

Vilna & District Municipal Library Board Policy Manual

APPENDIX E

Transitory Records

(Policy 403)

Definition of Transitory Record:

Transitory records are records such as memos, letters, reports, computer files, voice mails, or e-mail messages etc. that you create or receive while doing your job, that have only short-term, immediate, or no future value to the municipality.

Transitory records can legally and routinely be destroyed.

There are no firm rules as to what is and is not a transitory record. The decision will be based on the judgment of each employee. If the information in a record will have some future administrative, financial, legal, research, or historical value to the municipality then it is *not* transitory and should be filed. Refer to Schedule A of this bylaw. For example: e-mail messages that record approvals, recommendations, opinions, decisions, or government business transactions. These have future value and are *not* transitory.

Categories of Transitory Records:

Temporary Information: This includes telephone messages, routing slips, post-it notes, opened envelopes, memos, notes and messages (either on paper or electronic) where the information has only immediate or very short-term value. Once they have been used to perform the required activities, the records have no further value. On occasion, records such as these must be kept. Envelopes might be kept because the time and date of receipt might be stamped on them. A telephone message slip may have to be filed, as it may provide evidence of an individual calling at a certain time and date. If there is any doubt as to whether recorded information will have any future reference value, file the record.

Duplicates: This includes exact reproductions of a master document. Common examples are photocopies, or extra copies printed from a computer system, or by a commercial printer. After the master version has been filed, the duplicate may be destroyed. Clearly identify duplicates that are circulated strictly for reference purposes, so they are not filed.

A duplicate can sometimes be altered by someone adding handwritten comments, notes, or initials to it. This action creates a new record. If this added information will have future value to the municipality, file this document.

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Draft Documents and Working Material: This includes material used in the preparation of document and earlier versions of final documents. Usually drafts and working materials, whether paper or electronic, these do not have long-term value and can be destroyed as transitory records.

Some exceptions include drafts and working papers related to the preparation of legislation, legal documents, budgets, policies, standards, guidelines, and procedures. These documents may not be transitory if the municipality was primarily responsible for their creation. This information may have some future value to the municipality that warrants filing it.

Publications: This includes books, magazines, periodicals, pamphlets, brochures, journals, newspapers, and software documentation obtained from sources *outside* the municipality. If they have no future value and their usefulness is finished, they can be discarded in accordance with the municipality's guidelines.

Master copies of publications produced by or for the municipality are *not* transitory and should be filed. Extra copies are transitory once the publication is obsolete and may be destroyed. If it is believed that an obsolete publication has some historical significance, the Provincial Archives of Alberta or the local Archives may be contacted.

Direct Mail: This includes solicited or unsolicited information received from organizations or individuals advertising their products or services. If it is directly relevant to the operation of the municipality, this material may be filed for future reference. Many of these types of documents is "junk mail" and can routinely be destroyed.

Blank Information Media: This includes anything that was created or acquired for the purpose of collection or storing information, but which has not been used and has become obsolete. For example, blank forms.

This category, when storage media information must be physically destroyed, such as videos, audio or dictation tapes, diskettes, disk, magnetic tapes, or optical disk, where:

1. Sensitive or confidential information was previously stored.
2. Where that information was erased according to an approved records retention and disposition schedule.
3. Where it is possible that someone could recover the erased information by technical means.

Process for Transitory Records Disposal: Disposal of transitory records depends on 2 factors:

1. Whether or not the records are confidential and
2. The physical format or medium of the records.

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Confidentiality: Many transitory records do not contain confidential information, but some include personal information about individuals, third-party business information, cabinet confidences, or other sensitive material. Section 15-28 of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act provides guidance on what could be considered sensitive or confidential.

Obsolete blank forms that could be misused should be treated as confidential transitory records. For example: purchase orders.

Physical Format: The two most common record formats are paper and electronic. Paper records can be recycled, pulped, or shredded. Records on electronic media can be deleted through a specific action or erased automatically after a specified period of time.

*Information obtained from Alberta Public Works, Supply and Safety Services: "A Guide to Identifying and Disposing of Transitory Records" brochure.

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