

Washington, DC Chapter of Concerns of Police Survivors
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Standard Operating Procedure #2012-06

September 9, 2013

Review/Revision Date: February 6, 2016

Records Management and Disposition of Files and Documents
{Short Title: Document Retention Policy (DRP)}

1.1 Scope: This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) establishes guidelines and policies for records management and the disposition of files and documents of the Washington, DC Chapter of Concerns of Police Survivors (C.O.P.S.).

1.2 Objective: To provide sufficient information and guidance to Washington, DC Chapter of C.O.P.S. elected and appointed Board members regarding record retention and the disposition of files and documents.

1.3 Purpose:

A. Certain federal laws prohibit the destruction of certain documents. Not-for-profit organizations should have a written, mandatory document retention and periodic destruction policy. Policies such as this will eliminate accidental or innocent destruction. In addition, it is important for Chapter leadership to know the length of time records should be retained to be in compliance.

B. Federal and state laws require organizations to maintain certain types of records for particular periods. This Document Retention Policy (DRP) is to ensure the most efficient and effective operation of the Washington, DC Chapter of Concerns of Police Survivors (C.O.P.S.). The records of the Chapter are important to the proper functioning of the organization and include virtually all of the records produced. Such records can be in electronic or paper form. Thus, items that you may not consider important, such as “interoffice” e-mails and printed memoranda are records that may be considered important under this policy.

C. Goals of the DRP:

1. Retain important documents for reference and future use;
2. Delete or destroy documents that are no longer necessary for the proper functioning of the organization;
3. Organize important documents for efficient retrieval;
4. Ensure that you know what documents should be retained, the length of their retention, means of storage, and when and how they should be destroyed.

D. The Document Retention Policy identifies the record retention responsibilities of the Board members, whether elected or appointed, volunteers, etc. for maintaining and documenting the storage and destruction of the organization's documents and records.

1.4 APPROVED: This SOP was approved and adopted by the Washington, DC Chapter of C.O.P.S. Executive Board on September 9, 2013 and was reviewed and revised by the Board on February 6, 2016.

1.5 Chapter Board: Unless otherwise noted, any reference to the Chapter Board in this SOP infers voting members of the Chapter Board.

1.6 Background:

A. Removing e-mails from an inbox on a regular basis is good housekeeping, and so is discarding non-essential paperwork from old file cabinets. Having a document retention/destruction policy will give Chapter leadership guidance on what to save, what to archive, and what to shred – and when.

B. There appears to be no one regulation or guideline that governs document retention for all nonprofits. Laws relating to document retention are state-specific in many cases. In some cases the length of time to retain a document should be governed by the time period that a potential claimant has to bring a claim in that state, which can differ from state to state. Also, many nonprofits are subject to retention requirements that are specific to, or prudent for, the services they provide.

C. The IRS explains why it asks about document retention policies on the Form 990: "A document retention and destruction policy identifies the record retention responsibilities of staff, volunteers, board members, and outsiders for maintaining and documenting the storage and destruction of the organization's documents and records." (Source: *Instructions to the Form 990.*)

D. The *Sarbanes-Oxley Act's* prohibition of the destruction of documents that are subject to review in litigation provides an additional rationale for every nonprofit adopting a document retention policy. This will create a regular business practice of systematic

document destruction in accordance with an approved schedule. Having a written policy, and regular business practice of document destruction according to a schedule, lets people know what documents to retain and for how long. Such a policy is not only a prudent practice but also sound risk management.

E. The process of developing a document retention policy involves: (1) Identifying what types of paperwork and electronic files the nonprofit generates; (2) Determining the appropriate and legal length of time to retain them; and (3) Recording those retention times on a written schedule.

F. Records: “Records” discussed herein refers to all business records of the Washington, DC Chapter of C.O.P.S. and is used interchangeably with “documents”, including written, printed, and recorded materials, as well as electronic records, i.e., e-mails and documents saved electronically. All business records shall be retained for a period no longer than necessary for the proper conduct and functioning of the organization.

G. Categorizing Information: There is a need to determine whether a particular item is considered a record, and thus, subject to a records retention and disposition schedule. Some of the characteristics of a record are:

1. Contains legal or regulatory compliance information;
2. Evidences a transaction;
3. Identifies participants in business activities or who had knowledge of an event;
4. Proves a business-related event or activity occurred or did not occur.

It may be useful when making retention decisions to sort records into three categories – enduring value, limited value, and no value – and establish time periods to keep each group regardless of their form, whether paper or electronic.

2.0 Types of Records:

General – General correspondence includes, but is not limited to, any letters, notes, requests, complaints, etc. that are exchanged regarding the organization.

Financial – Financial records include, but are not limited to, accounting and corporate tax records, financial statements, ledgers, audit records, invoice and expense records, payroll, etc.

Governance – Records include, but are not limited to, Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, meeting minutes, deeds and titles, leases, policy statements, contracts and agreements, trademark records, etc.

Grants – Grant records include, but are not limited to, any document that is part of a grant request or application, through the acceptance and distribution of such grant funds. This would also include donations that were received by the organization with explicit instructions from the donor on the expenditure of the donation, also known as “restricted funds”.

Human Resources and Payroll – Human Resource records include, but are not limited to, employment applications, background investigations, resumes, letters of recommendation of current and past employees, current and past employee performance evaluations and complaints, etc. Payroll records include, but are not limited to salary history, current rate of pay, payroll deductions, time cards, W-2 and W-4 forms, bonuses, etc.

Legal – Legal records include, but are not limited to, all contracts, legal counsel correspondence, trademark and copyright registration, etc.

Marketing – Marketing documents include, but are not limited to, proposals, estimates and agreements for projects and programs to: promote the organization and its purpose, raise funds for the organization, educate the public of the organization and its mission, etc.

Operations – Operations records include, but are not limited to, all documents that involve the general operation of the business, e.g., proposals, contracts, agreements such as building/grounds maintenance, utilities, insurance, etc.

Historical – Historical records are those that are no longer of use to the organization, but by virtue of their age or research value may be of historical interest or significance to C.O.P.S.

3.0 Procedures:

A. Each Chapter individual serving in an official capacity will **daily** collect and shred papers containing confidential information if those papers are not considered “final” for the project they are working on. This would include drafts of letters that contain survivor contact information or financial information.

B. Files that are to be kept for a certain time limit, but are no longer immediately needed, should be stored in a file drawer or storage area. The drawer should be labeled with the file contents and the dates. These files will be rotated out for destruction as the files become outdated. Files that are to be kept permanently should be organized and contain

only the information necessary for archiving and put into a storage box, labeled with the exact contents and dates, and taken to a storage area. When large files in the storage area have become outdated, they will be gathered for shredding.

C. When a record is no longer needed or required, it should be disposed of properly in order to ensure that the data truly is no longer recoverable. Electronic records that are to be retained permanently must be pro-actively managed if the information is to remain viable, authentic, and accessible.

D. Washington, DC Chapter of C.O.P.S. official records or files initiated/generated and filed/maintained by Board members cannot be destroyed until approved by the Board. If a Board member or Committee Head wishes to destroy any record(s)/file(s), he/she is to present the record(s)/file(s) to be destroyed to the Board. The Board will determine if it is appropriate and proper to destroy the record(s)/file(s) presented and upon taking a vote will approve or disapprove the destruction and the method of destruction of the record(s)/file(s) presented. The Board will also designate the individual(s) who will destroy the record(s)/file(s). A Certificate of Records Destruction will be prepared by the individual who is destroying the records (see paragraph **5.0 Destroying Records** below). The Certificate of Destruction will be permanently filed and made a part of the Minutes of the Board that approved the destruction.

4.0 C.O.P.S. Document Retention Schedule:

A. Records Retention and Disposition Guidelines: Non-profit organizations, like for-profit ones, need to retain certain records beyond current use needs, according to regulatory, legal, financial, and operational requirements. Which records to keep and for how long may vary from organization to organization. Whether a record is in paper or electronic format does not determine its value or retention period, its content is the key factor. Records referenced in this schedule include paper, electronic (including e-mail), and voicemail regardless of whether the record is stored in traditional containers such as file cabinets and boxes, or on a network server, desktop, laptop, handheld, or other device with text or instant messaging capability. The schedule is merely a sample of a typical non-profit's need for retaining records and reflects the minimum suggested retention period.

B. Business records retention is required by the Internal Revenue Code, Employee Retirement Income Security Act, and Uniform Commercial Code. The following business record retention schedule considers those laws. Record retention is further governed by the particular requirements of each individual business and any special regulatory agencies to which it is accountable. This schedule should be used as a guide, modified as necessary to meet specific needs. However, if necessary, any contemplated

deletions in the permanent or multi-year categories should be discussed in advance with the Board.

<u><i>TYPE OF DOCUMENT</i></u>	<u><i>RETENTION REQUIREMENT</i></u>
Accident reports and claims (settled cases)	7 years
Accounts receivable ledgers and trial balances	7 years
Accounts payable (general, direct mail, etc.)	4 years
Audit reports	Permanent
Bank statements and reconciliations	4 years
Blueprints and plans	Permanent
Cancelled checks for important payments, i.e., taxes, purchases of property, special contracts, etc. (checks should be filed with the papers pertaining to the underlying transaction)	Permanent
Cancelled checks (DELETE: see exception item directly above)	4 years
Cancelled stock and bond certificates and expired options	7 years
Capital stock and bond records: ledger, transfer registers, stubs showing issues, record of interest coupons, options, etc.	Permanent
Cash books	Permanent
Chapter files	Permanent
Charity registration files, e.g., CFC, UW, BBB, etc.	Permanent
Chart of Accounts	Permanent
College scholarship files	7 years
Contracts (DELETE: , mortgages, notes, and leases) – expired	4 years
Contracts still in effect	Contract period
Contracts, business – current	Permanent
Contracts, business – expired	3 years
Contracts, program – current	Permanent
Contracts, program – expired	3 years
Correspondence (legal and important matters only)	Permanent
Correspondence (with customers and vendors)	3 years
Correspondence, general (Non-administrative incoming/outgoing and internal correspondence pertaining to or arising from the routine operations of the policies, programs, services, or projects)	4 years
Deeds, mortgages, and bills of sales, as well as contracts and leases still in effect	Permanent
Deposit slips	4 years
Depreciation schedules	Permanent
Donations, general and miscellaneous	3 years

Donations, restricted earmarked, current, ongoing	Permanent
Donations, restricted, earmarked, one time only or expired	4 years
Donations, special events, e.g., COPS WALK, Golf Tournament, etc.	Permanent
Expense reports, Board and Staff	4 years
General and private ledgers	Permanent
Grants, Federal	Permanent
Insurance policies for business, office, Board, program, etc. (current)	Permanent
Insurance policies for business, office, Board, program, etc. (expired)	3 years
Insurance records, current accident reports, claims, policies, etc. (active and expired)	Permanent
Internal reports, miscellaneous	3 years
Inventories of products, materials and supplies	4 years
Invoices from vendors	4 years
Journals	Permanent
Legal correspondence and proceedings	Permanent
Minutes books, Bylaws, charters, Articles of Incorporation, etc.	Permanent
Mission statements, strategic plans	Permanent
NPW survivor payments	7 years
Officer death files	Permanent
Petty cash vouchers	3 years
Program files, HOPs, TLEs, etc. (complete files)	3 years
Program files, HOPs, TLEs, etc. (condense after 3 years)	Permanent
Purchase orders (except purchasing agent copy)	1 year
Property appraisals by outside appraisers	Permanent
Property records-including costs, depreciation, reserves, and end-of-year trial balances, tabulating records related to above areas	Permanent
Purchase orders (purchasing agent copy)	4 years
Receiving sheets	1 year
Records required in connection with a lawsuit or potential legal action	must be retained until litigation is settled and the appeal time expires
Requisitions	1 year
Sales records	7 years
Scrap and salvage records-inventories, sales, etc.	7 years

State registrations	3 years
Tax returns and worksheets	Permanent
Trademark and copyright registrations	Permanent
Voucher register and trial balances	7 years
Vouchers for payments to vendors, members, etc. (including allowances and reimbursement of members, officers, etc., for travel and entertainment expenses)	4 years
Year-end financial statements	Permanent

Note: All permitted document destruction shall be halted if the organization is being investigated by a governmental law enforcement agency, and routine destruction shall not be resumed without the written approval of legal counsel or the Chapter President. In addition, if a lawsuit is filed or imminent, or a legal document request has been made upon Washington, DC Chapter of C.O.P.S., all record destruction must cease immediately. The DRP may be suspended to require that documents relating to the lawsuit or potential legal issue(s) be retained and organized. A critical understanding of this is imperative. Should anyone of Chapter leadership fail to follow this protocol, that individual and/or Washington, DC Chapter of C.O.P.S. may be subject to fines and penalties, among other sanctions.

5.0 Destroying Records: When a record is no longer required to be kept, it should be properly destroyed and the destruction should be documented. A sample Certificate of Records Destruction form is below:

CERTIFICATE OF RECORDS DESTRUCTION

(complete applicable portions of this form)

I, _____, acting on behalf of the Washington, DC Chapter of Concerns of Police Survivors, hereby certify that the following file(s)/record(s) were destroyed according to the Chapter's Document Retention Policy (DRP).

Collection/Record/Group/Series: _____

Record Category (correspondence, etc.): _____

Format (Mbox, Word, electronic mail, etc.): _____

Record(s) Date or Date Range: _____

Type media, or, if hard drive, enter serial #: _____

Method of Disposal: _____

Location of Disposal: _____

Date of Disposal: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____ Title: _____

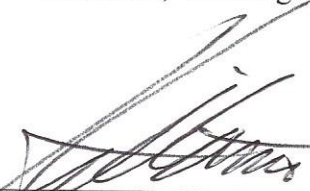
Authorized by: _____ Date: _____
(Signature)

(Board Member Printed Name) Title: _____

6.0 When in Doubt:

A. If you are ever uncertain as to any procedures set forth in this DRP, e.g., what records to retain or destroy, when to do so, or how, etc., it is your responsibility to seek answers from the President, Washington, DC Chapter of C.O.P.S. and/or the Board.

B. If you do not understand something regarding this DRP, you will contact the President, Washington, DC Chapter of C.O.P.S. and/or the Board for clarification.



Hector T. Dittamo
President
Washington, DC Chapter of C.O.P.S.
February 6, 2016