



# Records Management Manual



Park District of Oak Park  
218 Madison St  
Oak Park, Illinois 60302

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## Introduction

Illinois State Law (50 ILCS 205/) Local Records Act requires Park Districts to establish and maintain an active, continuing program for the economical and efficient management of records, and to appoint an individual to manage the program in accordance with all applicable statutes. The designated individual oversees the program to ensure that accurate Records Retention and Destruction Schedules are maintained and adhered to, and that all reporting requirements are met.

The Designated Records Manager, under authority of the Executive Director, is responsible for the day-to-day oversight of the Park District's Records Management Program to ensure compliance with state law. Through an ongoing Records Management Program, the Park District's Designated Records Manager provides assistance and support to departments, offices, and staff of the Park District of Oak Park to ensure that schedules are followed and destructions are properly documented and reported. The Designated Records Manager advises each department, office, or staff on conducting records inventories and preparing records for destruction.

This manual was prepared to provide written procedures for complying with state law and the Park District's records management policies and procedures.

## Quick Start Guide – Three Basic Steps of Records Management

### Step 1: Prepare and Maintain a Current Retention and Disposition Schedule

The Park District is required to have a current, State-approved Records Retention and Disposition Schedule (Retention Schedule) on file with the State of Illinois Local Records Commission. A State-approved schedule lists the types of records, or record series, maintained by each department; indicates how long documents are to be kept; and authorizes the destruction of non-permanent records once retention periods have been met. Illinois State Law, 50 ILCS 205/ Local Records Act, requires each state and local agency to submit proposed Records Retention and Disposition Schedules to the State for approval.

### Step 2: Retain Records According to an Approved Retention Schedule

The Park District is legally required to comply with its respective Retention Schedule; therefore, schedules are to be followed carefully, consistently, and in a timely manner.

### Step 3: Destroy Records According to an Approved Retention Schedule

Records are to be destroyed promptly and consistently according to a current, State-approved Retention Schedule. An approved Retention Schedule serves as authorization from the State of Illinois Local Records Commission to destroy a record once the retention period has been met.

**Note:** If a record is not listed on a current, State-approved Schedule, or if a record is required beyond the prescribed retention period for litigation or legal discovery, criminal or government investigation, or ongoing audit purposes, **do not destroy the record**. Whenever there is a question regarding whether a record can be destroyed, call the Park District Designated Records Manager for assistance.

**Where to Go for Help**

The Park District's Designated Records Manager is available to answer records management questions and to assist in the preparation and update of forms and reports.

## OVERVIEW

### Purpose

The Park District of Oak Park Records Management Program was established to provide a comprehensive and cost effective method for maintaining, preserving, and disposing of Park District records in compliance with Illinois State Law, 50 ILCS 205/ Local Records Act.

### Scope

The Records Management Program is applicable to all divisions, officials, employees, and representatives of the Park District. All records defined under Illinois State Law, 50 ILCS 205/Local Records Act, including records maintained by the Park District of Oak Park, are the property of the State of Illinois. No Park District official or employee has any personal or proprietary right to such records, even though he or she may have developed, created, or compiled the record. Unauthorized removal, destruction, or use of Park District records is prohibited.

### Objectives

The primary goal of the Records Management Program is to provide for efficient, economical, and effective control over the creation, distribution, maintenance, use, preservation, and disposition of all the Park District of Oak Park records, regardless of physical form or characteristic. The Records Management Program objectives are:

- Provide written guidelines and procedures for the creation, retention, and disposition of the Park District's records to ensure consistency and compliance with State law.
- Evaluate and determine the disposition of each record series based on whether it has permanent or archival research value, and whether it is to be retained and/or microfilmed.
- Ensure periodic review and updating of the Records Retention and Disposition Schedules.
- Review and recommend efficient and cost effective methods for record storage and retrieval.
- Develop a plan for evaluating, identifying, protecting, and recovery of the Park District's critical records (Essential Records Protection and Recovery Plan).
- Develop a process for evaluating, identifying, preserving, and protecting the Park District's historic documents (Historic Records Preservation).

### Authority

The Park District of Oak Park handles retention and destruction of its records following the Illinois State Law, 50 ILCS 205/ Local Records Act, and grants the Executive Director and the Designated Records Manager authority to oversee the program.

## Applicable Guidelines

### **Application No.02:41C**

Application No.02:41C specifically formed by the State of Illinois Local Records Commission for the Park District of Oak Park, is the Retention and Disposition Schedule (Retention Schedule) identifying the length of time records must be kept prior to destruction and purge lists identifying documents to be removed. This schedule must be followed at all times.

### **Park District Administrative Policy and Procedure**

Park District policy requires all officials, employees, and representatives of the Park District of Oak Park to adhere to the procedures set forth in the Records Management Manual issued by the Park District of Oak Park and approved by the Executive Director. Park District procedures list documents standards to provide general guidelines for the classification, retention, and destruction of official Park District documents.

### **Preservation of Public Records**

Illinois State Law 50 ILCS 205/ Local Records Act, declares all records made or received by public officials of the State in the course of their public duties to be the property of the State. Public records are not personal property, nor are they the property of a specific agency or political sub-department. The statute also prohibits the destruction or disposition of any public record unless the State of Illinois Local Records Commission has determined that the record has no further administrative, legal, fiscal, research, or other value.

### **Anti-Identification Procedures**

The Park District is to ensure that the personal identifying information of individuals or businesses, collected or obtained by the agency, is secure and cannot be accessed or viewed unless authorized by law.

### **Destruction of Public Records**

Destruction of public records by a public officer or by persons other than a public officer without authorization is a felony. Stealing, mutilating, defacing, altering, falsifying, removing or secreting public records are also felony offenses.

## SECTION 1: RECORDS RETENTION AND DISPOSITION SCHEDULE

### Custom Retention Schedule

The Park District has a custom retention schedule already completed; Application No.02:41C. This Retention Schedule that has been customized to accurately reflect the types of files maintained by the Park District is needed from the State of Illinois Local Records Commission to apply for record destruction. Each department must follow the retention schedule in retaining and destruction of their perspective records.

The Park District's Retention Schedule lists administrative and departmental records that may be common throughout the organization or just in individualized departments.

### Upkeep of Custom Retention Schedule

There are four basic steps for maintaining a Custom Retention Schedule:

1. Inventory Each Record Series
2. Evaluate Each Record Series
3. Complete a Records Retention and Disposition Schedule Form
4. Obtain Approval of the Proposed Custom Retention Schedule

### Responsibilities

#### Park District Executive Director

The Park District Executive Director is responsible for ensuring that the Park District's records management goals and objectives are met. This includes approving the timely retention and disposition of records, and overseeing any other activities necessary for the maintenance retention, and/or preservation of official records in compliance with State law.

The Executive Director:

- Signs new or revised department, office, or department Retention Schedule(s).
- Approves the disposal of department or office records that have met retention requirements.
- Designates one or more individuals to serve as department or office records management coordinators.

#### Park District Executive Assistant/Designated Records Manager

The Park District Executive Assistant is the Designated Records Manager of the Park District of Oak Park and is responsible for administering the Park District's Records Management Program.

The Executive Assistant:

- Develops, approves, and applies standards for the evaluation of records for preservation, retention, transfer, and disposal.



- Develops, approves, and applies general guidelines for the creation and version control of official Park District documents (agendas, minutes, contracts, resolutions, ordinances, and publications).
- Confers with the Park District Attorney, as needed, for legal review of new records management policies and procedures prior to implementation.
- Confers with the Park District Executive Director, as needed, for approval of the Records Management Manual and Records Management Administrative Guidelines and Regulations prior to implementation.
- Oversees the daily operation of the Park District's Records Management Program to ensure compliance with State law.
- Serves as the liaison to the State of Illinois Local Records Commission.
- Assists individual departments in establishing their internal records.
- Drafts, revises, and communicates the guidelines and procedures for the management and disposal of departmental records.
- Prepares and maintains the Park District Records Management Manual.
- Provides training in the fundamentals of the Records Management Program.
- Forwards new or amended Retention Schedules and requests for document imaging implementation to the State for approval.
- Files destruction reports with the State.
- Documents the Park District's use of an active records management program by maintaining Retention Schedules, destruction reports, and other documents showing the Park District's adherence to a methodic system of records retention and destruction.
- Monitors off-site storage and serves as the liaison between the Park District and the off-site storage account manager.
- Prepares and maintains the Essential Records Protection and Recovery Plan with the IT Manager.
- Evaluates and classifies historical and archival Park District documents, and oversees their storage and preservation.
- Assists departments and offices of the Park District in the identification and preservation of the Park District's historic and essential records.
- Makes recommendations on budgetary needs to ensure the Records Management Program is funded appropriately.

### **Superintendents, Directors, and Managers of Departments**

The Superintendents, Directors, and Managers of Departments are responsible for coordinating the records management responsibilities for his/her respective department or office.

The Superintendents, Directors, and Managers of Departments:

- Maintains department or department records in a neat and orderly manner to facilitate the maintenance, retrieval, storage, and disposition of the records in compliance with state law.

- Reviews, periodically, but not less than once per year, all existing records maintained within the department.
- Recommends changes to the department's Retention Schedule.
- Identifies and transfers inactive records to storage.
- Identifies documents meeting destruction requirements and prepares them for destruction.
- Prepares records management-related forms and reports.

Departments should not collect unnecessary information, especially personal information. Departments also must ensure the proper disposition of records containing personal information pursuant to the Park District's record retention schedules. Paper records containing personal information must be shredded, unless an equally cost-effective and thorough method is used. The data in electronic records (including, computers, disks, CDs, magnetic tapes, hard drives, laptops, PDAs, cell phones, or any other electronic media or hardware containing personal identifying information) must be permanently erased.

## Definitions

### **Electronic Records**

Electronic records are those that, regardless of physical form, reside in or are accessed by a computer system or are maintained in a media readable only by a machine or electronic device.

### **Essential Records**

Essential records are any records containing information necessary for the Park District to continue its key functions and activities in the event of an emergency or disaster. Essential records are not necessarily permanent, nor are they required to be maintained on a special medium. Each department is specifically responsible for the identification and protection of its own essential records.

### **Inactive Records**

A record is considered to be inactive when there is no longer any activity or interest in the document.

### **Non-Permanent Record**

A non-permanent record is any record that has a time-defined retention period, even if the retention period spans a great number of years. Non-permanent records must be retained and destroyed in compliance with a State-approved Retention Schedule.

If a document (or documents) in a non-permanent record is deemed to have historic value, the document is reclassified as a permanent record and cannot be destroyed. The remaining non-historic documents are still considered non-permanent records and must be destroyed according to their respective Retention Schedule.

The list of non-permanent records is quite extensive; however, a few examples include:

- Administrative and Personnel Files
- Budget and Financial Records
- Construction Records and Plans
- Legal Opinions
- Most Contracts

### **Permanent Records**

Permanent records are not scheduled for destruction, and are relatively rare, usually comprising a small percentage of a Park District's total records. Some examples of permanent records include:

- Minutes of a public body of the Park District (Park District boards, committees, as well as their respective subcommittees)
- Resolutions and ordinances of the Park District Board of Commissioners
- Documents declared by resolution to be a public record
- One copy of the Park District's annual reports
- Original copy of organizational documentation (for example, the Park District Charter or amendments to the Park District Charter; major changes in organization structure)
- Records documenting a historic or "landmark" event

### **Non-Records**

While the definition of records encompasses a broad spectrum of recorded information, not all recorded information is considered a record. Some examples of non-record materials include:

- Duplicate or extra copies of correspondence and reports initiated by another department and retained for informational purposes
- Working papers and notes that do not pertain to a specific project
- Drafts of reports or correspondence that have been finalized
- Published materials originating from Park District offices or other entities which require no action
- Catalogs, trade journals, and other publications
- Correspondence of short-term value, such as transmittal memos, courtesy copies of memos, etc.
- Informational or courtesy copies of records in which no documented administrative action is taken.

Non-record material should not be filed or retained in the same file with record material. Sometimes documents that are normally considered non-records, such as transmittals or routing slips, will acquire record status if they clarify the matter being documented. Such distinctions require care and discretion when filing.

Generally, for records management purposes, multiple copies of a single document are non-records. One copy of the document, preferably the original, must be designated as the official record, listed on the responsible department's Retention Schedule, and retained according to the schedule. The remaining copies of the document are considered to be non-record, reference copies generated for informational purposes. These non-record copies are to be retained in accordance with the Park District's Retention Schedule, or, in some cases, listed on the department's custom schedule. Non-record copies should never be kept longer than the retention period established for the official record.

**Records Retention and Disposition Schedule (Retention Schedule)**

A Records Retention and Disposition Schedule (also referred to as Retention Schedule) is a state-approved timetable that establishes the length of time a record must be kept. The retention and disposition dates listed on state-approved schedules are based on use or need of the record, and on its administrative, legal, fiscal, or archival value to the Park District of Oak Park. A retention schedule also serves as the required legal authority to destroy a record once the retention period has been met. Retention schedules apply to both electronic and paper documents.

## SECTION 2: RECORDS RETENTION AND STORAGE

Most records have active and inactive stages in their lifecycle.

### Active Records

Paper records are usually retained within the department until they are no longer considered active. In most cases, a record must be referred to more than six times per year to be considered active. When activity drops, departments should determine which records are eligible for transfer to the storage trailer by periodically (every 6 to 12 months) reviewing the Records Schedule.

### Inactive Records

When records are seldom referred to, their continued on-site retention becomes impractical. For this reason, the Park District has the option for inactive records to be stored in an off-site storage facility until retention requirements have been met. By storing inactive records off-site, costs associated with storing the same records within prime office space are reduced.

The Park District also has the option of using a vendor for records storage, retrieval, destruction and microfilming services. A record stored at an off-site facility remains available to the department until the recommended legal retention period has been met.

### Records Disaster Mitigation

It is not always possible to prevent an emergency, but the Park District is able to reduce the likelihood that emergencies become disasters by establishing and following effective emergency management practices, even with Park District records.

Possible threats to records include:

- Natural disasters
- Fires
- Floods
- Insect infestations
- Security breaches
- Theft

Prevention is the best insurance against the loss of records and information. The following steps are taken to help reduce the chance that the Park District's records will be lost or damaged.

- The Park District strives to have effective processes for managing all documents and records, regardless of format or medium by reviewing the Records Management Plan among key staff at least every 3 years.
- The Park District's records are stored in a room which is secure, equipped with fire and flood prevention and detection devices, and fitted with locks and alarms.
- Paper records are protected by always being stored in boxes or cabinets in cool, dry, secure locations away from sunlight, windows, water pipes, gas pipes, and at least 6 inches off the floor.

- Electronic records are protected with established, regular back-up and storage procedures.
- Records storage areas (paper and electronic servers) are regularly inspected to ensure they are secure, safe, and free from any sign of deterioration, infestation, or damage.
- Personnel responsible for records management are trained to handle records securely, including adhering to established records classification, cleaning up records according to retention schedules, and protecting sensitive information.
- Extra protection is given to vital and essential records, such as deeds. These records are also saved electronically at a different location than where the original copies are kept in order to increase the probability that one copy will survive if the other is destroyed.
- Eating and drinking while working with records is prohibited.
- Records storage areas are not to be used for surplus storage of other objects.

## SECTION 3: RECORDS DESTRUCTION

A State-approved Retention Schedule grants continuing authority to dispose of records that have met their scheduled retention period. With an approved schedule, the Park District may dispose of listed records. The State requires the lawful and timely destruction of eligible records. A record should not be destroyed while it still has significant value, nor should it be retained after its value drops below the cost of continued retention. However, records that must be retained beyond the specified retention period for litigation or legal discovery, criminal or government investigation, or ongoing audit purposes may not be destroyed until cleared by the appropriate authority (Park District Executive Assistant working in conjunction with the Park District Executive Director and/or Park District Attorney).

### Authorization To Destroy Records

There are only three instances when a record may be destroyed:

- If the record has met the State-approved retention schedule.
- If the record is on a State-approved imaging request and the record has been imaged and checked to ensure the quality of the image.
- If data entered from the record has captured the essence of the record.

After the Designated Records Manager's compilation of the list of records to be destroyed is completed, it must be entered onto a Retention and Disposition Schedule and sent to the State of Illinois Local Records Commission for approval. Upon receipt of the State-approved Retention and Disposition Schedule, it serves as authorization to destroy the records.

### Disposal of Records on Approved Schedules

Once a document has been destroyed in accordance with a State-approved Retention Schedule, the Designated Records Manager must retain a copy for the official files.

### Methods of Destruction

Destruction of records carried out by the off-site vendor must be documented and reported. The off-site storage vendor is required by contract to provide destruction reports.

## SECTION 4: ELECTRONIC RECORDS, MICROFILM, & DOCUMENT IMAGING

All Park District records, regardless of format, are to be maintained according to an approved Records Retention and Disposition Schedule. The retention and destruction of an electronic record, microfilm, or image is the same as for the paper copy of the same record. A Report/Certificate of Records Destruction Form is required for destruction of electronic records, images, and microfilm once the retention period for that record or record series has been met.

### Electronic Records

Electronic records are those which, regardless of physical form, reside in or are accessed by a computer system or are maintained in a media that can only be read by a machine or electronic device.

Public agencies can create, receive, and maintain electronic records as long as the records comply with all other statutory records requirements. A department or office must inform the Designated Records Manager when converting paper or microfilm records to electronic records (scanning).

Creating an electronic record “up-front,” rather than converting it from another media, is a cost-effective and efficient method of managing most non-permanent records. Some examples of electronic documents that may be maintained in electronic form include: Word documents, Excel spreadsheets, data input into a computer file, incoming and outgoing e-mail, large reports or statements sent by an outside agency or company for storage on the Park District’s computer network, scanned or imaged documents, digital photographs, and online forms completed/submitted by citizens or vendors.



## SECTION 5: ELECTRONIC MESSAGES (E-MAIL AND VOICE MAIL)

Electronic messages, including e-mail and voice messages, are subject to the Freedom of Information Act and may be subject to public disclosure. Electronic messages that are considered to be official records must be maintained for the same length of time and destroyed in the same manner as a paper record.

### **Non-Records Electronic Messages**

Non-record electronic messages that do not meet the statutory definition of a record are to be deleted from the user's inbox. The destruction of non-record electronic messages does not need to be reported on a list as it is recommended that most non-record electronic messages be deleted from the sender's and/or receiver's personal computer and from the Park District server on a monthly basis.

### **Records Electronic Messages**

#### ***Short-Term***

Records with a retention period of one year or less can be maintained effectively in a personal computer on the Park District's network. These types of records may include, but are not limited to appointment calendars, logs/rosters, activity reports (weekly, monthly, quarterly), transitory materials, etc. These short-term records can be organized and stored in online "folders" to facilitate document retrieval.

#### ***Long-Term***

Highly-active, long-term electronic records may be maintained online for convenience initially, and then be stored in the Park District's Barracuda Email Archive system stored offline when activity diminishes.

Electronic messages requiring long-term retention (more than one year) can be maintained in one of several types of offline systems. It is possible to transfer an electronic message to an offline system by printing the record to paper. Electronic records printed to paper must contain the full text message, including any links within the e-mail. Attachments to an e-mail must also be printed and attached to the paper record of the e-mail for retention purposes. Offline storage may also include computer output microfilm (COM), magnetic tape, or optical disk (CDs, DVDs).

### **Storage of Electronic E-mails**

The Park District's electronic e-mails are continually backed up by utilizing a Barracuda Email Archive appliance, along with a nightly back up of our Microsoft Exchange Service to disk.

## SECTION 6: DISASTER RECOVERY

### Disaster Recovery Plan

The following disaster recovery plan has been established to ensure that the Park District can act quickly and effectively to protect materials from harm, recover any damaged materials, and prevent further risks to records.

In the event of a disaster, the Disaster Records Recovery Team made up of the Executive Director, Designated Records Manager, and IT Manager should follow these key steps:

1. Confirm that all personnel are safe.
2. Ensure that the office is structurally sound and safe before authorizing anyone to return.
3. Access a copy of the Records Management Plan.
4. Confirm that the Park District is operating under emergency conditions.
5. Bring the disaster response team together to confirm and prioritize records recovery operations.
6. Assign immediate responsibilities according to this plan.
7. Establish disaster response site.
8. Secure the records storage site to prevent any future damage, loss, or theft.
9. Restore environmental controls to provide a cool, dry climate.
10. Stabilize the records. In a water disaster recovery effort, speed is of the essence. Wet records must be salvaged within 48 hours of the disaster to avoid costly restoration efforts. Photographic materials, magnetic media and coated paper stock paper deteriorate more quickly and should be given the highest priority. If stabilization is not possible, records should be moved off-site.
11. Document the damage through photographs and other forms of record for use in making a detailed assessment of the damage.
12. Recall, and if necessary, reconstitute, essential records and issue them to appropriate personnel for action.
13. Throw out duplicate, replaceable or disposable materials (including damaged non-records materials) to reduce the volume of materials confronting the recovery team and to remove a source of humidity from the disaster area. Keep an inventory of discards for insurance, replacement, and tracking.
14. As appropriate, arrange to salvage any non-vital records or clean up records systems or storage areas.
15. Records that have been water-damaged or mold-infested should be kept apart from other records for at least six months in a well-ventilated area with good climate control and low humidity.
16. Once the disaster is over and the office is back to normal, review the plan and make changes to improve it for next time.

### Electronic Recovery Instructions

Restoration of servers, Virtual Machines, files and brick-level email is done by utilizing Veeam software on PDOP-VCS01. Administrative client allows the restoration of 14 previous snapshots (two weeks) of all servers.

File recovery details are as follows:

#### Files

Files are stored on file server (PDOP-DC01) in directories [\\PDOP-DC01\e\\$\PDOP-Production](#). User directories are stored on file server (PDOP-DC01) in directories [\\PDOP-DC01\f\\$\Home](#).

#### Back-ups

Backups of all servers, Virtual Machines and files take place at 10:00PM daily utilizing Veeam software to PDOP-NAS01 (Network Attached Storage Device). An additional backup is run daily utilizing an additional 3GB USB external hard drive. The drive is rotated every two weeks and taken off-site for disaster recovery purposes.

#### Email

Email is archived on a Barracuda Email Archiver. All email (inbound and outbound) is routed and stored on this device for a period of seven years. Items can be retrieved by accessing an admin portal and performing a search by individual, subject, to, from, date, etc.

#### Data Replication/Duplication

Plans are underway to duplicate data off-site to one of our remote facilities. All items in PDOP-NAS01 will be replicated daily to an additional NAS device, allowing for VM's (Virtual Machines) to be restored on hardware housed in another remote location.

## SECTION 7: RECORDS REQUESTS

### Responding to Records Requests

Public Records Requests, (Freedom of Information Act) requires the Park District to follow the process of filling a FOIA request.

All FOIAs must be sent to the FOIA Representative of the Park District of Oak Park (the Executive Assistant) immediately to allow an expeditious response. If additional assistance is needed, the Park District Attorney is available to provide further direction on completing the request.

### Releasing Working Copies and Draft Documents

Some documents such as working copies and draft documents are not subject to disclosure. Once the final document is released, working copies or drafts may not need to be retained and can be destroyed. However, the Record Retention Schedule should be used in discerning this.