

A GUIDE TO ARCHIVING CONFERENCE RECORDS

Prepared by the United Church Archives Network (November 2018)

BACKGROUND

As of December 31, 2018, Conferences will formally close. The records they created and used are considered final. They should not be altered, edited or amended.

This guide was prepared to assist Conferences in managing their hardcopy and electronic records as they wind down their operations. Please contact your Conference Archivist if you have questions or require additional information

(<https://www.unitedchurcharchives.ca/welcome/united-church-of-canada-archives-network/>).

Conference records in hardcopy form should be reviewed to determine if they should be sent to the Conference Archives for permanent retention, sent to the incoming regional council for reference with respect to ongoing business, or securely destroyed.

Some Conference records exist in electronic format only (e.g., word processed documents, PowerPoint presentations). The Records Centre (RC) Transition Portal has been created for securely storing electronic Conference records which may need to be referenced by regional councils. All records uploaded to the Transition Portal should be considered a reference copy only (read-only, unaltered) to be used by regional councils for ongoing work. More information on electronic records is found below.

WHERE TO START

The following steps are recommended in preparing hardcopy Conference records to be sent to the appropriate Conference Archives:

1. Ask your Conference Archives for a listing of Conference holdings already deposited in the archives.
2. Determine where non-archived Conference records are currently held, and gather them in a central location to review and prepare for transfer to the archives.
3. Consult the recommended list of records to be archived.
4. Remove and destroy any duplicates, according to best practices.
5. Ensure that all file folders or binders are labelled correctly.
6. Prepare a listing (by box) of the records to be transferred to the Archives. Records may be arranged by grouping (e.g., minutes, reports, correspondence files).
7. Once lists are completed, get your Conference Executive Secretary to approve the transfer of the records.
8. Consult your Conference Archives to arrange transfer of records.

WHAT SHOULD BE TRANSFERRED TO THE ARCHIVES?

The following chart was developed to assist Conferences in identifying which records are archival and which are not. The chart also provides direction on how long to retain non-archival

records before they can be destroyed. If there are any documents or items that are not on this list and you are not sure what to do with them, please contact your Conference Archivist.

TYPES OF RECORDS	RETENTION PERIOD	COMMENTS
[OPERATIONAL]		
Annual reports	Archival	
Ballots	Retain until results are confirmed, then destroy	
Bylaws, constitution	Archival	Retain all historical versions
Organizational charts	Archival	Retain all historical versions
Correspondence and memoranda: <u>General</u> (for routine matters, e.g., requests for basic information, referrals to other sources)	Destroy after 3 years	
Correspondence and memoranda: <u>Substantive</u> (dealing with legal or other important matters, potential value for historical research on policy or issues, etc.)	Archival	
Legal documents (e.g. deeds, titles, mortgages, bills of sale)	Archival	
Minutes and proceedings of Conference and Conference Executive meetings	Archival	Includes appendices and attachment to the minutes (i.e. correspondence, reports, etc. tabled at the presbytery minutes); <i>ensure</i> the minutes have been <u>signed</u> and <u>reviewed</u>
Planning documents (e.g. goals, objectives, priorities)	Archival	
Policy statements and procedure manuals	Archival	
Conference standing committee and ad hoc committee records (minutes, reports, substantive correspondence, reports, etc.).	Archival	

TYPES OF RECORDS	RETENTION PERIOD	COMMENTS
Case files or correspondence files (usually these are substantive correspondence and subject files)	Archival	
Reports generated by or for Conference or related to the work of Conference	Archival	
[PERSONNEL]		
<i>Please consult the Conference Personnel Minister or the Conference Archivist for guidance.</i>		
[FINANCIAL RECORDS]		
According to the Income Tax Act, certain records must be retained for a specified period of time (usually seven years). Ensure these records are securely stored and accessible by regional council staff.		

RECORDS WHICH ARE NOT ARCHIVAL

Not all documents created or collected within a Conference environment are “records” of the Conference. That is, they do not serve to document functions, policies, decisions, procedures or operations or other activities of the Conference. These records include:

- Blank forms
- Annual Reports from outside agencies
- Notices or memos on upcoming social events
- Memos or routine administration details (not related to program functions) like room bookings.
- Past event completed permission forms for attendees

ELECTRONIC RECORDS

In some cases, the records identified as “archival” will have been created electronically, as **word-processed document files, digital photos, audio or video files, or databases**. At the present time, the Conference Archives cannot accept digital versions of Conference minutes, reports, correspondence, membership, financial, property, legal, or other official records. *Please ensure that all necessary documents have been printed and filed, in accordance with United Church guidelines.*

Certain digital records—including **photos, audio and video files**—present special challenges for archives, whether they are transferred in their original electronic form, printed on paper, or carried on disks, cassette tapes, or other containers. If you have records like these, please consult with the Conference Archivist at the earliest opportunity to ensure the appropriate preservation measures can be taken.

RECORDS CENTRE (RC) TRANSITION PORTAL

Records to upload to the Portal include:

- Minutes and related reports that are pending approval and need approval by regional councils. This includes all presbytery/Conference meetings, Executive, standing, sub and ad-hoc committees, groups/associations.
- Electronic versions of minutes (2 years only). NOTE: These minutes should be for reference only, the originals are to be printed and sent to Conference Archives.
- Substantive correspondence files relating to unresolved or ongoing matters.
- Files for ongoing projects
- Files regarding ongoing property issues
- Final Financial Ledgers (only in .pdf, word or excel formats). Hard-copy of these ledgers should also be sent to Conference Archives.

Do not upload the following, but discuss these items with your Conference archivist:

- Confidential or personal information (e.g. ministry personnel or human resource files)
- Routine correspondence
- Publications
- Media such as photographs and videos
- Database files which have not been converted to .pdf, word or excel format.

BEST PRACTICES FOR RECORD DESTRUCTION

Not all records are archival and do not need to be kept permanently. Certain records can be destroyed after holding them for a particular time period, as indicated in the recommended retention period shown above. In addition, drafts and duplicate copies of documents do not need to be kept.

Once these records no longer need to be retained, they must be carefully disposed of under controlled conditions. Any paper records containing personal or confidential information (including duplicate copies) should be shredded or destroyed by other permanent means. Such records should not be simply recycled, as the information could be identified and distributed to other places and/or sources. Electronic records designated for destruction should also be deleted from all computer drives and other portable devices.