

MVLS Forms & Procedures

Simplified Records Retention for Libraries

Policy/Guideline: 2.2 – Records Retention and Disposal

What records and documents is your library required to keep? How long are you supposed to keep each document? Are you really expected to keep things forever?

The answers to all of these questions are the discipline of Records Management. The NYS Archives maintains an official records retention schedule for “Miscellaneous Local Governments”, which includes libraries. That schedule is available on the web at:
<https://www.archives.nysed.gov/sites/archives/files/lgs-1-2022.pdf>

This official schedule is very thorough: it comes in at more than 270 pages. So although that document is the official records retention schedule for libraries, MVLS has developed this highly digested version to provide answers for libraries on how long specific records should be kept. This simplified version is designed as a supplement to, not a replacement for, the official records retention schedule.

The simplified schedule uses the same broad categories as the full schedule, and references the section numbers of the full schedule. Please refer back to the full schedule with any questions.

General Records

Maintain Permanently

- Annual Reports (1.1; 11.11; 23.23a)
- Board Meeting Materials - minutes, agendas, attachments, etc. (1.1)
- Policies and records of policy changes (9.9a; 10.10a)
- Plan of Service, Charter files etc. 11.11a; 1.254)
- Records of any legal case or investigation (4.4; 17.17)

Maintain 7 Years (Current + 6) Records, including correspondence pertaining to:

- Legal issues & notices, incident & damage reports (6.6; 7.7)
- Repair & maintenance records (16.16)
- Internal administrative records - signing authority, complaints, survey records etc. (6.6; 9.9b; 15.15; 22.22)
- Grant and special project files (10.10; 12.12; 13.13)

Maintain 4 Years (current + 3) Records pertaining to

- Accident Reports (31.31)
- Photocopying copyright compliance records (34.582a)
- Training & continuing education (37.585)

Most other general records can be maintained on an as-needed basis

Executive or Director Records

Maintain Permanently

- Files with lasting program or policy significance (1.198 a)

Maintain 6 years

- Files on routine activities (1.198 b)

Fiscal Records

Maintain Permanently

- OSC and municipal audits (1.214)
- Bond Summary records (1.224a)
- Investment summary records (4.227)
- Official budgets (2.49a)
- Grant Summary Files (18.720a)

Maintain 55 Years

- Payroll annual earnings records for retirement purposes (1.291)

Maintain 6 years

- External audits (1.215)
- Financial Reports, with all background detail, including purchasing, claims. invoices, etc. (1.215; 1.217; 1.198, 4.402)
- Grant Summary Files (18.720b)

Maintain 4 years

- Tax forms completed (941, W-1, W-4, etc.) (16.306; 17.307; 18.308)

Insurance Records

Maintain 18 Years

- Records concerning Workers Compensation insurance & claims (2.247)

Maintain 6 Years

- General Insurance Policies (1.246; 4.249; 7.252)

Library Records

Maintain Permanently

- Charter & Registration Records, By-Laws & Policies (1.254)

Maintain 6 Years

- Censorship & materials challenges records (8.261)

Maintain 4 years

- Photocopying copyright compliance records (34.582a)

Personnel Records

Maintain Permanently

- Master Personnel Files with dates of employment (1.310)
- Employee Rosters (18.327)
- Oaths of Office (19.328)
- Personnel Policies (9.9a)
- Labor Management records including Contracts, etc. (11.320; 12.321)
- Equal Employment Opportunities records (8.317)

Maintain 55 Years

- Payroll annual earnings records for retirement purposes (1.291)

Maintain 40 years

- Records on toxic substances in the workplace (16.325)

Maintain 18 years

- Records on occupational illnesses (21.7410)

Maintain 6 years after employee's termination

- Detailed Personnel File information (1.310b)

Maintain 6 years

- Employee timesheets (3.312)
- Periodic Payroll detailed information (1.291c; 2.292-)
- Health, life & unemployment insurance records (9.318; 10.319)
- Employee training records (5.314)

Maintain 3 years

- Employee grievance and disciplinary records (2.311; 14.323)
- Non-incident-related employee medical records (9.318a; 22.330a; 23.910)
- I-9 forms (31.911)

Property Records

Maintain Permanently

- Deeds, plot plans, property acquisition records, etc. (1.412a; 2.413; 3.414)
- Building "As-Built" drawings (5.416a)
- ADA legal cases (37.786)

Maintain 30 years

- Asbestos abatement project records (24.773)

Maintain 6 years

- General Building project records, including schematic drawings, etc. (4.415; 5.416)
- Feasibility studies (4.415a)
- Maintenance & testing records (7.769; 8.770)
- Inspection reports (15.424; 35.784)
- Inventory & equipment lists (15.424)

Maintain 3 years

- Building security & fire safety records (9.418; 11.420)
- ADA compliance records (36.785)