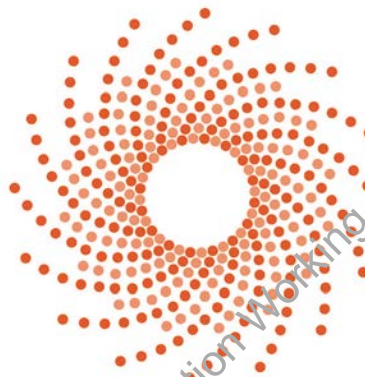


**GUIDE TO THE RECORDS MANAGEMENT
PROGRAM AT THE
BROOKLYN HISTORICAL SOCIETY**



SAA Museum Archives Section Working Group Example

PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

This Guide is intended for the use of Brooklyn Historical Society (BHS) employees and provides instructions for the retention and disposition of the Institution's records. The Guide is divided into three parts:

- Part I explains the Records Management Program through policies on the *Records Management Program, Duplicate Records, Drafts, and Working Papers, the Ownership of Recorded Information, the Retention of Company Records* and the *Destruction of Company Records*. These policies supply employees with the Program's objectives, the definition of BHS records, the use of retention schedules, and also the delineation of departmental responsibilities for the retention of records.
- Part II provides the General Retention Schedule, which specifies retention periods for commonly encountered records that are held by multiple departments.
- Part III provides Departmental Retention Schedules, which specify retention periods for unique records held by the departments of BHS.

SAA Museum Archives Section Working Group Example

PART I

Records Management Policy

Records Management Program (RM-1)

This policy defines principles, objectives, authority, and responsibilities for Brooklyn Historical Society's Records Management Program. It provides a framework for other company policies and standard operating procedures that pertain to specific types of records and recordkeeping practices.

The records created by Brooklyn Historical Society (BHS) are valuable assets that contain information pertaining to the Institution's business operations, as well as provide unique opportunities to capture Institutional memory. It is the Institution's policy to manage its records in a systematic, efficient, and effective manner in complete compliance with all applicable laws and regulations. For that purpose, BHS' Records Management Program develops strategies, plans, policies, procedures, and guidelines relating to the Institution's records and recordkeeping practices.

Definition of Company Record

BHS records include all recorded information that is created, received, or maintained by the Institution and those that relate in any way to the Institution's functions, operations, or activities. This definition of company records encompasses all recorded information regardless of physical form. These records include, but not limited to:

- Papers
- Computer Files and other born-digital materials
- Databases
- Photographic prints and films
- Microfilm, microfiche, etc.
- Audio recordings
- Video recordings
- Electronic mail

This definition also encompasses notes, working papers, and drafts of documents that are created, received or maintained by BHS employees in the course of their work. The status of copies, drafts, and working papers as company records is addressed in Records Management Policy RM-2.

Scope and Applicability

This policy applies to records that are created, received, or maintained by BHS and its employees in connection with the transaction of company business, unless specifically excluded as provided below.

Exclusions

There are several types of materials that are not included under the scope of the BHS Records Management Program. These non-records are:

- Books, periodicals, catalogs, and other publications acquired solely for reference purposes
- Unused copies of form letters
- Unused or undistributed caches of company publications
- Blank business forms
- Unsolicited brochures, flyers, advertisements, mass mailings, e-mail messages, or other records that are unrelated to company business
- Personal papers of BHS employees (as defined in RM-3).

Authority of Records Management Program

The Institution's Records Management Program is endorsed by the President's Office. As a result of this sponsorship, the Records Management Program is given the authority to:

- Define, maintain, and update strategies, plans, policies, procedures, and guidelines to promote discretion and efficiency in the creation, organization, maintenance, retention, use, and disposition of the Society's official records.
- Coordinate records management strategies, plans, policies, procedures, and guidelines with other information systems, policies, and procedures developed by the Institution.
- Create and distribute records management policies, procedures, and guidelines that meet the Institution's operational needs.
- Identify, evaluate, and/or develop guidelines, methods, and technologies for specific records management initiatives, such as determination of record retention requirements, cost-effective storage of recorded information, purging and destruction of obsolete records, and convenient retrieval of recorded information.
- Assist departments in the interpretation and implementation of the Institution's record retention policies, procedures, and schedules.
- Identify records of sufficient historical value that warrant permanent preservation and will be transferred to the Archives when they are no longer needed for business operations.

Departmental Responsibilities

All departments of BHS must abide by policies, procedures, and guidelines developed by the Records Management Program under the authority of this policy. Specifically, each department will:

- Make records management a continuing priority and assign appropriate resources and time towards it.
- Designate an individual who will have responsibility for ensuring the proper retention of departmental records.

- Identify and periodically review records management requirements, problems, and concerns.
- Ensure that all departmental employees understand, accept, and conform to company policies and procedures for recorded information.

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PART I

Records Management Policy

Copies, Drafts, and Working Papers (RM-2)

This policy addresses the status of duplicate records (copies), drafts, and working papers as company records and specifies the circumstances in which they are to be created and retained.

Definition of Copies

Where the same information exists in multiple copies, one copy will be designated as the official copy to satisfy legal and operational requirements. In most cases, the official copy of a record is the copy held by the department that is principally responsible for the business operation for which the record is associated. (For example, although all departments may create invoices, the official copy, in most cases, is held by the Finance department, as they are associated with payment.) Alternatively, the official copy may be the copy of a record that is kept in a departmental file, on a network server, or in a database.

All copies **other than the official copy** of a record are considered copies or duplicate records. A duplicate record replicates the content of the official copy, which may itself be an original record or copy. Official copies are not necessarily original records.

A duplicate record may be in the same format or medium as the official copy or in a different medium. For example:

- The official copy may be a paper document and the duplicate record a photocopy.
- The official copy may be a paper document and the duplicate record a scanned image made from it.
- An electronic version of an e-mail message or word processing document may be designated as an official copy for retention purposes, in which case any paper printouts are considered duplicate records.
- A printed copy of an e-mail message or word processing document may be designated as an official copy, in which case the electronic version is considered a duplicate record.

By definition, duplicate records contain the same information as official copies.

Retention of Copies

Copies created, received, or maintained by BHS employees in relation to the Institution's mission, goals, objectives, or business operations are company records as defined in

Records Management Policy RM-1. Employees may create duplicate records as information copies or as backup copies on an as-needed basis to support the Institution's mission, goals, objectives, or business operations. While copies created for information purposes may be informally described as "personal copies", all duplicate records are considered company property as defined in RM-3.

Official copies, by definition, satisfy the company's legal and operational retention requirements for recorded information. Duplicate records can be discarded when they are no longer useful to the individual or department for which they were created. This should be done at the earliest opportunity. As a rule, duplicate records should not be retained longer than official copies that contain the same information.

Retention of Drafts

When drafts are created, the final version is considered the official copy for retention purposes. Drafts must be discarded when no longer needed for the purposes in which they were created or superseded. This should be done at the earliest opportunity to avoid any confusion. This policy applies to drafts in all formats, including word processing files, spreadsheet files, et cetera.

Retention of Working Papers

Working papers, including notes, may be developed during the transaction of company business or during the preparation of company records. Most working papers, such as notes taken at a meeting or annotations on a draft record that is ultimately superseded by a final version, have no business value that warrants retaining them beyond their moment of usefulness. These records should be discarded at the earliest opportunity. In no case are working papers or notes to be retained for longer than one year after the purpose for which they were created has been fulfilled. It will be the employees' responsibility to ensure that these records are discarded in a timely manner. This policy applies to working papers in all formats, including word processing files, spreadsheets files, and other computer files.

Scope and Applicability

This policy applies to copies, drafts, and working papers that are created, received, or maintained by BHS and its employees in relation to the Institution's mission, goals, objectives, or business operations.

PART I

Records Management Policy

Company Ownership of Recorded Information (RM-3)

This policy establishes BHS as the owner of recorded information associated with the Institution's business operations and distinguishes company records from the personal papers of BHS employees.

Policy Statement

All records created, received, or maintained by BHS employees in relation to the Institution's missions, goals, objectives, or business operations are considered to be the property of BHS. No employee has any personal or property right to such records even though he or she may be named as the creator, recipient, or keeper of them.

In some circumstances, BHS employees may be authorized to remove the Institution's records temporarily to perform specific duties for the company. These individuals must return such records promptly when that purpose is fulfilled or at any earlier time when instructed to do so. BHS employees may not take any company records or copies of such records when they retire, resign, or otherwise terminate employment. Employees who have been authorized to remove company records from the facility must return them when they retire, resign, or otherwise terminate employment.

Scope and Applicability

This policy applies to any and all records that are created, received, or maintained by BHS and its employees in relation to the company's business operations, unless specifically excluded as provided below.

Personal Papers

Personal papers are defined as information-bearing objects of a private nature that pertain solely to an employee's personal activities and interests and that have no relation to the employee's assigned duties to BHS or the Institution's missions, goals, objectives, or business operations. Examples of personal papers include:

- Documents (paper or born digital) that were created by an employee before joining BHS and that were not used for BHS business.
- Documents (paper or born digital) relating to professional affiliations.
- Diaries, journals, or calendars that relate exclusively to personal appointments, activities, or other personal matters.
- Notes or correspondence unrelated to company business.

Regardless of format, BHS records management policies do not apply to personal papers. They are defined as non-records as defined in RM-1 and therefore will not be retained

by the company. However, if information about personal matters and BHS business is included in the same record, the record is then considered a company record.

Employees should make an effort to minimize quantities of personal papers in the BHS office or on the Institution's computer systems. Employees who have personal papers should identify and label them as such.

Contractor Records

Ownership of records created by consultants, service companies, and other contractors hired by BHS to provide specific services and that relate to the company's mission, objectives, or business operations should be addressed during contract negotiations and governed by agreed upon contractual provisions.

SAA Museum Archives Section Working Group Example

PART I

Records Management Policy

Retention of Brooklyn Historical Society Records (RM-4)

All BHS records must be retained and disposed of in accordance with retention periods and guidelines specified in the Institution's records retention schedules and in any related policies, procedures, guidelines, or directives that BHS has issued or may issue in the future. The retention schedules specify how long records need to be kept for legal reasons, as well as to satisfy business needs. Records under the scope of the Records Management Program must be retained for the time periods specified and discarded promptly when their retention period elapses.

Scope and Applicability

This policy applies any and all records that are created, received, or maintained by BHS and its employees in relation to the company's business operations, unless specifically excluded as provided below.

Compliance

All BHS employees must comply fully and consistently with this policy for all company records in their custody.

Exceptions and Exclusions

Destruction of records with elapsed retention periods is immediately suspended for any and all company records that are required for or relevant to a) pending or ongoing litigation or government investigations or b) tax audits.

The Records Management Program may allow for the extension of retention periods for specific records in the following circumstances:

- Where retention periods for records are being reconsidered or revised.
- Where the records are needed for completion of audits or other business operations.
- Where the records are needed for business circumstances that were not foreseen at the time the retention periods were determined.

Departments should request changes if they feel it beneficial to BHS' mission, operations, or activities.

Unscheduled Records

BHS intends that its retention schedule be comprehensive. However, there is no such thing as a perfect retention schedule. Departments should notify the President's Office concerning records that are omitted from the Institution's retention schedules. Until the record schedule is revised to include these unscheduled records, departments should continue to observe the established retention practices.

Responsibilities of the Records Management Program

Under this policy, the Records Management Program will:

- Prepare and issue retention policies, procedures, schedules, and guidelines for records in all formats that meet business needs in full compliance with all applicable laws and regulations and in conformity with best professional practices.
- Periodically review and, as necessary, revise retention policies, procedures, schedules, and guidelines to comply with business needs, new laws and regulations, to include new records, or to eliminate any confusion about the interpretation or implementation of set retention periods.
- Ensure that BHS employees are promptly notified when records must be retained for legal or tax reasons.

Departmental Responsibilities

All departments are responsible for implementing retention policies, procedures, and schedules issued by the Records Management Program under the authority of this policy. As stated in RM-1, each department will designate a coordinator who will have operational responsibility for records management procedures and practices. This records management coordinator will:

- Ensure that all department employees are informed about, understand, accept, and comply with the company's retention policies, procedures, schedules, and guidelines.
- Work to identify any problems that arise from the current retention requirements or to identify any gaps in the current schedules. For example, if a new records series were created.
- Ensure that copies, drafts, and working papers are subject to the guidelines established in RM-2.

PART I

Records Management Policy

Destruction of Records (RM-5)

As outlined in RM-4, records must be retained for the time periods specified in the records retention schedule and destroyed promptly in the regular course of company business. This policy is subject to exceptions and exclusions as described in RM-4. Records must be destroyed in a manner that is safe and appropriate to the content of the records, as well as the media on which the records are made. BHS employees must not destroy or authorize the destruction of company records except in accordance with these guidelines.

Scope and Applicability

This policy applies to any and all records that are created, received, or maintained by BHS and its employees in relation to the company's business operations.

Certificate of Destruction

Employees can destroy materials that are identified in the general and departmental retention schedules. As stated in RM-4, destruction authorization is temporarily suspended for records that are relevant to litigation, government investigation, or for other legal or tax matters.

To document the destruction of records, departments must complete a certificate of destruction form whenever official copies of company records are destroyed¹. When destroying records:

- The department must complete a separate certificate for each record series destroyed.
- The department must provide information about the record series that was destroyed, including the series titles or other description, the dates covered, the date the records were destroyed, and the destruction method.
- The form must be signed and dated by the individual responsible for Records Management procedures in his or her department.
- The completed form must be kept on file.

Please note, the destruction method applies only to those records of a confidential nature. Therefore, not all discarding need follow the steps provided above. For example, duplicate copies do not need a certificate of destruction. Also, if the retention schedule states records are to be kept "while useful" or "until discarded", the steps above are not required. Employees are to use discretion when discarding company records.

¹ A sample form is provided in Appendix A.

Destruction of Non-Confidential Records

Records that contain non-confidential information may be discarded by any means consistent with the waste removal practices already in place at the Institution. Recycling of paper is an acceptable method of destroying records that contain non-confidential information.

Destruction of Confidential Records

Records that contain confidential information must be destroyed in a manner that renders the contents unreadable and unusable.

- In keeping with BHS practices, shredding is a common and acceptable way to destroy confidential paper records.
- Acceptable methods of destroying confidential information recorded on microfilm, photographic negatives, motion picture films, or other photographic media include pulverization and chemical disintegration.
- File deletion is the only practical method of destroying confidential electronic records stored on hard drives that will remain in service following the destruction of the information.
- Acceptable methods of destroying confidential electronic records stored on magnetic tapes, floppy disks, or other optical disks (cd's, etc.) include cutting, crushing, erasing, pulverizing, chemical disintegration, or other physical destruction of the media. There are several companies who will remove confidential information and subsequently destroy the medium for a small fee.

Confidential records must be destroyed in a timely manner and kept in a secure location until destruction occurs. Appropriate measures must be taken to ensure the security and confidentiality of recorded information during all phases of the destruction process, including pickup and transfer of records from company locations to the destruction site. It is the department's responsibility to ensure that confidential records are destroyed in full conformity with this guide.

Use of Commercial Providers

If a department contracts with a commercial provider for the destruction of company records, the provider must:

- Specify the destruction method to be used for confidential and non-confidential records.
- Specify the amount of time that will elapse between pickup of records from the Institution and their destruction.
- Demonstrate safeguards for confidential information at all stages in the destruction process.
- Provide proof of destruction of records in the manner specified by the company.
- Complete a certificate of destruction as described in this guideline.
- Assume full liability for breaches of confidentiality involving company records while they are in the contractor's custody.

PART II

General Retention Schedule

The General Retention Schedule specifies the retention period for commonly encountered records that are held by multiple departments.

The General Retention Schedule is formatted as a table and includes the following information:

- Record Series Title
- Additional Description
- Retention Period
- Archival or Vital Record Status
- Remarks

Record Series Title

The records series title is the name of a group of logically related records.

Additional Description

Additional description is provided if needed to further identify the types of records that are contained within the series.

Retention Period

The General Schedule breaks down the Retention Period as “Office” and “Total Retention”. This retention period can be while useful, for a period of years, or permanent. If the retention schedule is “while useful” or “until superseded” the retention period is subject to the employee’s discretion. However, these records should be discarded at the earliest opportunity to prevent confusion or an unnecessary accumulation of volume. If a retention period is specified in years, this is *in addition* to the current fiscal year. For example, a record with the retention of 3 years can be discarded 3 years after the end of the current fiscal year. This will ensure that records will be at least 3 years old when discarded. The schedule specifies that some records should be retained permanently. This is denoted with a “P”.

It is left to the authority of BHS to determine where records should be stored once they are no longer active. The schedule does specify a period for which records should be retained in the office. Retention time is specified as such to accommodate employee need and ease of use. Once this period has elapsed, BHS can move records to off-site storage or, if of a permanent nature, to the archives. (See Appendix B for guidelines on the storage of records.)

Archival or Vital Status

The schedule provides information on the archival or vital status of records. In most cases, records with a permanent retention status are deemed archival, in that they assist in documenting the operations of the Brooklyn Historical Society and therefore have an enduring value to the Institution. Vital records are those that are essential for business operation. These are the records an organization cannot afford to lose (i.e. Board of Director records, incorporation papers, building blueprints). This status is included on the schedule to ensure that employees are aware of the significance of these records.

Remarks

Remarks are used to highlight the Office of Record² (the unit or department that retains the official copy) and any other information that is deemed useful for employees to be aware of relative to their records.

² See Appendix C for a complete list of the Office of Record for selected BHS records series.

PART III

Departmental Retention Schedules

The following schedules specify retention schedules for unique records held by departments. Departments are responsible for those records that are listed in their schedule. If another department is responsible for records held by a department, it will be indicated in the “Remarks” section. In this instance, the non-responsible department’s records will be deemed as duplicates.

The Departmental Retention Schedules are formatted as a table and include the following information:

- Record Series Title
- Additional Description
- Retention Period
- Archival or Vital Record Status
- Remarks

Record Series Title

The records series title is simply the name of a group of logically related records.

Additional Description

Additional description is provided if needed to further identify the types of records that are contained within the series.

Retention Period

The Departmental Schedules break down the Retention Period as “Office” and “Total Retention”. This retention period can be while useful, for a period of years, or permanent.

If the retention schedule is “while useful” or “until superseded” the retention period is subject to the employee’s discretion. However, these records should be discarded at the earliest opportunity to prevent confusion or an unnecessary accumulation of volume. If a retention period is specified in years, this is *in addition* to the current fiscal year. For

example, a record with the retention of 3 years can be discarded 3 years after the end of the current fiscal year. This will ensure that records will be at least 3 years old when discarded. The schedule specifies that some records should be retained permanently. This is denoted with a “P”.

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Remarks

Remarks are used to highlight the Office of Record (the unit or department that retains the official copy) and any other information that is deemed useful for employees to be aware of relative to their records.

APPENDIX A

**BROOKLYN HISTORICAL SOCIETY
CERTIFICATE OF DESTRUCTION OF RECORDS**

The records described below were destroyed in the regular course of business in conformity with the Institution's records management policies, record retention schedules, and standard operating procedures.

Department: _____

Name: _____

Description of Records Destroyed:

Inclusive Dates: _____

Date of Destruction: _____

Method of Destruction (for confidential records only):

- Shredding Pulverizing
 Demagnetizing Overwriting

Other: _____

We confirm that the records listed above were retained for the scheduled period of time and that the records are not relevant for pending or ongoing litigation or investigations.

Signature

Date

APPENDIX B

GUIDELINES FOR STORAGE OF RECORDS

When it is appropriate to move records into storage or transfer them to the Archives, in accordance with the retention schedules outlined above, please adhere to the following guidelines to ensure records are stored and identified properly.

- Use record storage cartons (1 cubic foot size).
- Pack records upright in boxes as you would in a file drawer.
- Records should be packed tightly enough to prevent records from slumping, but not so tight as to hinder their withdrawal.
- If box contains oversize materials, store appropriately and mark carton with “OS”.
- Create a list that includes folder titles, inclusive dates, and location of records contained in the box. Print this list and include it in the front of the box. This list can be a document, spreadsheet, or database report.
- Each box **MUST** be labeled. Please affix a label to the record storage carton with the following information:
 - the departmental acronym (as understood and used by BHS employees) and box number beginning with .001
 - box content
 - date range
 - OS (if necessary)
 - destruction date (if applicable, if not, please specify as permanent)
 - space designated to check if box list is included
 - initials of individual who packed box

SAMPLE BOX LABEL

DEV.001 Annual Appeal Files 2008-2009 Destruction Date: FY 2016 Box list included: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> X A.M.
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Materials that are improperly stored run the risk of being damaged, and therefore become unusable and/or unreadable. If cartons are not labeled properly, retrieval time increases, records can easily be misplaced, and more work must be done to identify the

carton's contents at a later date. Proper storage and identification will aid in the smooth transition for the destruction of records or their permanent retention in the Archives.

SAA Museum Archives Section Working Group Example

APPENDIX C

OFFICE OF RECORD for Selected Files

Record Series	Office of Record
Articles of Incorporation	Finance
Board of Trustees Files	President
Budget Files	Finance
Building Files	Finance/Operations
Committee Files	Administration
Contracts	Finance
Deed of Gift	Library/Archives
Exhibition Files	Exhibitions
Financial Files	Finance
Publications	Development/Communications

SAA Museum Archives Section Working Group Example

NOTE

This guide was created by Abbey Malangone in the course of her internship at Brooklyn Historical Society from May 20 – September 2, 2008. A variety of sources were utilized in the development of this guide. They include, but are not limited to

Code of Federal Regulations: www.gpoaccess.gov/CFR/INDEX.html

Connecticut State Library. Records Retention Schedules.
<http://www.cslib.org/publicrecords/opraforms.htm#schedules>

Etherington, Suzanne and Ann Marie Przybyla. *Inventory and Planning: The First Steps in Records Management*, No. 76. Albany: New York State Archives, 2003.

Museum of Modern Art. Retention Schedules.

New York State Archives. Laws and Regulations Related to Records.
http://www.archives.nysed.gov/a/records/mr_laws.shtml

New York State Archives. Retention and Distribution Schedules.
http://www.archives.nysed.gov/a/records/mr_retention.shtml

Saffady, William. Records and Information Management: Fundamentals of Professional Practice. Lenexa: ARMA International, 2004.

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Skupsky, Donald S. Recordkeeping Requirements: The First Practical Guide to Help You Control Your Records...What You Need to Keep and What You Can Safely Destroy! Denver: Information Requirements Clearinghouse, 1989.

The Library of Virginia. Records Management.
http://www.lva.lib.va.us/whatwedo/records/sched_state/index.htm

Wythe, Deborah, ed. Museum Archives: An Introduction, Second Edition. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2004.

* Various other sample records retention schedules were examined throughout the course of this project to gauge “best practices” when dealing with non-regulated records.