

# THE ROMAN CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF ATLANTA

## RECORDS POLICY

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### GENERAL

It is the policy of The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Atlanta (hereafter referred to as "Archdiocese") to identify, properly arrange, maintain, and safeguard records which are required for the conduct of both its spiritual and temporal affairs.

### PURPOSE

The purpose of the Records Policy is to establish guidelines with respect to the maintenance, use, retention, disposition, and preservation of appropriate Archdiocesan documents and records, and to assign responsibilities for administering the function within the organization.

### OBJECTIVES

To ensure that records required for the protection and efficient operation of the business of the Archdiocese, including those required by Canon Law, are retained. Documents must not be destroyed prematurely, misfiled, lost, or stolen because (1) numerous federal and state statutes, as well as Canon Law, require that certain categories of records and documents must be kept for specified time periods; (2) records may be required to support or define legal claims brought by or against the Archdiocese; and (3) availability of information is required in the efficient management of daily activities.

To ensure that records that outlive their usefulness are promptly discarded. Retention of documents for longer than the time period required for legal or business purposes can (1) cost the Archdiocese substantial sums for storage space, equipment, supplies and personnel; and (2) can result in serious legal ramifications.

To help promote a responsible attitude toward records on the part of employees.

### SCOPE

The records policy applies to all official departments, institutions, parishes/missions, and affiliates of the Archdiocese of Atlanta.

All records created or received in the course of official business are the property of the Archdiocese of Atlanta.

Vital records, such as Sacramental Records, and important records are those having legal, financial, administrative or historical value.

Records include written documents, printed materials, microfilm/fiche, computer records, electronic records (email, voice mail), video tapes, audio tapes, photographs, 3-D items, and all records in any other medium that have value.

The records maintained by the Archdiocese facilitate the information needs of employees and are not a public resource. The confidentiality of records and proprietary information must be protected. Certain restrictions on access to records within the Archdiocese may be imposed.

The Archdiocese acknowledges Canon Law 486, which mandates that "all diocesan and parochial documents must be protected with the greatest of care."

### ADMINISTRATORS

All Archdiocesan departments and institutions may retain records either in individual employee files, on-site departmental files and rooms, or at an off-site storage facility until the documents are destroyed pursuant to an approved records retention schedule. The costs of storage, duplication and backup of active, semi-active, and inactive records are to be borne by the department of record or office of creation.

Records which are no longer regularly used by an institution, department, or staff member who created them are considered semi-active or inactive (non-current) records and should be transferred to storage, whether an Archdiocesan storage area or off-site. When inactive records of permanent value are transferred to Archives they become the responsibility of the Archives and are no longer owned or managed by the office of record or office of creation.

Records of permanent value are not to be destroyed. Except for microfilm and backup computer tapes, permanent archival records will not be approved for off-site storage.

Departments and institutions located in the Atlanta area that have large volumes of non-current records that no longer can be retained on-site can store non-current records at the Archdiocese's off-site records facility. Please contact the Office of Archives and Records at [records@archatl.com](mailto:records@archatl.com) for more information.

Institutions, affiliates, and departments outside of Atlanta may store records either on-site, at the Archdiocesan facility, or at more conveniently located storage facilities with the approval and notification of the Chancellor of the Archdiocese, provided those records are disposed of according to the Archdiocesan retention schedule.

File management of records and the integrity of the records sent to storage remain with the individual departments or record creators. Records stored in boxes are simply an extension of the office file cabinets. The offices of records creation are responsible for purging non-relevant materials and preparing boxes for storage according to specific guidelines (see "[Guidelines for Packing Records](#)"). Written approval to destroy records must be obtained from the Chancellor (see "[Records Disposition Form](#)").

Management of permanent, inactive records deemed archival in nature transfers to the Archdiocese at large and is administered by the Office of Archives and Records, under the direction of the Chancellor. While original sacramental records in their bound volumes must remain in the parishes, those created prior to 1930 are to be transferred to the Archives.

The Office of Archives and Records directs the transfer of records to storage or to the Archives. Procedures for storing and retrieving records ensure that stored records are properly organized, labeled and identifiable for timely retrieval and destruction. Audits and surveys of records in institutions, parishes/missions, departments, and individual offices will be conducted from time to time in order to refine and update the general records retention schedule.

Any employee leaving his or her position is required to leave all company records for any successors and/or supervisors. Unauthorized destruction, donation, or other dispersal of records is not permitted.

Periodically, each department should review retention periods in the schedule to determine whether any assigned periods should be changed because of business needs, state or local legislation, or other special circumstances.

## RESPONSIBILITY

The Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Atlanta, or his delegate, interprets the policy. The Chancellor of the Archdiocese administers the policy. All Archdiocesan institutions, parishes/missions, affiliates, departments, and offices comply with and implement the policy.

The Office of Archives and Records, under the administration of the Chancellor, is responsible for surveying and appraising documents in all formats, maintaining retention guidelines, storing documents, retrieving non-current documents upon request, and disposing of those documents that have outlived their usefulness, as well as transferring permanent records to the Archives.

The Director of the Office of Archives and Records provides materials and information to support the business and pastoral activities of the Archdiocese and guidance in maintaining efficient recordkeeping.

APPROVED and EFFECTIVE This Day September 21, 2018



Deacon Dennis J. Dorner, Sr., Chancellor