



CITY OF BURLINGAME

Procedures for Managing Records

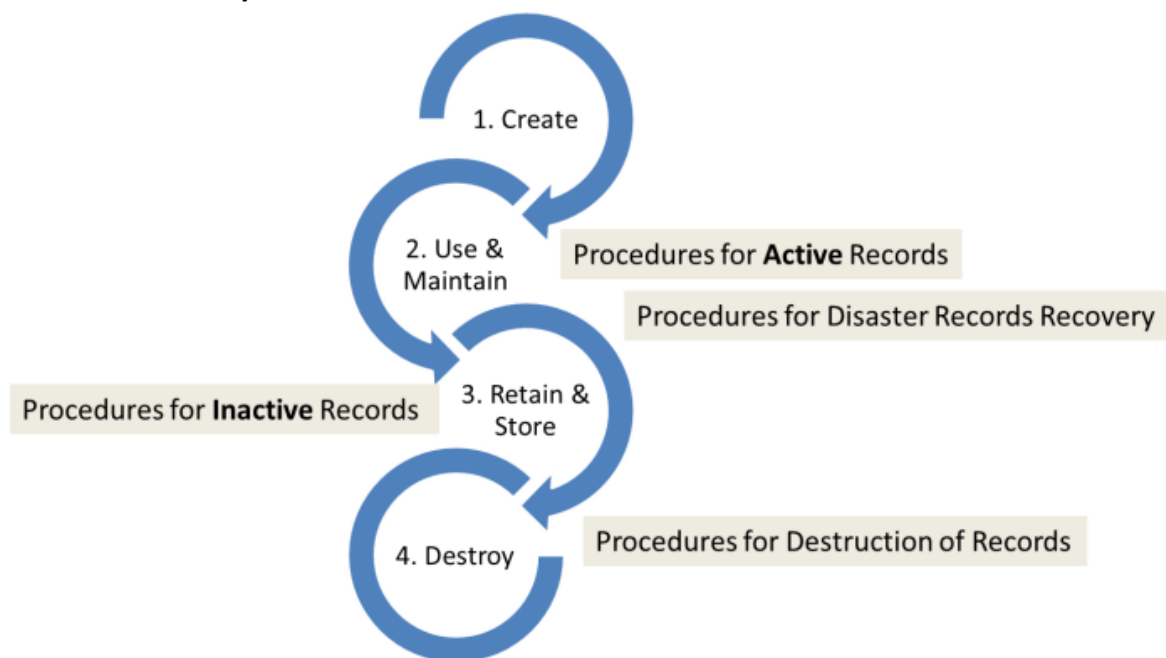
VERSION 1 DATED: 10.06.2025

The following records management practices are applicable to both paper and electronic records. All of the principles applicable to the paper filing system are also important to an electronic filing system and should be applied the same way, except where noted otherwise. The procedures in this document are organized according to the records life cycle, pictured in the figure below.

There are several periods in the life cycle of a record:

- The *active period* varies according to the record but is generally characterized as a record that is used frequently during the course of business and should be readily accessible.
- The *inactive period* is when the record's regular use declines, but the record is still required to be held per the City's Records Retention Schedule.
- The *destruction* occurs at the end of a record's life cycle on the Records Retention Schedule with an Authorized Destruction of Records.

Figure 1. Records Life Cycle



1. Active Records

Departments should create filing systems that are simple, easily accessible by all staff, used department-wide, and closely monitor items filed to ensure timely disposition. There are several different ways to establish a filing system: alphabetical, numerical, alphanumerical, chronological, or series driven. Regardless of what type of filing system a department uses, records must be kept in accordance with the City's Records Retention Schedule.



CITY OF BURLINGAME

Procedures for Managing Records

VERSION 1 DATED: 10.06.2025

1.1 Choosing Files to Maintain

Maintaining filing systems can be very costly, requiring the purchase of filing supplies, space, and staff time to establish, manage, and retrieve materials. Consider the following when determining which records to maintain:

Guiding Questions:

- “Is this record listed on the City’s Records Retention Schedule?” All records maintained at the department level should be on the Records Retention Schedule.
- “Does this record exist as an **official electronic record**¹?” Records that exist electronically should not be printed for the sole purpose of maintaining a paper copy.
- “Is my department the Office of Record?” To answer this question, check the Office of Record column on the Records Retention Schedule. If another department is responsible for maintaining a record, a department may choose to keep it for a short time in a working file, but there is no need to maintain duplicate files.

1.2 Selecting Storage Areas

Guiding Questions:

- “Is this file area accessible by staff and centrally located to the workgroup that will be using the files?”
- “Is the room appropriate for records?” i.e., space for the cabinets to be opened and closed with ease, climate-controlled, well lit, free of critters, etc.
- “Can the room or file cabinets be secured to permit the storage of sensitive or confidential records? Can the access be restricted to prevent removal and ensure orderly return?”

1.3 File Tracking

It is also best practice to maintain an electronic inventory to catalogue all active records maintained in a department. The inventory should include the name and location of the file, its contents, and typically the file date.

1.4 Training Staff

Ensure all personnel are trained to handle records securely, including adhering to records classification schemes and file plans, cleaning up records according to the Records Retention Schedule and other applicable law and policies, and protecting sensitive information.

¹ Electronic records must be maintained in a trusted system in a non-alterable format.



CITY OF BURLINGAME

Procedures for Managing Records

VERSION 1 DATED: 10.06.2025

2. Vital Records

Definition: Vital Records are those records that are fundamental to the functioning of an organization and necessary to continue operations without delay under abnormal conditions or in the event of a disaster.

2.1 Identifying Vital Records

Each department must analyze its own operations and records to determine what information is vital to the performance of its critical mission. It is important that management be selective about choosing which records are absolutely necessary to conduct emergency operations.

Guiding Questions:

- “What records are absolutely necessary to continue or resume operations tomorrow?”
- “If you evacuate your office, taking nothing with you, would you still be able to perform your Essential Functions?” Consider that you may have no access to the City server or internet for up to 72 hours – do you have what you would need?

General areas to be considered when selecting vital information include records required to:

2.1.1 Conduct Emergency Operations

- Records that specify how the City and its departments will operate in an emergency or disaster.
- Examples: utility systems maps, locations of emergency supplies, emergency operations plans and procedures, lines of succession and delegations of authority, lists and contact information of City personnel, checklists, manuals, standard operating procedures, continuity of operations plan, memoranda of understanding, and urgent programmatic information (these examples are not inclusive)

2.1.2 Reestablish Normal Governmental Functions

- Records necessary to the continued operations of the City
- Examples: municipal code, governing rules and procedures, and financial records (these examples are not inclusive)

2.1.3 Protect the Interests and Rights of the Organization and Individuals

- Records that protect the legal and financial rights and interests
- Examples: accounts receivable, identity records, payroll records, retirement records and



CITY OF BURLINGAME

Procedures for Managing Records

VERSION 1 DATED: 10.06.2025

insurance records; any records relating to contracts, entitlement, leases, or obligations whose loss would pose a significant risk to the legal and financial rights of the City or persons directly affected by its actions; system documentation for any electronic information systems designated as records needed to protect rights (these examples are not inclusive)

2.2 Paper Records

- A file containing Vital Records should be labeled distinctly from other records. An orange dot sticker should be affixed on the front of the file.
- Vital Records should be stored together in designated filing drawers. The drawers must be prominently labeled by affixing a bright orange VITAL RECORDS sticker on the front outside of the drawer.
- Confirm that the building or room in which records are stored is secure, equipped with fire and flood prevention and detection devices, and fitted with locks.
- Protect paper records by always storing them in boxes or cabinets in cool, dry, secure locations, ideally away from windows, water pipes, or gas pipes, and at least 6" (15 cm) off the floor.
- Inspect records storage areas regularly to ensure they are secure, safe, and free from any sign of deterioration, infestation, or damage.

2.3 Departmental Vital Records Inventory

- Prepare and maintain an up-to-date Vital Records inventory.
- Develop and implement a plan for protecting and accessing the vital records.
- Update the inventory at least annually.
- Update Vital Records, as needed, and remove and destroy outdated copies.
- Send the Vital Records inventory to the City Clerk on an annual basis.

2.4 Training Staff

Make sure all personnel are aware of and trained in records recovery emergency response procedures.

3. Inactive Records

3.1 Tips & Tricks:

When you notice that a file has reached the end of its active life cycle and is closed but waiting to live out its retention period, identify it in some way (e.g., with a sticker, or crossing out the file label) so it is easy to pull out for inactive storage during records clean-up days.



CITY OF BURLINGAME

Procedures for Managing Records

VERSION 1 DATED: 10.06.2025

3.2 Why Box Up Inactive Records?

- Better utilization of space at City Hall and other City locations
- More easily identify official records the City needs to keep in City buildings.

3.3 Boxing Files / Preparation of Records for Storage

- Boxes should be filled but not packed so tightly that records cannot be easily removed or inserted into the box.
- Boxes should be uniform, sized 15" x 10" x 12"
- Boxes should be clearly labeled with the contents' category and disposition information on the outside of the box, on both short ends so that it is always showing.
e.g.: Box ID #
City Council Agreements
Records Terminate: January 1, 2012 – December 31, 2012
Destruction Date: December 31, 2022
- Box together files of a similar disposition category.
- Do not co-mingle permanent records and non-permanent records in the same box.
- A list of box contents should be taped to the underside of the box lid. The department should maintain an inventory of inactive records that includes at a minimum the following information:
 - Subject
 - File Data
 - Retention Category
 - Reference # (if applicable)
 - Box ID #
 - Destruction Date
- A copy of the inventory of inactive records should be sent to the City Clerk's Office with regular updates.

3.4 For Permanent Records:

- Remove rubber bands and paper clips from all documents.
- Replace paper clips with staples.
- Check to see that papers are in correct chronological order within the file.
- Use acid-free boxes.

3.5 Imaging of Records:

- 3.5.1** The California Government Code permits the City to destroy some original documents after they have been scanned in accordance with the policies and procedures set forth



CITY OF BURLINGAME

Procedures for Managing Records

VERSION 1 DATED: 10.06.2025

in the Government Code whereby the electronic record can be considered the official record.

3.5.2 Before embarking on a major project to scan records, staff should check with the City Clerk's Office. The City Clerk's Office will evaluate your current records and can assist you in developing a plan to convert existing documents into electronic files and migrate the files to the City's current Electronic Document Management System (EDMS). Staff should not scan and store records on local or internal drives as these do not provide the same searching, storage, or security features as an EDMS. Records that should be imaged may include:

- Those used by many departments or many people in the same department;
- Permanent records, particularly those that are accessed regularly;
- Records that have a long retention period;
- Records that start and end in an electronic format;
- Records that are frequently requested by the public;
- Record series that are voluminous, making onsite storage impossible, but that are accessed often and would involve offsite storage and retrieval fees.

4. Destruction of Records

4.1 Request Records Destruction

- No records shall be destroyed until they have met the minimum retention period listed on the City of Burlingame's Records Retention Schedule. In addition, any destruction of records requires department head or designee, City Attorney, and City Clerk approval. For more information, refer to the City of Burlingame's Records Management Policy.
- Staff can request authorization to destroy records that are at the end of their retention schedule by completing the City's Destruction Form.
- In cases where there is no schedule for a particular record series, contact the City Clerk's Office for assistance.

4.2 Records Decision Matrix

To determine whether a record should be destroyed or not, please refer to Figure 2.

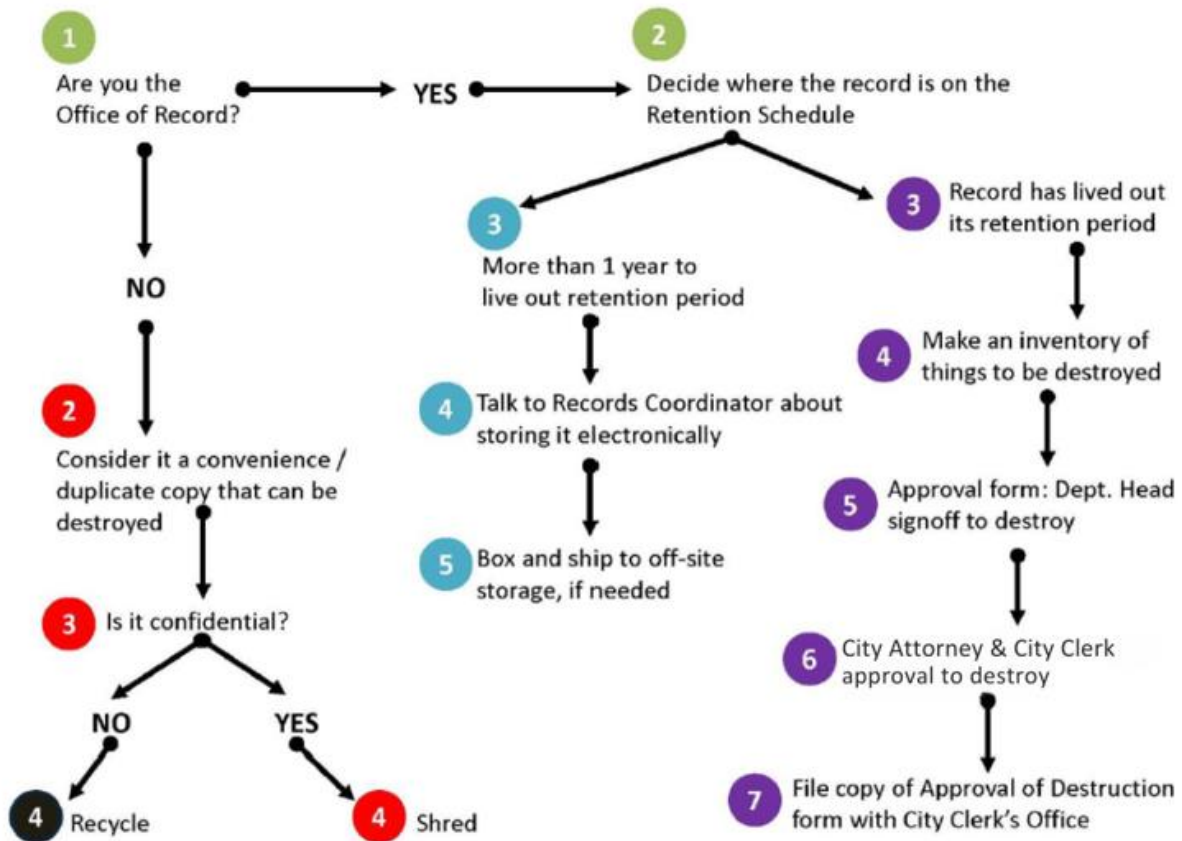


CITY OF BURLINGAME

Procedures for Managing Records

VERSION 1 DATED: 10.06.2025

Figure 2: Records Destruction Decision Matrix



What constitutes a “confidential” or “sensitive” document?

An individual’s first name or first initial and last name in combination with any of the following:

- Social Security Number
- Driver’s license number or California identification number
- Account number, credit or debit card number, in combination with any required security code, access code, password, or signature
- Medical information
- Health insurance information
- A user name and email address
- Check copies