

BSA Record Retention and Destruction Policy for Local and National Councils (effective 1-1-2016)

Official records of the Boy Scouts of America must be retained for as long as they are in use or retention is necessary for historical reference or contractual or legal requirements. Records and documents outlined in this policy include paper, electronic files (including email), and voicemail records, regardless of where the document is stored, including network servers, desktop or laptop computers, handheld computers, and other wireless devices with text messaging capabilities. Records may be retained in paper or digital form. **Councils are encouraged to consider batch scanning documents into PDF format for long-term storage.**

This policy specifies a minimum retention period. If it appears prior to or at the expiration of the retention period that a record should be retained longer, then steps must be taken to safeguard the file and indicate when it will be appropriate to purge the record. This policy is intended to provide general parameters for the retention of records. Ambiguities and exceptions must be resolved by proper written approval and documentation.

It is against Boy Scouts of America policy to knowingly destroy a record or document with the intent to obstruct or influence an investigation. If notice of an ongoing investigation or a legal hold is placed on records or documents, the records or documents are to be segregated and/or duplicated and placed in a safe location until notice that the investigation is over or the legal hold is lifted. Documents subject to a litigation hold or which may relate to a pending or threatened lawsuit must be retained until the suit is resolved. If there are any questions regarding documents which may need to be retained due to a pending or threatened lawsuit, call the legal department.

Prior to the destruction of any records or documents regardless of form or how its stored, approval for the destruction shall be obtained from the department head of the originating department, the legal department and the records management team leader. Destruction approval may be accomplished by paper or digital approval and a record of the approval is to be permanently obtained in digital format. Paper records and documents containing confidential, personal, or other sensitive information shall be identified on the destruction approval form for shredding where appropriate.

Type of Document	Retention Period	Format
Corporate Records		
Articles of incorporation/bylaws	Permanent	Digital
Minutes and resolutions	Permanent	Digital
Annual reports	Permanent	Digital
Copyrights, trademarks, deeds, royalties, trusts, wills/bequests (records that are required by law for documentation)	Permanent	Original
Executive board conflict of interest	7 years	Digital
Policies and procedures	10 years after obsolete	Digital
Awards (documents containing multiple categories, such as application to attend with integrated release from liability, should be kept the longer of the periods specified)		
Eagle, Silver Buffalo, Beaver, Fawn, Wood Badge, O/A, Lifesaving, Whitney M. Young, Hornaday, etc.	Permanent	Digital
Contract Files The contract file includes bids, performance- and acceptance-related documents including correspondence, insurance certificates, and other performance-related documents.	Expired + 10 years	Digital
Benefits		
Retirement plan, refunds, window, gift history, consultants, tax annuities, SEA (Scout Executives' Alliance), consultants, tax annuities, tax folders, vendor claim reports (United Healthcare audit), pension records	Permanent	Digital
Death folders/SEA (Scout Executives' Alliance) beneficiary (request for benefits of a member)	7 years	Digital

Type of Document	Retention Period	Format
Financial		
Accounting records: General journal, general ledger — year-end file copy with supporting details, grants, fixed assets and depreciation, account notice files, chart of accounts	Permanent	Digital
Statements: Cash and investment statements, notes receivable, travel expense reports, financials, budgets, payroll records, year-end physical, credit card receipts, inventory reports, subsidiary ledgers, bank statements	7 years	Digital
Invoices: Account payable/receivable invoices, A/P control, group reports, purchase orders, internal audit reports	4 years	Digital
Tax-exempt bonds	10 years after final bond matures	Paper until maturity, then Digital
Forms	While current	Digital
Health and Safety		
Incident and investigation reports (incident specific with attachments such as plan, camp inspections, logs, etc.)	18 years	Digital
Reports, plans, inspection reports, and first-aid logs	5 years	Digital
Insurance		
Claim files (workers' compensation, liability claims, general litigation files, auto claim files)	10 years after closure	Digital
Insurance policies, actuarial studies, ESIS contracts	Permanent	Digital
Tour permits/tour and activity plans	Permanent	Digital
Membership Records		
Applications (including Eagle applications)	Permanent	Digital
Authorization and disclosure forms	Permanent	Digital
Background checks	Permanent	Digital
Ineligible files (leaders, youth, and reviews)	Permanent	Digital
Unit rosters	Permanent	Digital
Youth Protection incident and investigation reports	Permanent	Digital
Documentation/application of clearances or background checks	3 years after expired	Digital

Type of Document	Retention Period	Format
Personnel Records		
Attendance, illness, resumes, relocation, unemployment claims, goals, promotions, and other related reports	3 years	Digital
Conflict of Interest Policy — signed copies	7 years	Digital
EEOC Yearly Diversity Report EEOC1	3 years	Digital
I-9s: Employment eligibility and verification	3 years after date of hire or 1 year after termination, whichever is later	Digital
Personnel files and individual staff records	7 years	Digital
Personnel files and individual records of commissioned professionals or pro-tech employees terminated for cause and for persons whose commission has been denied or revoked. Chief Scout Executives' sealed personnel files.	Permanent	Digital
Reorganization plans	5 years	Digital
Summer camp staff files or seasonal staff files, including letters of employment	5 years	Digital
Program If a document is potentially identified in more than one category, such as an application to attend with integrated release from liability, the document should be kept for the longest potentially applicable period.		
Boy Scouts, Cub Scouts, Learning for Life/Exploring, Leadership Support, International, Jamboree, Order of the Arrow, NESA (National Eagle Scout Association), Venturing, National Events unless otherwise specified below	5 years	Digital
Risk Acknowledgement or Release from Liability forms from program events	10 years	Digital
Talent release or photo use authorization	10 years	Digital
Advancement records	Permanent	Digital
Training records	Permanent	Digital
Friends of Scouting pledge forms	7 years	Digital
Territory transfers/council mergers	Permanent	Digital
Charter applications	Permanent	Digital
Event files	5 years	Digital

Type of Document	Retention Period	Format
Properties		
Blueprints, maps of facilities, construction as-built drawings, construction specifications, equipment manuals and purchase documents, and engineering reports	May be transferred with ownership or 10 years after property conveyed away	Paper or Digital
Environmental reports and hazardous waste disposal records	Permanent	Digital
Security, fire safety, access, postage and delivery	Current + 3 years	Digital
Software Licenses		
Software registrations, warranties, and license agreements	Until software removed	As provided
System Backups		
Magnetic tape and similar devices. Includes security, testing, and upgrades	13 Months	Digital
Tax Records		
Federal and state tax: 990, 900-T, 5500, 1099, 1042, 5227, 1041-A, 1065, 941, 945, trust returns, unclaimed property returns, tax sheltered annuity reports	Permanent	Digital
State and federal sales and payroll tax: payroll withholding, unemployment, garnishment and workers' compensation reports, sales tax returns, support, and Scout Shop detail reports (used during audits), annual license, charitable registrations, and corporate filings	7 years	Digital

Approved effective: 1/1/2016



Steven P. McGowan, General Counsel

If it is an electronic application, the data is already retained and there is no paper application to which the policy applies.

Applications contain important answers to screening questions, which may be valuable in terms of the BSA showing it is consistent in processing registration applications. Cost-effective scanning and storage make retention in digital format an efficient choice.

Paper applications should be scanned and retained in PDF format immediately after they are processed. They can be bulk-scanned into folders organized by processing date or even month or some other logical manner of organization so long as it provides the ability to narrow the search for a specific application if it is required in the future.

Any question regarding this policy may be directed to the Legal or Records Management departments.