

# Records Retention Schedule

## General Retention Schedule (GRS) 3 Health & Safety Records



Information Governance Unit  
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**To submit comments, or to request additional paper copies, please contact:**

**Information Governance Unit  
Law & Governance  
Friars Terrace  
Stafford  
ST17 4AY**

**Telephone: (01785) 278176**

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## What is a Retention Schedule ?

- A retention schedule is a list of records which need to be retained by the County Council for a designated period of time. The Retention Schedule shows the title of each record, a time period for which records are to be retained, and identified the reason (legislative, regulatory and / or operational) on which retention is based.
- The existence of this Retention Schedule is a requirement of Staffordshire County Council's Corporate Records Management Policy. It has been developed by the Information Governance Unit in collaboration with Business Unit / Section Managers, and in partnership with Legal Services.
- The Retention Schedule provides consistent instructions for all staff who deal with records, and a formal policy for records retention and disposal. It is not, however, immutable and divergences from the schedule may be appropriate in certain circumstances, so long as liaison is made with the Director Law & Governance.
- Official guidelines on the retention of records used by the majority of SCC Units (including Health & Safety, Personnel, and Financial Records) can be found in the Staffordshire County Council *General Retention Schedules*, available on the Corporate Intranet Site. The Information Governance Unit is currently working with individual Business Units to produce Retention Schedules which list records specific to each unit.

*"Each department will require its respective business units to:*

- *Ensure the capture of records (both paper and electronic) that provide evidence of its functional activities.*
- *Establish retention schedules for all areas of work."*

**SCC Corporate Records Management Policy**

*"A records management service should include the drawing up of retention schedules for all classes of the authority's records and the systematic disposal of those no longer of administrative use...."*

**Guidance on Section 224, Local Govt Act 1972  
Issued by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2000**

## Retention Schedules and the Freedom of Information Act 2000

- The Freedom of Information Act 2000 is intended to promote a culture of openness and accountability amongst public authorities by providing people with rights of access to records held by Staffordshire County Council.
- From 1 January 2005, the County Council must comply with requests for the information that it holds unless an exemption from disclosure applies. The Authority will normally have a maximum of twenty working days to respond to the request, however there are circumstances when this time limit can be extended.
- The Lord Chancellor has also issued a Code of Practice under Section 46 of the Freedom of Information Act, setting out his views on desirable practice for the keeping, management and disposal of public authority records. The Code of Practice includes a requirement to develop and apply Records Retention Schedules.
- Any freedom of information legislation is only as good as the quality of the records to which it provides access. Such rights are of little use if reliable records are not created in the first place, if they cannot be found when needed or if the arrangements for their disposal are inadequate.

*“An appraisal documentation system will ensure consistency in records appraisal and disposal. It should show what records are designated for destruction, the authority under which they are to be destroyed and when they are to be destroyed.*

*It should also provide background information on the records, such as legislative provisions, functional context and physical arrangement.*

Lord Chancellor's Code of Practice on the Management of Records, issued under Section 46 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000

*“As from January 2005 , anyone will have a new legal right to request access to any information held by any public body.....My message to all public bodies is: Get your Act together. Prepare now. Don't panic later.”*

Richard Thomas, Information Commissioner,  
May 2003

# Understanding the Retention Schedule

- Retention Schedules are updated annually by the Information Governance Unit in collaboration with officers from each Section.
- The Information Governance Unit produces Records Retention Schedules for every Business Unit in Staffordshire County Council, and they all follow a similar format. The graphic below demonstrates how to interpret the schedule:

Records	Action	Retention Period	Trigger (event that prompts start of Retention Period)	Authority guiding record creation & retention
<b>Directorate Activity: Research</b>				
<b>Research &amp; Analysis</b>				
Strategic Corporate Issues	Destroy	6 Years	Date Created	SCC Business Need
Economic Research & Analysis	Destroy	6 Years	Date Created	SCC Business Need
Demographic Research & Analysis	Destroy	6 Years	Date Created	SCC Business Need
Traffic Data Collection & Analysis	Destroy	6 Years	After survey completion	Limitation Act 1980

  

Types of Record

Action(s) once record has exceeded its retention period

Amount of time for which record should

Event that triggers the start of the retention period

Legal / Regulatory / Business need guiding retention

Description of process

## Using the Retention Schedule

This Retention Schedule has been developed to be used in the following ways:



### When new records are created

The Retention Schedule should be used as a point of reference in the day-to-day management of records. The most effective point in the life-cycle of any record at which to decide how long it should be retained, and for what reason, is when that record is created.

When opening a new file, creating an electronic record, or typing a letter, this Retention Schedule will act as a guide to the conditions under which that Record should be managed, stored and ultimately disposed of.



### When configuring an electronic records management system

Any Electronic Document & Records Management System should manage not only paper records, but ensure that all legal and business requirements are met in terms of the retention, security and disposal of all electronic records (including e-mail, electronic forms, web site content and images).

The integration of electronic records management into existing business systems must include proper consideration of Retention Schedules to provide a set consistent legal and operational requirements.



### When designing or implementing new paper filing systems.

Any new office system intended to improve the efficiency of paper filing should be designed with a clear understanding of the legal and business requirement for record keeping, when records should be transferred to the Staffordshire County Council records centre, and when they should eventually be destroyed.



### When transferring files to off-site storage

Office space is at a premium and it is rarely possible to retain files on-site for the length of time for which they have to be retained.

The Retention Schedule should always be consulted when transferring files to the Staffordshire County Council Records Centre at Friars Terrace.



### When destroying files

In order to protect itself and minimise risk, all businesses should not maintain records longer than they need to; nor should they destroy records sooner than is required

The Retention Schedule provides consistent guidelines on the retention period of all this Unit's records.

## Responsibility for Implementation

When a record has reached the end of its specified retention period, a designated person needs to be responsible as the signatory for the destruction process where destruction is the specified action.

In implementing retention policy reference should be made to both generic schedules, for records used by several directorates (which covering corporate, financial, health & safety and personnel records\*) and the specific schedules, pertaining to only one particular Department/Service.

The schedules should be regularly updated to account for any changes to business practice and must be reviewed annually as a matter of course.

**The responsible authority for this schedule is: .....**

*Director (Law & Governance)*

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## Health & Safety Records Retention Schedule

Records	Action	Retention Period	Trigger (event that prompts start of Retention Period)	Authority guiding record creation & retention
<b>Activity: Accidents &amp; Incidents</b>				
Recording and reporting of accidents involving Group 3 or Group 4 biological agents	Destroy	40 Years	Date created	Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002
Report of violent conduct at work	Destroy	12 Years	Date created	Limitations Act 1980
Accidents and incidents involving Group 3 or Group 4 biological agents	Destroy	40 Years	Date created	Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002
Accident Reports - adults	Destroy	3 Years	Date created	RIDDOR 1995, Social Security (claims and payments) regulations 1979
Dangerous Occurrences - adults	Destroy	3 Years	Date created	RIDDOR 1995, Social Security (claims and payments) regulations

Records	Action	Retention Period	Trigger (event that prompts start of Retention Period)	Authority guiding record creation & retention
				1979
Outbreaks of notifiable diseases - adults	Destroy	3 Years	Date created	RIDDOR 1995, Social Security (claims and payments) regulations 1979
Investigation of Accidents, Dangerous Occurrences and Notifiable Diseases	Destroy	40 Years	Date created	Limitations Act 1980
Witness Statements	Destroy	12 Years	Date created	Limitations Act 1980
Record of Issue of Protective Equipment	Destroy	6 Years	Date of issue	Limitations Act 1980
Accident Book	Destroy	3 Years	Date closed	RIDDOR 1995
Dangerous Occurrences - children	Destroy	*	* Until aged 21	RIDDOR 1995, Social Security (claims and payments) regulations 1979
Accident Reports - children	Destroy	*	* Until aged 21	RIDDOR 1995, Social Security (claims and payments) regulations 1979

Records	Action	Retention Period	Trigger (event that prompts start of Retention Period)	Authority guiding record creation & retention
Outbreaks of notifiable diseases - children	Destroy	*	* Until aged 21	RIDDOR 1995, Social Security (claims and payments) regulations 1979
<b>Activity: Health &amp; Safety Policy</b>				
Time off or other assistance provided to safety representatives appointed under the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977	Destroy	5 Years	Date created	Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977
Notifications of appointments of safety reps by Trade Unions under the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977	Destroy	1 Years	Termination of contract	Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977
Consultations and other communications with safety representatives appointed under the Health & Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996	Destroy	50 Years	Date created	Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996
Development and establishment of SCC H&S	Destroy	50 Years	Date modified	Health & Safety at Work

Records	Action	Retention Period	Trigger (event that prompts start of Retention Period)	Authority guiding record creation & retention
policy				Act 1974
Audit and review of SCC H&S provision	Destroy	10 Years	Date created	Health & Safety at Work Act 1974
Consultations and other communications with safety representatives appointed under the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977	Destroy	50 Years	Date created	Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977
Formation of a safety committee under the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977.	Destroy	50 Years	Dissolution of Committee	Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977
Data and analysis of performance against SCC H&S policy	Destroy	1 Years	Date created	Health & Safety at Work Act 1974
Proceedings and decisions of a safety committee formed under the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977.	Destroy	50 Years	Date created	Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977
Election of representatives of employee safety under the Health & Safety (Consultation with	Destroy	1 Years	Termination of contract	Health and Safety (Consultation with

Records	Action	Retention Period	Trigger (event that prompts start of Retention Period)	Authority guiding record creation & retention
Employees) Regulations 1996				Employees) Regulations 1996
Time off or other assistance provided to safety representatives appointed under the Health & Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996	Destroy	5 Years	Date created	Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996
Health & Safety File	Destroy	3 Years	Life of Building	Construction (Design and Management) Regs
Development and establishment of SCC H & S procedures	Destroy	50 Years	Date modified	Health & Safety at Work Act 1974
<b>Activity: Risk Assessments</b>				
List of employees exposed to Group 3 or Group 4 biological agents	Destroy	40 Years	Date created	Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002
Air monitoring	Destroy	5 Years	Date created	Control of Lead at Work Regulations 2002
Manual Handling Assessments	Destroy	6 Years	Termination of contract	SCC Period, taking into account Limitation Act 1980

Records	Action	Retention Period	Trigger (event that prompts start of Retention Period)	Authority guiding record creation & retention
DSE Assessments: Screen test records	Destroy	6 Years	Termination of contract	Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992
DSE Assessments: Identification of users form	Destroy	*	*Until risk assessment has been carried	Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992
DSE Assessments: Risk assessment	Destroy	6 Years	Date created	Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992
DSE Assessments: Corrective Appliance Voucher records	Destroy	6 Years	Date created	Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992
Examination, testing and repair of plant and equipment provided to control asbestos levels	Destroy	5 Years	Date created	Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002
Risk Assessments and recommended actions	Destroy	5 Years	Date created	Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002
Identifying presence of Asbestos	Destroy	5 Years	Date created	Control of Asbestos at

Records	Action	Retention Period	Trigger (event that prompts start of Retention Period)	Authority guiding record creation & retention
				Work Regulations 2002
Hazardous Substances Present / In use	Destroy	40 Years	Date created	Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002
Air monitoring where exposure requires individual employees to be under surveillance	Destroy	40 Years	Date created	Control of Lead at Work Regulations 2002
Examination, testing and repair of plant and equipment provided to control exposure to lead	Destroy	5 Years	Date created	Control of Lead at Work Regulations 2002
Risk Assessments of employees exposed to lead	Destroy	5 Years	Date created	Control of Lead at Work Regulations 2002
Monitoring of exposure to employees to substances hazardous to health	Destroy	5 Years	Date created	Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002
Examination, testing and repair of plant and equipment provided to control exposure to substances hazardous to health	Destroy	5 Years	Date created	Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002
Written plans of work for undertaking work with asbestos	Destroy	5 Years	Date created	Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002

Records	Action	Retention Period	Trigger (event that prompts start of Retention Period)	Authority guiding record creation & retention
<b>Activity: Sites &amp; Safety</b>				
Fire certificate	Destroy	3 Years	Date modified	Fire Precautions Act, 1971
RIDDOR notification to HSE	Destroy	12 Years	Date created	SCC period, guided by Limitation Act 1980
Specifications for first aid facilities and equipment	Destroy	5 Years	Date superseded	Health and Safety (First Aid) regulations 1981
Assessment of requirements for first aid facilities and equipment	Destroy	5 Years	Review of assessment	Health and Safety (First Aid) regulations 1981
Appointment of official first-aiders	Destroy	*	*Termination of contract	Health and Safety (First Aid) regulations 1981
Assessment of requirements for fire-fighting systems and equipment	Destroy	5 Years	Review of assessment	Fire Precautions (Workplace) regulations 1997
Nomination / appointment of Fire Wardens	Destroy	*	*Termination of contract	Fire Precautions

Records	Action	Retention Period	Trigger (event that prompts start of Retention Period)	Authority guiding record creation & retention
				(Workplace) regulations 1997, Management of Health & Safety At Work Regulations 1999
Site & Safety Inspections	Destroy	5 Years	Date created	Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
First Aid: List of First Aiders	Destroy	*	*Date superseded	Health & Safety (First Aid) Regulations, 1981
Notification of Hazard	Destroy	12 Years	Date closed	SCC period, guided by Limitation Act 1980
Equipment log book	Destroy	3 Years	Life of equipment	SCC Business Need
Witness Statements	Destroy	12Years	End of Investigation	SCC period, guided by Limitation Act 1980
Record of issue of protective equipment	Destroy	6 Years	Date of Issue	SCC period guided by Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regs 1982, taking into account Limitation Act 1980
Report of discarded syringes	Destroy	6 Years	Date created	SCC period, guided by Limitation Act 1980

Records	Action	Retention Period	Trigger (event that prompts start of Retention Period)	Authority guiding record creation & retention
Fire procedures	Destroy	*	*Date superseded	SCC Business Need
Fire evacuation reports	Destroy	*	*Date superseded	SCC Period, guided by Fire Precautions Act, 1971
Fire equipment repair logs	Destroy	*	*Life of equipment	SCC Business Need
Annual fire fighting equipment inspections	Destroy	3 Years	Date of Inspection	SCC Business Need
Arrangements with external emergency service organisations	Destroy	5 Years	Review of arrangements	Fire Precautions (Workplace) regulations 1997, Management of Health & Safety At Work Regulations 1999
Record of maintenance of protective equipment	Destroy	3 Years	Date superseded	SCC period guided by Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regs 1982, taking into account Limitation Act 1980
Test certificate	Destroy	3 Years	Date superseded	SCC Business Need
Instruction Manual	Destroy	3 Years	Date superseded	SCC guided by Limitation Act 1980

