



RETENTION & DISPOSITION SCHEDULE OF PRESBYTERY & SYNOD RECORDS

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INTRODUCTION

This guide provides an overview of record categories, retention schedules, and best practices for managing both physical and digital records. It was created in consultation with institutional policy and procedures, federal and provincial legislation, and industry standards. Contact the Archives for further information and assistance regarding your Presbytery/Synod records.

General Records Management Guidelines

- Organize records by category and date for easy retrieval
- Label boxes and files clearly
- Use consistent file-naming conventions for digital files
- Avoid file duplication (digital and physical)
- Ensure secure storage of sensitive documents
- Review records regularly to determine what needs to be retained, archived, or disposed of

Storage & Preservation

Physical Records

- Avoid damp or humid environments (ex. basements or attics)
- Do not keep records on the floor (consider fire-proof cabinets, metal shelving)

Digital Records

- Use clearly labeled folders and sub-folders
- Maintain back up on an external hard drive

Digital Records Management

- Use standardized digital formats (ex. PDF, DOCX, CSV)
- Regularly update software and backup data to prevent loss
- Control access permissions to protect confidential information

Disposal & Archival Recommendations

- Shredding: For confidential physical documents; always shred the year after the number of retention years have passed (keep for 7 years, shred in 8th year)
- Deletion: Use permanent deletion methods for sensitive digital records (empty your recycling bin)
- Transfer to Archives: Records to be kept permanently should be transferred to the Archives, or securely kept in the Clerk’s office when they are no longer being actively used (indicated below)

RECORD CATEGORIES & RETENTION SCHEDULES

Administrative Records

Record Type	Retention Period	Action
Minutes (official, signed copy; closed door/in-camera)	Permanent	Archive
Minutes (copy minutes)	Keep as needed	Dispose
Reports	Permanent (if not already included within minutes)	Archive
Correspondence (significant) i.e. matters dealing with legal, policy, or property issues requiring decisions, actions, or responses	Permanent	Keep in Clerk’s Office
Correspondence (routine) i.e. matters dealing with general or temporary issues, such as routine memos, event announcements, news from congregations, etc.	Keep as needed	Dispose
Presbytery Committees		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minutes, general correspondence, draft reports, working papers, etc. 	Keep as needed	Dispose

• Special project reports and final products	Permanent	Keep in Clerk's Office
• Correspondence and planning documents	Keep if significant	Keep in Clerk's Office
Formula with signatures	Permanent	Keep in Clerk's Office
Examinations of Session Records	2 years	Dispose
Edicts of Inductions and/or Ordination	2 years	Dispose
Contact/Mailing lists	Keep most up to date	Dispose

Legal & Governance Records

Record Type	Retention Period	Action
Property Documents (deeds, titles, declarations of trust, etc.) for church buildings, camps, etc.	Permanent (duplicates of documents held by the congregation should be kept as needed)	Keep in Clerk's Office
Contracts & Agreements (ex. Leases, rentals, services, etc.)	2 years after contract has ended	Dispose
Funds & Trusts Records		
• Documents, reports, and legal documents relating to the establishment, terms, purpose, etc.	Permanent (if not already included with the minutes)	Keep in Clerk's Office
• Correspondence and other documents relating to the fund's general administration	Keep as needed	Keep in Clerk's Office
Insurance Policies (liability)	Permanent	Keep in Clerk's Office

Insurance Policies (fire, property, travel, etc.)	2 years after term has finished	Dispose
Bequest/Estate Files		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal documents 	Permanent	Keep in Clerk's Office
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Correspondence and other documents relating to the general administration of the bequest/estate 	Keep as needed	Dispose

Judicial Process & Issue Files

Record Type	Retention Period	Action
Non-Disciplinary & Corrective Cases		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial complaint and associated documents 	Permanent	Keep in Clerk's Office
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports of Investigating and/or Review Committees 	Permanent (if not already included with the minutes)	Keep in Clerk's Office
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All other documents relating to the complain 	Keep until resolution is achieved and appeal period has expired	Dispose
Disciplinary Cases		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minutes of relevant proceedings and attached documents, documents admitted in evidence, correspondence or judgements issues by the court 	Permanent	Keep in Clerk's Office
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report of the Investigating Committee 	Permanent (if not already included with minutes)	Keep in Clerk's Office
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documents relating to the case but not admitted as evidence 	Keep until resolution is achieved and appeal period has expired	Dispose

Appeals	Permanent	Keep in Clerk's Office
Sexual Abuse or Harassment Complaints	See the "Policy of the Presbyterian Church in Canada for Dealing with Sexual Abuse and/or Harassment"	
Documentation re: Complaints/Conflicts (resolved without Judicial Process)	Keep as needed	Keep in Clerk's Office
Documentation re: Legal, Administrative, or Financial Issues	Permanent	Keep in Clerk's Office
Documentation re: General or Routine Issues	Keep as needed	Dispose

Financial Records

Record Type	Retention Period	Action
Financial Statements (audited)	Permanent (if not already included with minutes)	Keep in Clerk's Office
Monthly Financial Statements, Drafts, Working Documents	7 years	Dispose
Budgets (approved)	7 years (if not already included with minutes)	Dispose
Draft Budgets, Statements, Working Documents	Keep as needed	Dispose
General Ledger	7 years	Dispose
Bank Reconciliations, Bank Statements, Deposit Books, etc.	7 years	Dispose
Receipt Remittances	7 years	Dispose
Invoices, Utilities, and Other Bills	7 years	Dispose
Tax Documents	7 years	Dispose
Payroll Records	7 years	Dispose

Personnel Records

Apply to individuals employed by the Presbytery, including special ministries or organizations that are overseen by the Presbytery. These are highly confidential.

Record Type	Retention Period	Action
Employment Records (i.e. employee information, leave documents, performance reviews, vacation records)	3 years after employment ended	Dispose
Tax Documents (ex. T4s)	7 years	Dispose
Psychiatric Evaluations	Permanent	Keep in Clerk's Office
Police Record Checks	Permanent	Keep in Clerk's Office

Other Records

Record Type	Retention Period	Action
Resources and Publications (ex. Orders of service, pamphlets, directories, histories, newsletters, videos, etc. produced by or for the Presbytery)	Keep 1-2 copies of each permanently	Archive
	Keep duplicates as needed	Dispose
Dissolved Congregations	Apply the <i>Congregation Records Retention Schedule</i> (provided by the Archives) and contact Archives Staff to arrange transfer of records.	

Additional policy of The Presbyterian Church in Canada Archives can be found in Appendix G of The Book of Forms.