



# Ouse & Humber Drainage Board

## Document Retention Policy

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## 1. Introduction

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Records are assets that require careful management in order for the Board to conduct its business and comply with statutory obligations. This policy sets out the arrangements for record management.

The effective management of records in all formats depends as much on their efficient disposal as well as their long-term preservation. The untimely destruction of records may adversely affect service delivery but so will the unnecessary retention of outdated and potentially inaccurate information.

Disposal is necessary not only to reduce administrative burdens but also to ensure that information is not retained for longer than is necessary and that accurate records are maintained for appropriate periods to satisfy applicable operational and legal requirements.

## **2. Retention periods**

The Retention Schedule which forms part of this policy sets out the length of time that records should be retained, irrespective of the media on which they are created or held including:

- Paper
- Electronic files (including databases, Word Documents, spreadsheets, web pages and emails)
- Photographs and video tapes

Retention periods are determined based upon the nature of the information held, not the medium in which it is maintained. For example, information which is held in electronic form should only be retained for the same period as it would be kept if it was in paper form. However, it is not necessary to retain both paper and electronic versions of the same record, or to retain duplicated copies of records. Retention arrangements for electronic records should ensure that they will remain complete, unaltered and accessible throughout the retention period.

The value of records tends to decline over time, so the majority of records should only be retained for a limited period of time and eventually be destroyed. A recommended minimum retention period, derived from operational or legal requirements, is provided for each category of record and applies to all records within that category.

A small proportion of records which are considered to be of permanent historical significance will be preserved in the archives. The Chief Executive is responsible for the selection of records for permanent preservation and the maintenance of the archives.

## **3. Storage**

All data and records should be stored as securely as possible in order to avoid potential misuse or loss. All data and records will be stored in the most appropriate location having regard to the period of retention and the frequency with which access will be made to the record.

When considering the storage of historical documents in some circumstances it may be appropriate to consider if they should be stored in a museum.

#### **4. Disposal**

Records should be reviewed as soon as possible after the expiry of the retention period. A record should not be destroyed without verification that:

- No work is outstanding in respect of that record and it is no longer required.
- The record does not relate to any current or pending complaint, investigation, dispute or litigation.
- The record is unaffected by any current or pending request made under the Freedom of Information Act or Data Protection Act.

Paper records will be shredded on site and electronic records will be erased. All copies of a record in whatever format will be destroyed at the same time.

#### **5. Other records**

Many records have no significant operational or evidential value and are not subject to retention under this policy but may be destroyed once they have served their primary purpose. These include:

- Compliment slips and similar items which accompany documents.
- Drafts of documents.
- Working papers which are the basis of the content of other documents.
- Invitations and notices of acceptance or apologies.
- Magazines, marketing materials, catalogues, directories, etc.

This is not an exhaustive list but merely indicates the types of record which have no significant operational or evidential value and may be destroyed once their effective use has ended.

## 6. Record Retention Schedule

Accident Book	Permanently
Agendas & minute books	Permanently
Bank reconciliations	7 years
Bank statements	7 years
Board Members' records (ex-members)	2 years
Capital grants paperwork (after scheme completion / final account)	7 years
Cheques (for important payments and purchases)	Permanently
Consenting and enforcement	Permanently
Contracts, mortgages, notes, and leases (expired)	7 years
Contracts (still in effect)	Contract period
Correspondence (regarding rating)	Permanently
Correspondence (legal and important matters)	Permanently
Correspondence (other)	7 years
Deeds and legal agreements	Permanently
Employment applications	1 year
Expense claims (employees & members)	7 years
External audit reports	Permanently
Fixed Assets Cost and Depreciation schedules	Permanently
Health & Safety records	Permanently
Historical documents	Permanently
HR files (terminated employees)	7 years
Insurance records, current accident reports, claims, policies, and so on (active and expired)	Permanently
Internal audit reports	7 years
Investment details	7 years
Invoices	7 years
Licences (expired)	7 years
PAYE, tax returns and records	Permanently
Payroll records and summaries	7 years
Planning records	Permanently

Purchase and sales ledger records	7 years
Retirement and pension records	Permanently
Special Levies Records	Permanently
Statutory documents of the Board e.g. byelaws, standing orders	Permanently
Timesheets	7 years
VAT Returns	7 years
Year-end financial statements	Permanently

## 7. Review

This document will be reviewed every five years, taking into account any changes in legislation and best practice.