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## Records Management Guide #1 What's Archival?

The following types of records are typically a permanent town record and should be held by the Archives. *Project records may also have long-term value and should be transferred to the Archives for review.*

- ***Meeting minutes***  
The paper copy is the permanent, record copy per the Secretary of State, Supervisor of Public Records. See *Records Management Guide #4: Board and Committee Minutes on the Web* for information on electronic copies.
- ***Original records (correspondence, reports, etc.) that have long-term operational, legal, fiscal, historical or artifactual significance<sup>1</sup> i.e., records that:***
  - ♦ Are needed for the department to carry out future business
  - ♦ Protect the Town's legal interests
  - ♦ Are needed to comply with retention requirements of a law or regulation
  - ♦ Document the town's financial, administrative or programmatic history
  - ♦ Document construction, alteration or disposition of town-owned land
  - ♦ Document the development and implementation of official policies, decisions, regulations, organization, functions, procedures, essential transactions and programs.
- ***Original signed copies of deeds, agreements, and leases***  
The Town Clerk's office is the office of record for original signed copies of deeds, agreements, and leases. See the deed index for more information.
- ***Reports related to municipal interests and infrastructure***  
The Town Clerk's office is the office of record for consultant and other reports related to municipal interests and infrastructure.
- ***Plans that document town infrastructure and town property***
- ***Building plans for public access buildings and properties that are on or are eligible for the State Register of Historic Places***
- ***Departmental rules and regulations***  
One mint copy should be preserved in the Archives.
- ***Official decisions and policies***  
One mint copy should be preserved in the Archives.
- ***Town publications***  
One mint copy of all town publications (books, reports, brochures, calendars, etc.) should be preserved in the Archives—this includes electronic publications. The Archivist may choose to sample some publications e.g., course schedules.
- ***Photographs***

<sup>1</sup> Town meeting article 4, May 10, 1999

The Archivist should review all photographs for long-term value. *Using pencil, lightly identify the photo. Write on the reverse side of the photo. Do not use pen! If the paper is coated and you cannot use pencil, fold a piece of paper around the photo and write on the paper.*

### ***What about contract files and bid specifications?***

The Board of Selectmen's office should receive the original, signed copy of the contract. Sealed bids must be retained 21 years. Bid documents for non-sealed bids must be retained for 7 years. This is the statute of limitations period for each type of contact.

### ***How do I transfer records to the Archives/Records Center?***

1. *Records should be transferred to the Archives after the period noted in the departmental records disposal schedule. If a disposal schedule does not exist, departments should transfer records when records have become inactive i.e., are accessed less than once per month or upon the termination of a project, staff employment or reorganization.*
2. Box records in standard-size record cartons—records that are not in standard-size boxes will be returned, unless you have made previous arrangements with the archives. Central supply stocks standard-size record cartons.
  - ♦ Box records in the original order as they appear in your active filing system.
  - ♦ Box the same type of records together in series e.g., keep minutes, correspondence, etc. together. If there is a small amount of material in each series, you can put multiple series in one box.
  - ♦ Pack records upright in the record carton. Letter-sized records can be stored facing toward the front of the box. Legal-sized records can be stored from side to side.
  - ♦ Do not overstuff boxes.
  - ♦ *If records are in hanging files, transfer the records to file folders. Do not transfer the hanging Pendaflex folders.*
3. *All boxes should be labeled on the short end and should be labeled in PENCIL.* Boxed files should be labeled with the following information:
  - a. Department, commission or committee name.
  - b. Name of record series
  - c. Alphabetical or numeric range, if applicable
  - d. Inclusive dates
  - e. Box number and the total box number in the transfer e.g., box 1 of 4, 2 of 4, etc.
  - f. Disposition date or status, if known e.g., Destroy 12/31/1999 or Permanent.

#### *Example:*

Board of Selectmen  
Minutes 1987-1990  
Box 1 of 2  
Permanent

- g. If the box contains subject files or many different types of files e.g., correspondence, contracts, etc. that relate to the same project, please include a list of folder titles. If you include a folder list, please note this on the *Records Transfer Form*.

A folder list is not necessary if folder names do not offer additional information or if the folder names are similar e.g., if the series information is chronological.

4. Copy box information to the *Records Transfer Form*. A *Records Transfer Form* must accompany records transferred to the Archives.
5. Department notifies the Archivist that the boxes are ready and contacts the custodians to move the boxes.
6. When the records are transferred to the Archives, the Archivist assigns a batch transfer number to the records.
7. Archivist signs and dates the transfer form and provides the Department Head/Records Custodian with a photocopy of the completed *Records Transfer Form*.