



COUNTY OF CARROLL
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONERS
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Policy Title:	Records Retention Policy
Purpose:	To provide for the proper disposition of County records
Effective Date:	December 22, 2020
Revision Date:	May 1 2024
Reference(s):	NH RSA 33-A;

POLICY

Carroll County shall ensure compliance with all applicable laws and regulations pertaining to record retention including, but not limited to, those listed in NH RSA 33-A and Federal CFR 200.334/200.337.

Carroll County shall simultaneously recognize the County's administrative need to manage its records and provide for their systematic destruction after legal requirements have been met and the records no longer have value to the County or its citizens.

This policy applies to all records generated in the course of the County of Carroll's municipal operations, including original, reproduced, and electronic documents.

PROCEDURE

Municipal Records Committee

In accordance with NH RSA 33-A:3, Carroll County shall establish and maintain a Municipal Records Committee charged with governing the retention and disposition of its municipal records. The committee membership shall include a representative from each County department as approved by the Commissioners.

The Committee shall:

1. monitor laws affecting record retention
2. modify the record retention schedule (Appendix A) as necessary
3. if necessary, develop additional operational procedures to ensure that records are properly stored and accessible and disposed of properly

Any such additional procedures shall adhere to any applicable statutory requirements, as well as the County's operational capabilities. In addition, such procedures shall ensure that any records containing sensitive or confidential information are treated with particular care. The Committee may elect to use electronic methods of document storage, where appropriate, in accordance with NH RSA 33-A:5-a.

The Committee shall annually review this policy and recommend amendments needed to comply with statutory or regulatory requirements.

Storage, Retention, and Disposal of Municipal Records

The statutory Records Retention Schedule details the retention period for specific types and categories of records in order to ensure legal compliance. The Committee may determine that records are to be maintained by the County for a period longer than the minimum period required.

Documents to be destroyed shall first be reviewed by the applicable Department head or their designees to determine if any portion(s) of those records should be retained due to their historical value. If no reason exists to maintain the record beyond the retention schedule, the documents shall be destroyed as follows:

- Non-confidential records shall be recycled if possible, or shredded
- Confidential documents shall be shredded
- Electronic files shall be deleted from the individual's computer as well as from any backup or permanent media storage.

Shredding shall be done by either authorized staff members or by a shredding service.

All municipal records belong to the public in perpetuity and shall not be destroyed, maliciously damaged or retained by any person not entitled to do so.

It is understood that there may be federal and state laws and/or regulations in addition to NH RSA 33-A that govern the disposition of records in the individual County departments. Department heads maintain department-specific policies relative to those additional record retention requirements.

Records pertinent to Federal awards will be retained until at least five years after the end of the grant performance period. The County will allow access to these records by authorized representatives in order to make audits, examination, excerpts, transcripts and interviews of such documents.

Electronic Records

Carroll County will regularly conduct a quality review of our electronically saved (PDF-format) documents to confirm readability and accessibility and will ensure paper files exist, where required according to the record retention schedule, to substantiate the electronic versions. Electronic records are backed up regularly.

The County will follow NH RSA 33-A:5-an Electronic Records as currently written and in the future, as it may be amended by legislation:

- I. Paper municipal records listed in the disposition and retention schedule of RSA 33-A:3-a may be transferred to electronic records, as defined in RSA 5:29, VI, and the original paper records may be disposed of as the municipality chooses, subject to the requirements of other state or federal laws. Such records shall be stored in portable document format/archival (PDF/A) or another file format approved by the secretary of state and the municipal records board. Documents stored electronically will be named in a manner to provide easily searchable access.
- II. Electronic municipal records listed on the disposition and retention schedule of RSA 33-A:3-a that are to be retained for 10 years or less may be retained solely electronically in their original format if so approved by the municipal committee responsible for the records. The municipality is responsible for assuring the accessibility of the records for the retention period. If the records retention period exceeds 10 years or the municipal committee does not approve retention of the record solely electronically in an approved format, the records shall be transferred to paper, microfilmed, or stored in portable document format/archival (PDF/A) or another approved file format on a medium from which it is readily retrievable. At least once every 5 years from date of creation, the municipal committee shall review documents and procedures for compliance with guidelines issued by the secretary of state and the municipal records board. (effective August 7 2017)

Suspension of Record Disposal

In the event any official or employee of Carroll County is served with any subpoena or Right-to-Know request; or becomes aware of an investigation or audit concerning the County or any litigation against or

concerning the County, such individual shall ensure that all records are preserved, regardless of the retention schedule, until the County's legal counsel determines that the records are no longer needed.

Initial Training and Annual Review

Each department head or their designees is responsible for providing a copy of the records retention policies to newly hired employees and initial training on records retention specific to their department. Each department head or designee shall also provide an annual review of the records retention policy. The annual review will serve as an opportunity to review any legislative changes or amendments to the records retention policy adopted by the County.

(This policy replaces the "Carroll County Records Retention Policy Revised December 22 2020)

Approved by vote of the Board on May 1, 2024.

Terry McCarthy
Chairman

Chuck McGee
Vice-Chairman

Bill Nelson
Clerk