



# Operating Policy – Document Management

## 1. Purpose

- 1.1 To outline the procedure to be followed when storing, transferring, or destroying documents.

## 2. Storing Documents

- 2.1 An organized, uniform system of storing documents will increase the administrative efficiency of the MSU;
- 2.2 Digital files and any associated documentation should be stored on the MSU server in chronological order;
- 2.3 Physical files should be retained in departmental offices for no more than two (2) years from the end of the year in which they were created. For example, if a file was created in November 2009, it should be transferred to the Archives or destroyed no later than May 2012.

## 3. Transferring Documents

- 3.1 The transferring of physical files refers to moving documents from one's office to the MSU Archives;
  - 3.1.1 Physical files are to be transferred to the Archives through the Executive Assistant. When files are ready to be transferred to the Archives, they are to be delivered to the MSU Main Office;
  - 3.1.2 For the sake of uniformity, the transferring of physical files will always occur during the first month of each new fiscal year (May 1-31).
- 3.2 The transferring of digital files refers to moving documents from one's personal computer whether local or cloud based, to MSU's local or cloud-based servers;

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- 3.2.1 MSU departments and personnel shall save all files to the MSU server. If files are kept on an individual's personal computer, all files shall be transferred to the MSU server by the end of each year (April 30). If there is uncertainty or a lack of access regarding the appropriate system, the Executive Assistant must be contacted to resolve the issue;
- 3.2.2 If it is not possible for an electronic transfer to be made, the file(s) in question must be printed and saved according to the process outlined in Section 3.1.
- 3.3 If a certain category of digital documents is commonly printed and stored as physical documents, the physical version shall be transferred and stored according to Section 3 and their destruction shall be done according to Section 5;
  - 3.3.1 If these documents can also be saved as digital files, the digital version shall be saved and not be destroyed according to Section 5.7.2 and they are to be transferred to MSU's servers according to Section 3.2.

#### 4. Naming Conventions

- 4.1 In order to ensure the greatest degree of documentary uniformity, a list of Naming Conventions has been developed including, but not limited to:
  - 4.1.1 Bylaws;
  - 4.1.2 Computer Files;
  - 4.1.3 Corporate Files (contracts, agreements, insurance policies);
  - 4.1.4 Correspondence;
  - 4.1.5 Employment (job descriptions, wage reviews, hiring boards);
  - 4.1.6 Financial (financial statements, budgets, audited statements, yearly fees, ROEs);
  - 4.1.7 Information;
  - 4.1.8 Minutes (to include, at a minimum, minutes of all Executive Board, Board of Directors and SRA meetings);
  - 4.1.9 Miscellaneous;
  - 4.1.10 Personnel (resumes, offers of employment, performance appraisals, disciplinary notices, requests for vacation/time off [including sick days]);
  - 4.1.11 Policies;
  - 4.1.12 Reports (research studies, presentations to the SRA, Executive Board, and/or Board of Directors, Year Plans);

4.1.13 Training (management training, staff training).

4.2 Unless otherwise directed by the Board of Directors or its authorized designate, this list is to be employed by all departments.

## 5. Destroying Documents

5.1 To provide adequate storage space, it is necessary to periodically and systematically destroy documents which are no longer useful and which the MSU is not required by law or for the purpose of institutional history to retain. Given the sensitive and essential character of certain documents, it is vital to implement strict guidelines concerning the destruction of documents;

5.2 The MSU is required by Provincial and Federal laws to retain certain documents for a specific time period. Given that the requirements of Ontario statutes exceed those of Federal statutes, department managers will be expected to observe Ontario law when determining the appropriate date for the destruction of the relevant documents. Adhering to Ontario law requires that the following types of documents be retained indefinitely:

5.2.1 Articles of Incorporation and Amendments thereto;

5.2.2 Shareholder Agreements;

5.2.3 Minutes of Directors' and Shareholders' meetings;

5.2.4 Directors' and Shareholders' Resolutions;

5.2.5 Notices naming Directors;

5.2.6 Securities Register;

5.2.7 A copy of the Last Notice filed under the Corporations Information Act;

5.2.8 General Ledger;

5.2.9 Special contracts or Agreements;

5.2.10 All versions of Pension Plans.

5.3 Ontario law requires that the following documents be retained for a period of no less than seven (7) years from the end of the fiscal year to which they relate:

5.3.1 Canada Pension Plan;

5.3.2 Employer Health Tax;

5.3.3 Federal and Ontario Income and Capital Tax;

5.3.4 Land Transfer Tax;

5.3.5 Other Federal and Ontario Statutes;

5.3.6 Retail Sales Tax;

5.3.7 Tobacco Tax;

5.3.8 Unemployment Insurance.

- 5.4 With respect to the MSU, the following types of documents should be retained for a period of no less than seven (7) years from the end of the fiscal year to which they relate:
- 5.4.1 Annual Inventory;
  - 5.4.2 Bank statements, cheques;
  - 5.4.3 Cash Register Tapes;
  - 5.4.4 Fixed Asset Invoices (usually the period begins in the year after the asset is sold, since this is the last year it enters into income);
  - 5.4.5 Lease Documents;
  - 5.4.6 Payroll Records;
  - 5.4.7 Record of Employment (ROE);
  - 5.4.8 Sales Summaries;
  - 5.4.9 Tax Returns;
  - 5.4.10 Trade Invoices.
- 5.5 Given the length of the retention period associated with the documents listed in Section 5.4, said documents must be transferred to the Archives prior to their destruction according to the procedure outlined in Section 3;
- 5.6 It is requested that department managers recommend a retention period for files that are not associated with any of the categories listed in Section 5.4. The suggested retention period should be based upon precedence and projected need and/or value;
- 5.7 Retention periods will vary according to the type and specific character of a given document. Below is a guideline of the approved minimum retention periods for documents that belong to each of the following categories:
- 5.7.1 **Bylaws** – should be retained in either hard copy or computer files until amended or eliminated;
  - 5.7.2 **Computer Files** – should never be destroyed. Computer files are only to be transferred according to the protocol outlined in Section 3;
  - 5.7.3 **Corporate Files** – should be retained for a minimum of seven (7) calendar years or for the duration of their applicability, whichever is longer;
  - 5.7.4 **Correspondence** – will vary according to the subject matter of the correspondence in question. In general, correspondence should be retained for a period identical to the files with which it is associated;

- 5.7.5 **Employment** – should be retained until they are no longer applicable and have been replaced by new ones, at which point the “old” employment files may be transferred and/or destroyed. Given the character of the documents which are classified as “employment files”, it is not necessary for the majority of departments to retain any such files except those which are directly relevant to their staff;
  - 5.7.6 **Financial** – the retention period for financial records has been outlined in above subsections 5.1 and 5.2;
  - 5.7.7 **Information** – given the diversity of files, which may be included in this category, managerial discretion will determine the appropriate retention period for such files. At minimum, these files should be retained for two (2) years;
  - 5.7.8 **Minutes** – the majority of departments need to retain Minutes for a minimum of two (2) years, after which they can be destroyed. Departments should retain only those Minutes which are of importance to their specific operation. However, in the event that Minutes are kept in electronic format then section 5.7.2 COMPUTER FILES shall apply:
    - 5.7.8.1 Minutes pertaining to the Board of Directors, Executive Board or the SRA must be retained for a minimum of seven (7) years.
  - 5.7.9 **Miscellaneous** – given the diversity of files which may be included in this category, managerial discretion will determine the appropriate retention period for such files. At minimum, these files should be retained for two (2) years;
  - 5.7.10 **Personnel** – should follow the same guidelines detailed above in subsections 5.1 and 5.2;
  - 5.7.11 **Policies** – should follow the same guidelines assigned to Bylaws;
  - 5.7.12 **Reports** – should be retained indefinitely or until the destruction is authorized by the Board of Directors or its designate.
- 5.8 Documents which possess archival value (e.g. their content provides information which is important for the preservation of institutional history) should never be destroyed;
- 5.9 In those instances in which any of the above guidelines conflict with current MSU practices, until the conflict has been resolved by the appropriate parties, the guidelines to be followed are those which mandate the lengthiest period of retention;

- 5.10 Subsequently, until an official party has been developed regarding precisely what type of documents are archival, prior to scheduling a document for destruction, managers should attempt to clarify whether 'questionable' documents have archival value;