

Records Management Publications
Texas State Library and Archives Commission

Local Schedule GR (3rd edition)

Retention Schedule for Records Common to All Local Governments

Effective November 1, 1995

Preface

This schedule establishes mandatory minimum retention periods for the records listed. No local government office may dispose of a record listed in this schedule prior to the expiration of its retention period. A records control schedule of a local government may not set a retention period for a record that is less than that established for the record on this schedule. The originals of records listed in this schedule may be disposed of prior to the expiration of the stated minimum retention period if they have been microfilmed or electronically stored pursuant to the provisions of the Local Government Code, Chapter 204 or Chapter 205, as applicable, and rules of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission adopted under authority of those chapters. Actual disposal of such records by a local government or an elective county office is subject to the policies and procedures of its records management program.

Destruction of local government records contrary to the provisions of the Local Government Records Act of 1989 and administrative rules adopted under its authority, including this schedule, is a Class A misdemeanor and, under certain circumstances, a third degree felony (Penal Code, Section 37.10). Anyone destroying local government records without legal authorization may also be subject to criminal penalties and fines under the Open Records Act (Government Code, Chapter 552).

Introduction

The Government Code, Section 441.158, provides that the Texas State Library and Archives Commission shall issue records retention schedules for each type of local government, including a schedule for records common to all types of local government. The law provides further that each schedule must state the retention period prescribed by federal or state law, rule of court, or regulation for a record for which a period is prescribed; and prescribe retention periods for all other records, which periods have the same effect as if prescribed by law after the records retention schedule is adopted as a rule of the commission.

Local Schedule GR sets mandatory minimum retention periods for records series that are usually found in all local governments, regardless of type. If the

retention period for a record is established in a federal or state law, rule of court, or regulation, a citation to the relevant provision is given; if no citation is given, the authority for the retention period is this schedule.

The retention period for a record applies to the record regardless of the medium in which it is maintained. Some records listed in this schedule are maintained electronically in many offices, but electronically stored data used to create in any manner a record or the functional equivalent of a record as described in this schedule must be retained, along with the hardware and software necessary to access the data, for the retention period assigned to the record, unless backup copies of the data generated from electronic storage are retained in paper or on microfilm for the retention period.

Unless otherwise stated, the retention period for a record is in calendar years from the date of its creation. The retention period, again unless otherwise noted, applies only to an official record as distinct from convenience or working copies created for informational purposes. Where several copies are maintained, each local government should decide which shall be the official record and in which of its divisions or departments it will be maintained. Local governments in their records management programs should establish policies and procedures to provide for the systematic disposal of copies.

If a record described in this schedule is maintained in a bound volume of a type in which pages are not designed to be removed, the retention period, unless otherwise stated, dates from the date of last entry.

If two or more records listed in this schedule are maintained together by a local government and are not severable, the combined record must be retained for the length of time of the component with the longest retention period. A record whose minimum retention period on this schedule has not yet expired and is less than permanent may be disposed of if it has been so badly damaged by fire, water, or insect or rodent infestation as to render it unreadable, or if portions of the information in the record have been so thoroughly destroyed that remaining portions are unintelligible. If the retention period for the record is permanent on this schedule, authorization to dispose of the damaged record must be obtained from the director and librarian of the Texas State Library. The Request for Authority to Destroy Unscheduled Records (form SLR 501) should be used for this purpose.

Requests for Authority to Destroy Unscheduled Records (SLR 501), whose submission to the director and librarian of the Texas State Library is required by the Local Government Code, Section 203.045, need not be filed for records shown as exempt from the requirement.

Certain records listed in this schedule are assigned the retention period of AV (as long as administratively valuable). This retention period affords local governments the maximum amount of discretion in determining a specific retention period for the record described. Although AV may be used as a retention period on a records control schedule of a local government, it is in the best interests of any records management program that fixed retention periods be assigned for each records series. AV records tend to accumulate and go unmanaged.

Circumstances occasionally dictate that the retention period for a record listed in this schedule be longer if it is maintained in a particular type of local government or documents a particular type of activity. Consequently, if the retention period for a record on another commission schedule, issued for a particular type of local government or local government activity, is longer than that listed for the same record in this schedule, the longer retention period must be followed.

Section 1-2: General Records

1000-26 Correspondence and Internal Memoranda (includes incoming and copies of outgoing correspondence and internal correspondence and memoranda).

Retention Note: ... The retention periods that follow are for correspondence and internal memoranda that do not readily fall within other record groups.

a) **Policy and program development** - Correspondence and internal memoranda pertaining to the formulation, planning, implementation, modification, or redefinition of the policies, programs, services, or projects of a local government. RETENTION: 5 years.

Retention Note: Review before disposal; some correspondence of this type may merit permanent retention for historical reasons.

b) **Administrative** - Correspondence and internal memoranda pertaining to or arising from the routine administration or operation of the policies, programs, services, and projects of a local government. RETENTION: 2 years.

<http://www.tsl.state.tx.us/slr/recordspubs/gr.html> - 1.2