



OP20 – RECORDS MANAGEMENT

Policy Type: Operational **Policy Number:** OP20 **Reviewed:** April 9, 2026

1. Overview

The Whitchurch-Stouffville Public Library Board recognizes the importance of organizing and retaining business and personal records according to standards that ensure ease of retrieval while maintaining appropriate levels of security and confidentiality. It also recognizes the responsibility to adhere to provincial and federal legislation relating to retention, such as those of The Canada Revenue Agency.

This policy ensures that physical and electronic records created or received by Whitchurch-Stouffville Public Library (WSPL), in the course of carrying out Library business, are managed appropriately throughout the records' life cycle to facilitate the accessibility, accuracy and security of information to meet operational and legislative requirements.

2. Key Points Summary

This policy applies to physical and electronic records that are created or received by the Library Board, employees, or volunteers of WSPL, including records received from external sources, in the course of carrying out Library business.

This policy does not apply to the digital or physical materials acquired for public collections, or to historical and archival items acquired for the Local History and Archives collections.

Records will be managed to ensure they are available, accessible, and maintained in accordance to legislative requirements, and operational needs.

Records (permanent, archival, official, and transitory) will be retained, preserved, protected, secured and disposed of appropriately.

The CEO, Managers, and Administrative Assistant, are accountable and responsible for the administration of, and compliance with the Records Management Program.

3. Definitions

Archival Record: Records determined to have historical and cultural value to the Library, that warrant continuous preservation. These records are transferred to Local History and/or Archives (located at Municipal Offices, Archives Warehouse) at the end of their retention periods.

Classification Scheme: A document/schema that identifies and classifies records, usually by business function, across different departments or groups, and provides the record description, control, links, disposition methods, and access status.

Disposition: The final action carried out on a record after its retention period has ended. This may include retaining, archiving, or destroying the record(s).

Life Cycle: Similar to a biological life cycle, a record's life cycle is a record's creation or receipt, use, maintenance, retention, and disposition.

Permanent Record: Records determined to have historical, administrative, legal, or other value to the Library that warrant continuous preservation.

Record: Recorded information in any format or medium, created, received, and maintained as evidence in pursuance of legal obligations or in the transaction of business. This may include paper and electronic records, minutes, correspondence, financial statements, maps, drawings, photographs, etc.

Records Management: The field of management responsible for managing records in an efficient and systematic manner throughout its life cycle.

Record Series: A group of identical or related records that are normally used and filed as a unit and that permit evaluation as a unit for retention scheduling purposes.

Retention Period: The period of time during which records must be kept before disposition. The retention period is often divided into active and inactive stages, and is determined by legislative, regulatory, and operational requirements.

Retention Schedule: A timetable that identifies record series and the length of time they must be retained and their final disposition.

Transitory Records: Records of a temporary nature that have limited usefulness. Transitory records are not required to meet legislative obligations or to sustain administrative or operational functions.

4. Policy Details

In the course of managing records, WSPL will comply with legislated requirements and professional standards including: the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, the *Public Libraries Act*, the *Employment Standards Act*, *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, and the *Income Tax Act*. All records created by WSPL in the organization's custody are the property of the Library and are managed as a corporate resource, regardless of medium or format.

Limited Collection

Where there is no legislative requirement to retain records or there is no compelling business reason to do so, WSPL will limit its collection of information and what is contained in records. For example, when verifying identification, Library staff will check identification but not record information such as driver's license numbers.

WSPL will ensure that all records created by the organization or in its custody are:

- Available, accessible and maintained to support management and strategic decision-making and to meet operational and legislative requirements;
- Secured and properly protected against damage or unauthorized access;
- Retained and not destroyed before the defined retention periods;
- Disposed of in accordance with established retention schedules; and destroyed in a secure manner that considers confidentiality requirements.

Scope

This policy applies to the life cycle of all records in all formats, digital or physical, and will be applied consistently across all media. This policy applies to all records that are created and/or used by the Board, employees of the Library, and volunteers. It also applies to records from external sources such as other governmental bodies, businesses and the public when such records are maintained by the Library as a part of its administrative and operational functions. This policy does not apply to items in the Library's digital or physical materials collections acquired solely for use by the public. This policy does not apply to historical and archival materials or items acquired by the Library as part of its Local History and Archives collections.

Disposition of Records

Records that have reached the end of their retention period and are no longer needed for another valid reason will not be retained and will be destroyed. Transitory records, unless they have become necessary for legal or administrative purposes, will not be retained and will be destroyed. Records that are classified as permanent or archival records, have long-term value to the Library, such as for recording its corporate, service and cultural history. These records will be preserved and protected to ensure their safety, availability, and recovery. As such, permanent records will be maintained by the department the record is created by, while archival records will be transferred to the Local History and Archives department and will follow the Local History and Archives Policy. Records will not be retained beyond their retention period without a valid reason authorized by the CEO or designate. The destruction of records will be done in a secure and confidential manner and will be carried out in accordance with established procedures.

Official Records

Only one official record, either physical or digital, will be maintained for the purpose of ensuring retention requirements. Where an original physical record is not required by law, or is not classified as a permanent record for preservation, the digital record will become the official record for retention purposes. The physical record will be then considered transitory and will, therefore, be disposed of. Duplicate records that are identified in the retention schedule (such as copies used as supporting documents to a report, or when the original record is submitted to the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville) are considered exceptions and are not transitory. They will be retained in accordance with the retention schedule.

Records in Electronic Format

The electronic/ digital records within a record series are an alternative format or delivery of the records themselves, with no change in the transaction or content of the record. Electronic records are governed under the same rules of the Library's records management policy, which addresses format, content, organization, retention, disposition, and backup. The introduction of new technology will require updates to procedures and practices pertaining to electronic records which otherwise will be reviewed and changed following the same revision timeframe as this policy.

Accountability

The CEO is responsible for ensuring that records management requirements are being met and that they reflect the Board's policies and priorities. The Administrative Assistant is accountable to the CEO for the general administration of the records management function. Managers are accountable to the CEO for administering their respective record series and ensuring compliance with Records Management Policies and procedures within their areas of responsibility.

5. Related Documents

- *Public Libraries Act, RSO 1990, c. P.44*
- *Municipal Act, 2001 sections 253-255*
- *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, RSO 1990, c. M.56*
- *Employment Standards Act, 2000, SO, c. 41*
- Canada Revenue Agency Regulations
- LIB – OP01 – *Confidentiality & Protection of Privacy Policy*