

## Sample Records Schedule: Congregations

A **records retention schedule** identifies the types of records created by a congregation and its officers and governs their retention and disposition. This schedule is intended to provide an example that your congregation can use to manage your records and prepare records for transfer to your Regional Council Archives. If your congregation creates types of records not listed in this schedule and you are uncertain how long to keep them, contact your Regional Council Archives for more information.

All record types with **Archives** retention should be transferred to the Archives when the records are no longer actively used in church work. Those marked **Permanent** are to be kept permanently at the congregation. It is best to send such records every three to five years. Only one copy should be deposited to the Archives. Record types that are not permanent should be disposed after the designated retention period.

Record Type: Administrative	Retention Period	Comments
Advertising and marketing materials	5 years	Includes flyers, brochures, posters, photographs, audio-visual material. Contact Regional Council Archivist.
Agendas	5 years	
Annual reports	Permanent	
Annual statistics	Permanent	
Ballots	Retain until results are confirmed	
Bylaws/constitution	Permanent	Retain all historical versions.
Correspondence and memoranda: general	3 years	
Correspondence and memoranda: substantive	Permanent	Dealing with legal or other important matters; potential value for historical research on policy or issues.
Email accounts	3 years	Save emails which detail business decisions in relevant files.
Legal documents	Permanent	e.g.: deeds, titles, mortgages, bills of sale, memorandums of agreement for disposition of cemeteries when churches close.
Minutes of congregation	Permanent	All boards, committees, organizations of the congregation.
Minutes of other church courts	5 years	e.g.: Regional Council, General Council.
Organization charts	7 years	Retention begins when org. chart is superseded.
Planning documents	Permanent	e.g.: Goals and objectives, priorities.
Policy statements and procedure manuals	Permanent	Includes all written policy statements, procedures, standards and guidelines.

Reports	Permanent	Generated by board/organization/committees of congregation.
Social media	3 years	Retain while current.
Website	5 years	Contact Regional Council Archivist for information on web content capture.
<b>Record Type: Finance/Property</b>	<b>Retention Period</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Audited annual financial returns	Permanent	Those included in Annual Report are sufficient.
Bank statements, pass books, reconciliations, and cancelled cheques	7 years	A requirement of the <i>Income Tax Act</i> .
Budget planning documents	10 years	
Capital construction records	Permanent	Including: survey and title searches; contracts (incl. change orders); funding approvals; testing reports and certificates; "as built" drawings.
Cash receipts	7 years	
Contracts	7 years	Retain while current. Supplies, service, maintenance.
Deposit books/slips	7 years	
Donor files (e.g., objective files)	7 years	
Donor receipts	7 years	
Equipment and supplies: general	5 years	Includes office supplies, hardware, software.
Equipment and supplies: assets	7 years	Includes furniture, permanent fixtures, buildings.
General ledgers	7 years	
Inspection reports	5 years	Retain until next inspection. Including fire, elevator.
Insurance policies	Permanent	Including property, boiler and machinery, travel, accident, course of construction.
Insurance documentation (not policies)	3 years	
Invoices: construction	Permanent	
Invoices: other capital	7 years	
Invoices: operating	7 years	
Journals and subsidiary ledgers	7 years	Accounts payable, accounts receivable, cash receipts, misc. & other, payroll.
Plans, drawings, and specifications	Permanent	i.e., Architectural, engineering.
Property records	Permanent	Deeds, titles, leases.
Subscription files	7 years	e.g., <i>The Observer</i> .
Tax returns	7 years	Charitable, GST/HST.
Tax bills: property, municipal	7 years	
Utility contracts	7 years	

Weekly offering envelopes	7 years	
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<b>Record Type: Membership</b>	<b>Retention Period</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Communion rolls	Permanent	
Directories: members and staff	1 year	Retention begins when directory or list is obsolete.
Historic rolls	Permanent	
Mailing lists	1 year	Retention begins when directory or list is obsolete.
Registers: baptism, marriage, burial	Permanent	
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<b>Record Type: Personnel</b>	<b>Retention Period</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Payroll records: time cards/sheets	2 years	
Payroll records: T4s	7 years	
Payroll records: T4As	7 years	
Payroll records: deductions CPP, EI	7 years	
Personnel policies	Permanent	Re. Lay personnel hired by congregation.
Personnel records: ministry personnel	7 years	Ministry and Personnel committee keep all active records. See Personnel Records Policy for which records to transfer to Office of Vocation as permanent.
Personnel records: lay personnel	7 years	Ministry and Personnel committee keep all active records. See Personnel Records Policy for more information.
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<b>Record Type: Other</b>	<b>Retention Period</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Bibles/hymnals	Copied information permanent	Photocopy significant historical information written in margins, etc., if not available elsewhere.
Biographical material of key members and clergy who have served congregation	Permanent	
News clippings of congregational activities	Permanent	Make sure newspaper is named, dated, photocopied on acid-free paper.
Newsletters	Permanent	
Bulletins/orders of service	Selective retention	Contact Regional Council Archivist.
Histories of congregation	Permanent	Published or unpublished.
Film/videotape	Selective retention	Produced by congregation/of historical importance; identified.
Oral history: tapes/transcripts	Selective retention	

Press releases: issued by congregation	Permanent	
Programs	5 years	
Publications: by congregation	Permanent	
Publications: non-congregation	While in use	
Photographs	Selective retention	Identified and dated. Contact Regional Council Archivist.
Residential school	Permanent	Transfer copy to NCTR.
Scrapbooks	Selective retention	Historical contents identified and dated. Contact Regional Council Archivist.
Slide/tape shows	Selective retention	Subjects identified and dated. Contact Regional Council Archivist.
Sound recordings	Selective retention	Of congregational event/activity; key speakers identified; date of event. Contact Regional Council Archivist.
Speeches	Permanent	Congregation: clergy, officers, guests; dated.

For more information, contact your Regional Council Archives:

<https://www.unitedchurcharchives.ca>