadsheet allocation with invoice is used as source documentation for transactions recorded in accounting systems	3 years.	Destroy.
Financial Reports, Annual	Annual record of parish finances. Status of expenditures. Information includes account numbers, account names, assets, reserve and fund balances, liabilities, totals, and net worth.	Permanent.	Transfer to parish archives.
Financial Reports, Monthly	Monthly record of parish finances. Status of expenditures. Information includes account numbers, account names, assets, reserve and fund balances, liabilities, totals, and net worth.	Current year plus 1 year.	Destroy.
Fixed Assets Inventory	N/A.	Until superseded.	Destroy.

FINANCIAL RECORDS CONT.

RECORD SERIES	DESCRIPTION	RETENTION	DISPOSITION
General Ledgers	One or more series of computer or non-computer generated financial ledgers providing final year-to-date accounting summary and a permanent audit trail for all fiscal receipt and disbursement transactions affecting any and all parish funds and accounts, including receipts and expenditures, from all revenue sources. Records covered under this schedule include the annual accounting code and system table required to access general ledger information.	Permanent.	Transfer to parish archives.
Gifts and Contributions, Permanently Restricted	Life insurance policies of donors, gift annuity information, matching gifts application, confirmation receipts of investment sales, investment statements of accounts of donors, investment company notices of address changes of donors, bankruptcy notices, stock certificate copies, corporate action notices, donor wills, titles to real estate for time shares, and life insurance policy statements.	Permanent.	Transfer to parish archives.
Gifts and Contributions, Temporarily Restricted	Life insurance policies of donors, gift annuity information, matching gifts application, confirmation receipts of investment sales, investment statements of accounts of donors, investment company notices of address changes of donors, bankruptcy notices, stock certificate copies, corporate action notices, donor wills, titles to real estate for time shares, and life insurance policy statements.	7 years after restriction has been met.	Destroy.
Gifts and Contributions, Unrestricted	Life insurance policies of donors, gift annuity information, matching gifts application, confirmation receipts of investment sales, investment statements of accounts of donors, investment company notices of address changes of donors, bankruptcy notices, stock certificate copies, corporate action notices, donor wills, titles to real estate for time shares, and life insurance policy statements.	7 years.	Destroy.

FINANCIAL RECORDS CONT.

RECORD SERIES	DESCRIPTION	RETENTION	DISPOSITION
Grants	Correspondence, applications, reports, etc. relevant to application for and administration of grant monies.	For grants awarded - permanent retention for final accounting and summary documents only. For the remainder (i.e., the working materials) and grant applications not awarded - 3 years.	For grants awarded, transfer final accounting and summary documentation to parish archives. For the remainder and grant applications not awarded, destroy.
Insurance, Auto	Insurance policies for motor vehicle.	7 years.	Destroy.
Insurance, Flood	Flood insurance policies.	7 years.	Destroy.
Insurance Ledger	Catholic Mutual Group ledger pages.	Current year plus 2 years.	Destroy.
Insurance, Liability	Insurance policies for liability; includes general liability, fiduciary liability, directors and officers (D&O) liability, etc.	100 years.	Destroy.
Insurance, Property	Insurance policies for property.	100 years.	Destroy.
Journal	Records used for reviewing and adjusting various accounts before transferring information to the general ledger. information includes name of the department, account number, description, voucher number, date, reference number, debit, credit, and date.	7 years.	Destroy if summarized in general ledger.
Offertory envelopes	N/A.	Until annual reconciliation.	Destroy after tax season.
Payroll	Documents wages/salary paid to parish employees for services rendered. records also include payroll withholdings, such as social security, federal income tax, state income tax, etc. See also Personnel Records.	7 years	Destroy.

FINANCIAL RECORDS CONT.

RECORD SERIES	DESCRIPTION	RETENTION	DISPOSITION
Petty Cash and Accounts	N/A.	7 years.	Destroy.
Receipts/Receipt Books	Copies of receipts issued for funds received. information includes date, receipt number, from whom received, amount, purpose, and signature of person who received the funds.	7 years.	Destroy.
Retirement	General correspondence regarding retirement: contribution activity reports and adjustments, annual accounting, auditor's report, bank statements, compensation reports, monthly deposit reports, proposals, stocks and bonds, annual reports, and retirement actuarial valuation.	The most cumulative report (quarterly, annual, etc.) has permanent retention. The remainder of content retained for 3 years.	Transfer the most cumulative records to parish archives. destroy the remainder.
Tax Records	N/A.	7 years.	Destroy.

PERSONNEL RECORDS

RECORD SERIES	DESCRIPTION	RETENTION	DISPOSITION
Employment Application, Successful	Application materials of a person accepted for employment.	Retain for life of personnel file.	Transfer to personnel file.
Employment Application, Unsuccessful	Application materials of a person not accepted for employment.	Until administrative value ceases.	Destroy.
Pastoral Appointments	Letters of priest and deacon appointments to parish.	Permanent.	Transfer to parish archives.
Personnel Files	Forms and materials relating to individual employees of the parish. Files may include applications, salary data, professional background, evaluations, leave, contracts and other documents related to employment history. Includes I-9s and Safe Environment materials. Does not include retirement benefits data.	7 years after termination, provided service information of the individual is included among a permanent service record series.	Destroy, provided service information of the individual is included among a permanent service record series.
Service Records	Information that serves as proof of individuals' position(s) and dates of employment with the parish or other agency.	Permanent.	Transfer to parish archives.
Volunteer Files	See personnel files.	N/A.	N/A.
Workers' Compensation/ OSHA	Case files containing records and reports generated as a result of work-related accidents and injuries involving parish employees; exposure to toxic substances in the workplace.	30 years after termination of employment.	Destroy.

LEGAL RECORDS

RECORD SERIES	DESCRIPTION	RETENTION	DISPOSITION
Act or Articles of Incorporation	Documentation of incorporating or bringing into existence a corporate body of the parish.	Permanent.	Transfer to parish archives.
Bequests and Estate Papers	N/A.	Permanent.	Transfer to parish archives.
Contracts, Major	Documentation of contractual relationship between the diocese or its agencies and an entity. includes contracts of real estate, employer/employee, and capital improvements.	50 years after cancellation or expiration.	Review for extended retention of select records. destroy the remainder.
Contracts, Minor	Documentation of contractual relationship between agencies and service providers. includes contract with description of the services to be provided, dates of the contract, signatures, and correspondence.	1 year after cancellation or expiration.	Destroy.
Leases	N/A.	1 year after cancellation or expiration.	Destroy.
Leases, Real Property	N/A.	7 years after cancellation or expiration.	Destroy.
Litigation Case Files	Judicial proceedings which involve the diocese of Charleston or its agency. includes some or all of the following: affidavits, summons and complaints, responses, orders of dismissal, notice of general appeal, laws and regulations applying to particular cases, legal briefs, transcripts of proceedings, orders, court decisions, correspondence, memos, binders, releases, disposition document, etc.	Permanent.	Transfer to diocesan archives.

PROPERTY RECORDS

RECORD SERIES	DESCRIPTION	RETENTION	DISPOSITION
Architectural Plans and Drawings, As-Built	N/A.	Permanent.	Transfer to parish archives. Provide one certified copy to diocesan archives.
Architectural Plans and Drawings, Proposed	N/A.	Until administrative values ceases.	Destroy.
Deeds	See Titles, deeds, and Conveyance of Real Property.		
Insurance, Auto	Insurance policies for motor vehicle.	7 years.	Destroy.
Insurance, Flood	Flood insurance policies.	7 years.	Destroy.
Insurance, Property	Insurance policies for property.	100 years.	Destroy.
Leases, Real Property	N/A.	7 years.	Destroy.
Mortgage Documents	Mortgage document and any documentation that demonstrates the satisfaction of a mortgage.	Permanent.	Transfer to diocesan archives.
Permits, Use of Premises or Facilities	Documentation of third party rights to access and use of parish facilities or equipment.	7 years after expiration.	Destroy.
Surveys/ Plots	N/A.	Permanent.	Transfer to parish archives. Provide one certified copy to diocesan archives.
Titles, Vehicle	N/A.	3 years after final disposition of vehicle.	Destroy.
Titles, Deeds, and Conveyances of Real Property	Includes any title searches or title warranties.	Permanent.	Transfer to diocesan archives.

SACRAMENTAL RECORDS

RECORD SERIES	DESCRIPTION	RETENTION	DISPOSITION
Annulment Case Files	N/A.	5 years after close of case.	Destroy.
Baptism Register	N/A.	Permanent.	Transfer to parish archives; 100+ years old may be transferred to diocesan archives.
Book of the Elect	N/A.	Permanent.	Transfer to parish archives; 100+ years old may be transferred to diocesan archives.
Confirmation Register	N/A.	Permanent.	Transfer to parish archives; 100+ years old may be transferred to diocesan archives.
Death Register	N/A.	Permanent.	Transfer to parish archives; 100+ years old may be transferred to diocesan archives.
First Communion Register	Optional register.	Permanent.	Transfer to parish archives; 100+ years old may be transferred to diocesan archives.
Marriage Register	N/A.	Permanent.	Transfer to parish archives; 100+ years old may be transferred to diocesan archives.
Pre-Nuptial Case Files	N/A..	60 years.	Destroy.
Profession of Faith Register	N/A.	Permanent.	Transfer to parish archives; 100+ years old may be transferred to diocesan archives.

SACRAMENTAL RECORDS CONT.

RECORD SERIES	DESCRIPTION	RETENTION	DISPOSITION
Register of Anointings/ Sick Calls	Optional register.	Permanent.	Transfer to parish archives; 100+ years old may be transferred to diocesan archives.
Register of Catechumens	N/A.	Permanent.	Transfer to parish archives; 100+ years old may be transferred to diocesan archives.
Sacramental Affidavits	Testimony received for attesting to the conferral of a sacrament for the purpose of creating or recreating a sacramental record (sacramental register entry) after the fact.	Until administrative value ceases.	Destroy.

THIS HANDBOOK IS PRODUCED BY

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