

Supreme Court of Pennsylvania
Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts

Record Retention & Disposition Schedule with Guidelines

*For Courts of Common Pleas, Magisterial District Courts,
Philadelphia Municipal Court, and the Pittsburgh Municipal
Court*
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1. Record Retention Program

1.1 Background

Pennsylvania Rule of Judicial Administration No. 507 establishes three categories of offices for purposes of record retention and disposition: 1) offices scheduled by the County Records Committee (that must dispose of records in conformity with the applicable retention schedules established by the Committee)¹; 2) offices scheduled by the Supreme Court (that must dispose of records in conformity with the applicable retention schedules established by the Supreme Court)²; and 3) non-scheduled offices (that can only dispose of records upon request to the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission [PHMC] and the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts [AOPC] and with approval by the AOPC)³.

The record retention and disposition schedules set forth hereunder have been adopted by the Supreme Court. This document contains guidelines and procedures for storing and archiving records, as well as the disposal of both permanent and non-permanent records.

1.2 Definitions

Court Records - “Court records” are those papers, dockets, books, photographs, or other documentary materials in any form made or received in a Judicial District pursuant to law, statute, or rules of court, in connection with transactions of its business and the discharge of its responsibilities.

Permanent Records - “Permanent records” are those which may not be destroyed. Permanent records may, however, be disposed if they are replicated as required by the applicable schedules adopted by the Supreme Court, and provided that prior approval has been received from the AOPC. (See §2.2 Disposal Request Procedure – Permanent Records)

Non-permanent Records - “Non-permanent records” are those records which need to be retained for a specified period of time and which may be disposed without prior approval upon expiration of the retention period provided in the applicable record retention schedule,. These records must be listed in the appropriate Records Disposal Log which must be filed with the AOPC on an annual basis, as further set forth herein. (See §2.3 Disposal Request Procedure & Log – Non-Permanent Records)

Electronic Records - “Electronic records” include numeric, graphic, and text information which may be recorded on any medium capable of being read by a computer and which satisfies the definition of a record as defined in §1.2 Definitions. This includes, but is not limited to: magnetic media such as computer tapes, disks, optical disks, diskettes and other electronic storage devices and electronic filing systems containing records. These requirements apply to all electronic records systems, whether microcomputers, minicomputers or main-frame computers, in network or stand-alone configurations. (See §3. Microfilm and Electronic Archival Systems)

Records not subject to retention - “Records not subject to retention” are those records which

Pa. R.J.A. 507(a)

Pa. R.J.A. 507(b)

Pa. R.J.A. 507(c)

need not be maintained permanently or for a specified period of time, and which may be used by system and related personnel of the Unified Judicial System as unofficial in-house working papers, reference and drafts. No approval is required to dispose of these records.

Unscheduled Records – Questions concerning retention periods for records not included in this schedule, or, for records created subsequent to the adoption of this schedule, should be directed to the AOPC.

1.3 Application of the Schedules

This document sets forth schedules and guidelines for records that are being used by personnel of the Unified Judicial System and related staff that support the courts of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, but not records maintained by county officers which are set forth in the County Records Manual.

These schedules and guidelines are intended to supplant existing practices for the retention and disposition of permanent and non-permanent records and to help officials responsible for record disposition proceed consistently throughout the Unified Judicial System of the Commonwealth. It is recognized that the same type of record may be under the control of different offices or personnel in the various Judicial Districts. Nonetheless, the retention period of the record remains the same, although the office or personnel charged with the responsibility of retaining or disposing of the record may vary.

1.3.1 Conflict With Other Retention Schedules

These schedules are intended to be consistent with those set forth in the County Records Manual. However, if conflicts arise, this schedule shall govern.

1.4 Mandatory Minimum Retention Periods

The record retention periods set forth herein are minimum terms for the retention of the respective files after which the files may be disposed. While the files may be destroyed – in accordance with the conditions and procedures contained herein – they may also be retained for longer than the established retention periods. Those decisions are best left to court records management officials and their leaders. The District Record Retention Officer – as further defined in §2.1 below – will be available to provide information and guidance as necessary.

Absent good cause to the contrary, personnel should dispose of files in conformity with the minimum standards in the schedules. The retention periods have undergone considerable scrutiny, both in terms of practicality and for conformance with legally accepted standards from many sources.

1.4.1 Identification of Records

The ability to dispose of records in an efficient and responsible manner is dependent upon the reliable identification of the records in question. Therefore, officials, when storing records subject to these retention schedules, should do so in a manner that clearly sets forth the materials contained in the files under consideration. Information may include such elements as the date the record was created, the subject matter, record type (i.e., presentence reports, notes of testimony, etc.), and scheduled destruction date.

1.5 Effective Date

This Record Retention Schedule shall become effective as provided by the Supreme Court.

2. Record Disposal and Retention Procedures

No permanent or non-permanent record may be disposed unless in compliance with the procedure set forth in this Schedule.

2.1 Central Point of Contact for Record Retention

As a central point of contact, a “Record Retention Officer”, designated by the District Court Administrator with the approval of the President Judge, will coordinate the disposition of records within each Judicial District. No records may be destroyed without the approval of the Record Retention Officer.

2.2 Disposal Request Procedure: Permanent Records

Within each District, the record custodian (or person making the disposal request) must submit requests to destroy or transfer permanent records to the Record Retention Officer utilizing a Unified Judicial System Scheduled Court Records Disposal Certification Request form adopted by the AOPC pursuant to Pa. R.J.A. 507(b). The Record Retention Officer shall review the form for completeness and ascertain and certify in writing that the records to be destroyed have been replicated on a medium approved by the Supreme Court, (See §6 Retention Forms) and must forward the original form to the AOPC at such location as may be provided from time to time. A copy of each request form must be retained by the Record Retention Officer for the District. The AOPC shall review the Disposal Certification Request and shall forward same to the PHMC in the event an advisory opinion is deemed necessary, or, if not, shall approve or deny the request. The AOPC will return a copy of the request form reflecting the decision to authorize or deny the request. If the request is authorized, the specified record(s) may be destroyed or transferred to the PHMC, as specifically provided in the form. No permanent records may be destroyed or transferred unless the request form with the authorization from the AOPC has been received by the Record Retention Officer. The form must be retained permanently.

The following procedure must be followed:

1. Permanent records must not be destroyed without approval of the AOPC.
2. Requests for the destruction of permanent records will be submitted by the records custodian to the Record Retention Officer utilizing a form approved by the AOPC pursuant to Pa.R.J.A. 507(b).
3. The Record Retention Officer will review the request form to verify that the records in question are permanent records and confirm in writing that those records have been transferred to an acceptable medium (See §6 Retention Forms). Only then will the Record Retention Officer forward the request to the AOPC. Where records have been transferred to microfilm format, the standards and quality control measures set forth in the County Records Manual shall apply (See County Records Manual at page 1-MF-1).
4. Upon receipt of the Disposal Certification Request form, AOPC shall determine whether an advisory opinion should be solicited from the PHMC. If so, the AOPC shall forward a copy of the form to the PHMC for review, and shall consider the recommendation of the PHMC in deciding whether to grant or deny the request. If an advisory opinion is not deemed necessary, the AOPC shall determine whether to grant the request based upon a review of the form. Upon determination, the AOPC shall send a copy to the Record Retention Officer. When the Record Retention Officer receives the written response from the AOPC, a copy shall be sent to the record custodian of the unit that requested leave to destroy the records, with instructions for their disposal.
5. No permanent record may be destroyed without having complied with the specific

direction set forth by the AOPC at the time permission to destroy the permanent record is granted.

2.3 Disposal Request Procedure & Log: Non-permanent Records

A request to destroy non-permanent scheduled records must be submitted by the record custodian requesting permission to dispose of the record(s) to the Record Retention Officer utilizing a Unified Judicial System Disposal Log for Non-Permanent Records form adopted by the AOPC as provided in Pa.R.J.A. No. 507. The Record Retention Officer shall review the Records Disposal Log Form for completeness and shall grant written permission to dispose of such non-permanent records upon ascertaining that the applicable retention period as set forth in the schedule has been met. Written approval from the AOPC is not necessary before destroying non-permanent records as identified in the schedule. A log of individual disposition actions involving non-permanent records must be maintained. Copies of the Records Disposal Log Form shall be submitted on an annual basis to the AOPC. (See [§4.5 Form Retention](#))

The following procedure must be followed:

1. The record custodian seeking permission to dispose of the record shall complete a Record Disposal Log Form for records designated for destruction pursuant to the appropriate schedule, and shall submit the form to the Record Retention Officer for review and approval. (See [§6. Retention Forms](#) at the end of this document)
2. The Record Retention Officer will indicate approval or disapproval in the provided place(s), and return a copy to the individual submitting the destruction request. The original Records Disposal Log Form will be retained by the Record Retention Officer.
3. If approved, the records listed on the log form may then be destroyed.
4. No later than January 31st of every year, the Record Retention Officer will forward to the AOPC a copy of the log forms listing the records that have been disposed during the previous year.

2.4 Destruction Hold Procedures

2.4.1 Matters In Litigation

Notwithstanding the disposition schedules set forth herein, no record which is otherwise eligible for disposition shall be destroyed if the District becomes aware that the record may be needed for pending litigation. District Court Administrators or their designees, upon having the knowledge or belief of actual or impending litigation requiring the preservation of certain records, shall immediately so notify in writing the Record Retention Officer, and appropriate deputies or other staff, to ensure the preservation of the subject records, as well as suspending any destruction or transfer activities. Such records shall be retained until all related proceedings have been concluded or until such time as, in the written opinion of counsel for the District or the AOPC, the threat of litigation has been removed. (See also [§4.9 Litigation: Judicial Districts and Employees](#))

2.4.2 Matters Pending Audit

Records subject to audit must be retained for the periods listed in the schedule and must be audited and all findings resolved before such records may be destroyed. Applicable Federal and State statutes and administrative regulations may necessitate retaining records for a longer period of time than indicated in the schedule. Information on specific program regulations should be obtained from the appropriate administering/funding/licensing agency.

2.5 Methods of Record Destruction

2.5.1 Confidential Records

Where confidential information may be contained in the records, shredding is the preferred method of destruction. Otherwise, records may be incinerated under the direct supervision of the District.

2.5.2 Non-Confidential Records

Records that do not contain confidential information may be shredded, incinerated, or otherwise disposed according to general practice.

Records stored at vendor sites designated for record storage, maintenance, and disposition may be destroyed under the supervision of the vendor with written confirmation from the vendor that the records have been disposed.

2.6 Liability of Record Retention Officer and System and Related Personnel.

Record retention officers and/or system and related personnel involved in record retention and disposal duties shall be immune from all civil liability that may be related to records management practices provided that the disposition of records is accomplished in accordance with the terms of the within schedule, and any amendment thereto.⁴

2.7 Disposal Request Procedure: Damaged Records

Records are to be maintained at such appropriate locations as to minimize their potential loss or damage. It is crucial that Districts periodically undertake risk assessments of the conditions under which records are stored, and take appropriate steps to mitigate the threat of damage. Extensive information on Disaster Planning and Vital Records protection is provided by the Pennsylvania Historical Commission on its website, at <http://www.phmc.state.pa.us> (see Records Management, State Government Services, Disaster Planning & Vital Records; and Local Government/Judicial System Services, Disaster Planning & Vital Records Management). All Record Retention Officers are encouraged to take advantage of the information provided, which includes generic templates for the establishment of Disaster Response and Recovery Plans.

Despite periodic risk assessments, some records may be damaged before the expiration of their retention period by unforeseeable natural disasters such as floods, earthquakes, fires, or other causes. When records are damaged, an assessment must be immediately conducted to determine the potential for their recovery. Districts should attempt to salvage and preserve all damaged records whenever possible. Only after an appropriate determination has been made that the damaged records cannot be salvaged or restored should their disposal be requested. Of course, records that are beyond their mandatory minimum retention period and have no administrative, legal or historical value may be destroyed without approval from the AOPC, provided, however, that the protocol established in Section 2.3 is followed.

The request to dispose of damaged records must be made by the District Court Administrator, after consultation with the official responsible for the records and the Record Retention Officer and at the conclusion of the evaluation process necessary to determine the salvageability of the damaged records. The District Court Administrator must personally view all records whose disposal is

⁴Patterned after the County Records Act, which provides that “No County officer shall be held liable on his official bond or in any way, either civil or criminal, because of the disposition of records, provided he disposes of the records in accordance with the schedules adopted by the committee.” Act No. 407, August 14, 1963, as amended. See 16 P.S. § 13005

sought, and must attach photographs and other appropriate description of the damage and justification for the request to dispose of the records.

The District must consider the following factors in determining that the records cannot be salvaged and must be destroyed: whether the records are permanent or non-permanent; whether the records are subject to audit, and if so, whether an audit has been completed; whether the records can be salvaged by ordinary methods such as air drying; whether the records may be salvaged by extraordinary means such as retaining an expert in record reconstruction; whether the damaged records pose a health risk in their continued storage; whether any movement of the damaged records can be safely made; whether the cost of restoring the record exceeds its value, administrative, historical, or otherwise.

In the event the damaged records whose destruction is being sought are subject to an audit, and copies of the damaged records are not available, the official responsible for the records shall notify the auditing entity, as soon as practicable, that the specified records were damaged, describe the nature of the damage, and represent that on a date certain a Unified Judicial System Record Disposal Certification Request - Damaged Records form will be submitted to the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts seeking permission to destroy the damaged records unless the auditing entity requests, before the submission date, a reasonable delay in seeking destruction of the damaged records. Information concerning the notice provided (date, name of auditing entity and address) as well as responses, if any, will be entered on the Unified Judicial System Record Disposal Certification Request - Damaged Records form. Of course, no notification need be made if a copy of the records exists, if the damaged records were audited, or are not subject to an audit.

A Unified Judicial System Record Disposal Certification Request - Damaged Records form must be submitted by the District Court Administrator to the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts, at such location as may be provided from time to time. In order to expedite the approval process where public health and safety concerns are present, the Record Disposal Certification Request form should be submitted by electronic mail or fax. The AOPC will return a copy of the request form reflecting the decision to authorize or deny the request. If the request is authorized, the specified damaged record(s) may be destroyed

The following procedure must be followed to seek permission to dispose of Damaged Records:

1. The official responsible for maintaining the records must notify the Record Retention Officer and District Court Administrator immediately upon ascertaining that records which are subject to a Record Retention Schedule have been damaged.
2. The Record Retention Officer will immediately conduct a personal inspection of the damaged records. In the event the Record Retention Officer is of the opinion that the damaged records may not be salvageable, the Record Retention Officer must inform the District Court Administrator.
3. The District Court Administrator will direct the Record Retention Officer and official responsible for the records to conduct an appropriate evaluation of the options available to restore the damaged records and will request the preparation of a comprehensive report detailing the available options, if any. The Report should include photographs or other representations of the current condition of the damaged records.
4. If the Report issued by the Record Retention Officer and official responsible for the records reveals that the damaged records cannot be safely salvaged, the District Court Administrator shall personally review the damaged records and, if he/she is in agreement with the Report, shall complete a Unified Judicial System Record Disposal Certification Request - Damaged Records form and forward it to the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts.
5. The damaged records must be maintained until such time as the District Court

Administrator has received a written response from the AOPC approving the disposal of the damaged records.

3. Microfilm and Electronic Archival Systems

The last several years have seen the introduction of numerous technologies with indications that they may have the potential to change traditional archiving practices. Magnetic tape, optical disk and CD Rom have caused the use of microfilm as the sole method of non-paper archiving to be questioned by some. However, officials are cautioned that the decision to utilize archiving media other than microfilm requires implementation of policies and practices to ensure that the integrity of the data is maintained and that the ability to extract the data in a human readable format is present for the entire retention period. Therefore, all records stored in any electronic manner, including but not limited to Magnetic Tape, Optical Disk or CD Rom, must be refreshed or migrated at intervals not exceeding eight years. Additionally, under no circumstances are computer hard drives or disks running on direct access storage devices to be used for archiving purposes as these devices are subject to periodic failure.

When considering the preservation of documents having a retention period in excess of twenty-five years, it is recommended that the conservative microfilm method be utilized. The microfilming standards and quality control guidelines contained in the County Records Manual are adopted herein. That manual also contains guidelines concerning the retention and disposition of records onto optical imaging and storage systems. These also are hereby adopted, with the exception of §8(d)(iii) and §8(d)(iv).

Paper documents with less than a twenty-five year retention period and all documents originating electronically such as indices and dockets may be archived using media other than microfilm provided the refresh/migrate safeguards noted above are followed. Used within the context of this Schedule, the following definitions shall apply:

Refresh - To move data/images from one medium to the same medium (i.e., tape to tape). This requires an analysis of the medium and the associated software and hardware to determine its viability for the next eight years.

Migrate - To move data/images from one medium to a new medium (i.e., tape to CD Rom) one software program to a current version or another program and/or from one hardware platform to a new hardware platform.

Retention periods that govern files in paper form also govern records in electronic form. (See [§1.2 Definitions, Electronic Records](#))

4. Retention and Disposition of Miscellaneous Records

4.1 Annual Reports

Annual reports of the Judicial Districts are considered permanently valuable for historical and research purposes, and should be retained permanently

4.2 Electronic Case Indices

Electronic computer indices listing cases disposed, generally indexed by year that show party/defendant name, case number, and disposition are to be retained permanently and refreshed or migrated consistent with the requirements set forth in §3. *Microfilm and Electronic Archival Systems*. These may include indices maintained by Common Pleas Courts, Magisterial District Courts, Pittsburgh Municipal Court, Philadelphia Municipal Court, and the Adult Probation, Juvenile Probation, and Domestic Relations offices. Paper copies may be destroyed through the most convenient means upon being replaced.

4.3 Notes of Testimony

Retention periods for notes of testimony are generally determined by: whether they have been transcribed; whether and with whom they have been filed; and whether they pertain to testimony in juvenile court proceedings.

4.3.1 Raw Notes of Testimony

Raw notes of testimony are those on paper tapes and/or other media in the original state in which they existed when taken at the time of testimony. Consistent with Pa. R.J.A. 5000.13(b) once transcribed, raw stenographic notes may be destroyed 60 days after filing. Raw notes that have not been transcribed may be destroyed seven years from the date of testimony.

4.3.2 Transcribed Notes of Testimony – Filed

Transcribed notes of testimony filed with the Prothonotary, Clerk of the Orphans' Court, and Clerks of Court are subject to the retention periods set forth in the County Records Manual under those offices, and need not be retained by the Judicial District, court reporter or court.

4.3.2.1 Juvenile Matters

Transcribed notes of testimony filed in juvenile matters shall be retained until the subject reaches the age of 25, or, 10 years after the last action in the case, whichever is later. (See §5.7 *Juvenile Delinquency and Dependency Records*). Raw notes that have not been transcribed may be destroyed seven years from the date of testimony.

4.3.3 Transcribed Notes of Testimony – Not Filed

Transcribed notes of testimony not filed with the Prothonotary, Clerk of the Orphans' Court, and Clerks of Court are subject to the retention periods set forth in the County Records Manual under those offices, and must be retained by the Judicial District for the retention periods set forth in the County Records Manual.

4.3.4 Method: Record Retention Disposal Log

Disposal of raw notes shall be accomplished as provided in §2.3 *Disposal Request Procedure & Log: Non-permanent Records*. When completing Records Disposal Log Forms, the untranscribed raw notes need not be listed on the Records Disposal Log by caption and case number, but may be

listed merely by date of hearing.

4.3.5 Audio, Digital and Video Recordings

Except as otherwise provided in this schedule, audio, digital, and video recordings made in matters of record have the same retention periods as do their paper equivalents. (See §4.3.1 Raw Notes of Testimony, §5.7 Juvenile [Delinquency and Dependency Records], §5.3 Domestic Relations Records, and §5.2 Magisterial District Courts, etc.)

4.3.5.1 Mental Health Proceedings

Audio, digital, and video recordings made in mental health proceedings should be retained for one year from the date of the hearing at which they were made.

4.4 Personal Records of the Judiciary

The judiciary should dispose of personal files not integrally related to court operations. The judiciary is encouraged to minimize, to the greatest extent possible, the numbers and types of files to be retained. Moreover, certain files often included among judicial personal records are already retained elsewhere, and it is neither necessary, nor advisable, to retain these types of files. They include the following:

Notes of Testimony – which are subject to retention schedules applicable to official Court Reporters, Prothonotaries and Clerks of Court and are available from those entities. **Pre-Sentence Reports** – which are subject to retention schedules applicable to the Probation Department and are available from that agency.

Mental Health Evaluation Reports – which are subject to retention schedules applicable to the Probation Department are available from that agency.

Pleadings – which are subject to retention schedules applicable to the Clerks of Court or Prothonotary and are available from those agencies.

4.4.1 Retention Period.

Records submitted for storage by the judiciary will be retained for as long as the records are of administrative value and as otherwise specified by the individual judge, provided however, that no record will be retained for any longer than two years from the conclusion of the judge's term of office.

4.5 Form Retention

All retention forms shall be retained permanently

4.6 Records Disposed Pursuant to Pa. R.J.A. No. 1901

Records of Court of Common Pleas cases filed with Clerks of Court or Prothonotary which are disposed pursuant to Pa. R.J.A. No. 1901 and local rules enacted thereunder, are subject to the retention periods set forth in the County Records Manual under §4.B.X.(b)3. (Relating to Clerks of Court), and §3.B.VII.(b)11. (Relating to Prothonotaries), and shall be disposed consistent with the provisions of the County Records Manual. Records of all other cases may be disposed 60 days after the entry of the order to terminate such matters.

4.7 Trial/Hearing Lists

Trial/Hearing Lists are used universally across all courts of the Commonwealth. Such documents, used by court personnel for the daily conduct of courtroom activities, include information such as parties' names, addresses, charges, case numbers, attorney information, etc.

Trial/Hearing Lists should be retained for as long as they are of administrative value, but are not to be destroyed if they might be referenced during litigation concerning speedy trial issues.

4.8 Expungement of Records

Court orders for the expungement of records shall supercede the conditions of this schedule.

4.9 Litigation: Judicial Districts and Employees

Records relating to litigation involving the District and/or District employees must be maintained and available for the pendency of the litigation. They should be retained for a minimum of six years following the expiration of the appeal period.

5. Schedules

The tables below and on the following pages will provide listings of the various types of affected records, grouped into major categories, or series: 1) Adoptions; 2) Magisterial District Courts, Pittsburgh Municipal Court, Philadelphia Municipal Court; 3) Domestic Relations; 4) Facilities; 5) Financial; 6) Jury Commissioner; 7) Juvenile – Delinquency and Dependency; 8) Payroll; 9) Personnel; 10) President and Administrative Judges and Court Administrators; 11) Pretrial Services; 12) Probation (Adult); 13) Protection from Abuse; and 14) Purchasing.

5.1 Adoptions Records

Category	Description	Retention Period
ADOPTIONS		
Adoption Dockets, Indices, & Papers	Record of all proceedings in adoptions. Indices of the adoption dockets. Shows name of the person adopted, name of the adopting parents, date of adoption, case number, and volume and page where recorded in the adoption docket. Case files include petitions, paternity claims, consents, reports, notices, hearings, decrees, exhibits, notes of testimony, certifications of adoption, voluntary relinquishments, involuntary terminations, information on child and natural parents, investigators' reports on the adoptees, doctors' reports, recommendations from pastor, and all other records relating to adoptions.	Retain permanently for administrative and legal purposes.

5.2 Magisterial District Courts, Pittsburgh Municipal Court, Philadelphia Municipal Court Records

Category	Time Measured From:	Mandatory Retention Period
TRAFFIC CITATIONS		
Traffic Citations - Disposed	From final disposition – payment of all monies due, satisfactory completion of all sentences imposed, and/or entry of an order terminating further court activity, except records for cases disposed under Pa. R.J.A. No. 1901. (See §4.6 Records Disposed Pursuant to Pa. R.J.A. No. 1901)	Retain 3 years.
CIVIL RECORDS		
Civil Original Papers	Entry of Judgments, except records for cases disposed under Pa. R.J.A. No. 1901. (See §4.6 Records Disposed Pursuant to Pa. R.J.A. No. 1901)	Retain 7 years.
	Discharge, Verdict, or Other Disposition Without Judgment, except records for cases disposed under Pa. R.J.A. No. 1901. (See §4.6 Records Disposed Pursuant to Pa. R.J.A. No. 1901)	Retain 3 years.
Civil Dockets	From final disposition in Magisterial District Court.	Retain 7 years.
Notes of Testimony (Including Audio, Digital, and Video Recordings)	Expiration of appeal period.	Retain 1 year.
CRIMINAL RECORDS		
Criminal Dockets & Indices	From final disposition – payment of all monies due, satisfactory completion of all sentences imposed, and/or entry of an order terminating further court activity.	Retain 7 years.
Original Papers in Misdemeanor and Felony Cases	From final disposition – payment of all monies due, satisfactory completion of all sentences imposed, and/or entry of an order terminating further court activity except records for cases disposed under Pa. R.J.A. No. 1901. (See §4.6 Records Disposed Pursuant to Pa. R.J.A. No. 1901)	Retain 3 years.
Non-Traffic Citations, & Summary Criminal Complaints	From final disposition – payment of all monies due, satisfactory completion of all sentences imposed, and/or entry of an order terminating further court activity, except records for cases disposed under Pa. R.J.A. No. 1901. (See §4.6 Records Disposed Pursuant to Pa. R.J.A. No. 1901)	Retain 3 years.
Magisterial District Courts/Pittsburgh Municipal/Philadelphia Municipal Courts General Correspondence Records Not Relating to Official Action Taken	Filing in Magisterial District Courts/Pittsburgh Municipal Court/Philadelphia Municipal Court.	Retain 1 year.
FINANCIAL RECORDS		
Financial Incoming Records: Journals, Ledgers, Receipts, Bank Statements, etc.	Close of the year for which the records apply.	Retain 7 years.
MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS		
Miscellaneous Matters Where Official Action Taken (Including Search Warrants and Affidavits)	Filing in Magisterial District Courts/Pittsburgh Municipal Court/Philadelphia Municipal Court.	Retain 3 years, except for unexecuted search warrants and affidavits which shall be destroyed pursuant to Pa.R.Crim.P. 212(B).

5.3 Domestic Relations Records

Category	Description	Retention Period
DOMESTIC RELATIONS		
Divorce and Annulment Papers	Complaint; Proof/Affidavit/Acknowledgment of Service of complaint/Answers/Counter Claim; Final Decree; Property, Custody, Alimony, and Support Orders; Agreements; and Notice of Election to Retake Prior Name.	Retain permanently for administrative and legal purposes.
	All other papers in Divorce or Annulment actions (e.g. Masters' Reports, Notes of Testimony, Inventories and Appraisements, Income and Expense Statements, Correspondence, Proposed/Suggested Schedules of Distribution, Notices of Counseling, Hearing Notices, and other Certificates of service Special Relief Papers)	Retain for 5 years after Final Decree in Divorce or Annulment.
Domestic Relations Files	Complaint for Support, Support Orders, Acknowledgments of Paternity and Genetic test results, Petitions for Modification, Transcripts of Court Proceedings, Court Opinions, and Appeals to Superior Court, Custody records in matters not involving divorce.	Retain permanently, except for custody records in matters not involving divorce. If not part of a divorce action, retain 20 years after filing of order granting custody.
	Orders for earnings and health insurance information, Appearance Orders, Bench Warrant Orders, Contempt Orders, and Income Withholding Orders.	Retain 4 years unless otherwise provided by the rules and regulations promulgated by the appropriate administering/ funding/licensing agency (Bureau of Child Support Enforcement, Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare and Bureau of Child Support Enforcement, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services).
Dockets and Indices	Dockets and indices pertaining to papers filed in Domestic Relations cases, including Divorce and Annulment.	Retain permanently.

5.4 Facilities Documents

Category	Description	Retention Period
FACILITIES		
Space Allocation & Use Records	Records used to manage office space & facilities in the courthouse and government complex. Shows department space usage and future needs.	Retain 5 years.
Facility Maintenance - Routine	Records of maintenance and other work performed on major equipment or systems. Usually shows date, type of repair, cost and workers.	Retain 5 years.
Leases	Signed original leases and supporting work papers.	Retain general written leases 6 years after termination or the termination of any substitute or renewal thereof.
Construction Contracts	Signed original contracts or agreements and supporting work papers	Retain construction contracts 12 years after termination or the termination of any substitute or renewal thereof.
Parking Permit/Assignments	Applications, waiting lists, and assignments for parking spaces.	Retain 6 months after permit expires.
Incident Investigation Records	Records documenting incidents and investigations by District staff, including but not limited to injury, theft, or breach of District policies relating thereto.	Retain 5 years after investigation is closed or concluded.

5.5 Financial Records

Category	Description	Retention Period
FINANCIAL		
Accounts Payable Files	Bills including certain Court Appointed Lawyers' bills and Court Reporter, Interpreter, and jury expenses, check vouchers, invoices, purchase orders & requisitions, receiving reports, and other records of payment for goods & services.	Retain 7 years.
Accounts Payable Ledgers	Usually indicates date, department or cost center, invoice & check number, vendor's name, amount and account totals.	Retain 7 years.
Accounts Receivable Files & Ledgers	Records document monies owed and paid to the court, showing date, department or fund, amount received and account total.	Retain 7 years.
Receipts	Records that document payments received by the court from parties, fees, or other monies assessed for fees or services.	Retain 3 years.
Cash Register Accounting	Records used to reconcile transactions with cash on hand at the end of each day.	Retain 3 years.
Canceled checks	Checks that have been paid by the bank and returned to the depositor as evidence that the payee has received the funds.	Retain 7 years.
Deposit Slips	Consists of copies of slips listing and accompanying bank deposits showing date, account, clerk numbers, and amounts.	Retain 3 years.
Controller Reports	Includes a summary of the financial condition of the District, with an account of all receipts, expenditures, disbursements, revenues, assets, and liabilities.	Retain Permanently.
Grant Administration Records	Usually include application, purpose, personnel, and budget, financial reports, correspondence and other related papers.	Comply with Funding Agency.
Budget Preparation Files	Records created and used during budget development and request including cost statements, estimates, justifications, narratives, spread sheets, and relevant background materials.	Retain FY plus 5 years or as otherwise provided by funding source.
Budget Request	Copy of the final budget request created by the court along with supporting materials that document communications between the District and the funding source, and may include documents relating to negotiations and review after the budget request.	Retain FY plus 3 years or as otherwise provided by funding source.

5.6 Jury Commissioner Records

Category	Description	Retention Period
Calendars of Drawings	Published listing of dates for court trials and hearings. Indicates court date, drawing date, and mailing date.	Retain until end of court term/session.
JURY LISTS		
Jury Records: Master Lists of Prospective Jurors	List of county residents, in manual or electronic form, who may be eligible to serve as jurors. Includes name, street address, city and zip code. May be drawn from Voter Registration, Department of Motor Vehicles, or other source lists.	Retain until end of court term/session. For courts with continuous trial terms, retain 2 years after creation of list.
Jury Selection Lists	Result of regular drawings for each court term/session. The number of names is designated by the president judge and drawn at random from the master list of prospective jurors. Includes individual's name and address, and sometimes occupation.	Retain 5 years after end of court term/session. For courts with continuous trial terms, retain 6 years after creation of list.
Lists of Qualified Jurors	Names drawn from the jury selection list of all those individuals determined eligible for jury duty.	Retain 5 years after end of court term/session. For courts with continuous trial terms, retain 5 years after mailing.
Exempt Jurors List	List of individuals excused from jury duty, with reason for exemption.	Retain as long as of administrative value.
Juror Qualification Forms	[As provided in 42 Pa. C.S. §4521(d)] Returned questionnaires of prospective jurors used to evaluate their qualifications to serve on a jury. May include information on name, age, residence, employer, citizenship, literacy, disability, criminal record, prior service, occupation, and undue hardship. Signed by respondent.	Retain until completion of jurors' service unless otherwise ordered by the trial judge.
Juror Information Questionnaires	(As provided in Pa.R.Crim.P. 632) Questionnaires used during <i>voir dire</i> process.	Retain until completion of jurors' service unless otherwise ordered by the trial judge, during which time it shall be sealed.
Service Review Forms (Exit Questionnaires)	Optional evaluation form filled out by jurors on completion of jury duty and designed to solicit opinions concerning various aspects of jury duty.	Retain as long as of administrative value.
MINUTES		
Minutes of the Jury Selection Commission	Information may include date and place of meetings; names of members who attended; name, address and occupation of each juror selected; type of jury for which each juror was drawn; type of court and term of service; and signature of jury commissioners' clerk.	Retain 7 years; then contact State Archives to arrange transfer of selected books. Those records not selected may be destroyed..

5.7 Juvenile Delinquency and Dependency Records

Category	Description	Retention Period
JUVENILE		
Juvenile Dependency Case Dockets Books & Indices, and Juvenile Delinquency and Dependency Papers/Files, Probation Files	<p>A. All dockets, books, and indices pertaining to papers filed in juvenile delinquency and dependency cases.</p> <p>B. Papers filed in juvenile delinquency and dependency matters including dependent petitions, orders, counsel appointments, mental health evaluations background information, drug & alcohol test results, case supervision records, and transcribed testimony.</p> <p>C. All other delinquency and dependency papers retained by the District.</p>	Retain permanently - the Docket, plus original court orders pertaining to adjudication, disposition and consent decrees. All other records - retain until age 25 or 10 years after last action on the case whichever is later. No distinction between dependent cases and delinquent cases.

5.8 Payroll Records

Category	Description	Retention Period
PAYROLL		
Daily Time Sheets	Employee's name date and hours worked each day.	Retain 3 years.
Employee Payroll Adjustment Records	Usually includes employee's name and social security number and amounts withheld for Federal and State taxes, insurance, bonds and any other deductions.	Retain 4 years.
Individual Employee's Earning Record - Terminated	Often kept in card form, salary history includes employee's name and address, social security number, department, position, date of birth, date employed, and salary/earnings history totals, posted for the duration of county employment. Usually transferred to Individual Pension Files upon termination of employment.	Employees Who Separate with Post-termination Benefits - Retain 3 years after all benefits have been paid. Records may be transferred to County Pension Board.
		Employees Who Separate without Post-termination Benefits - Retain 5 years after termination of employment.
Payroll Deduction Authorizations	Completed by employee, the record usually indicates employee's name and address, department, social security number, deductions authorized and employee's signature [W-4].	Retain 4 years after cancelled or superceded; or employment is terminated.
Payroll Earnings and Deductions Registers	Generally includes employee's name, social security number, gross earnings, taxes withheld, deductions, net earnings, check number and date of payment.	Pay period reports - Retain 4 years.
		Year-to-date annual summary - If payroll data is posted to individual employee's earning record, retain 7 years; otherwise retain 100 years.

5.9 Personnel Documents

Category	Description	Retention Period
PERSONNEL		
Applications for Employment - Not Hired	Includes applications, resumes, pre-employment records.	Retain 2 years.
Employee Card Files or Record Books	Summary may include employee's name, address, date of birth, social security number, job and salary history, benefit and termination data.	Retain permanently for administrative and historical purposes.
Individual Employee's Personnel Records	File may include, employee ID card, application, references, photo ID records, resume, EAR, and records pertaining to health and life insurance, performance evaluations, commendations, training, change forms, retirement, letters of resignation, vacation and sick leave, salary, separation correspondence.	Vested employees - Retain 3 years after all benefits have been paid. Non-vested employees - Retain 5 years after termination.
Employee Medical Records	May include pre-employment and other medical records showing health or physical condition of employee during their tenure.	Same as Employee's Personnel Records. For those exposed to toxic substances or harmful agents in the workplace, retain at least 30 years after termination & comply with OSHA standards.
Job Descriptions & Announcements	Narrative descriptions of job duties & responsibilities.	Descriptions: Retain current plus one prior revision. Announcements: 2 years after position is filled.
Labor Negotiation files	Correspondence, reports, other records used to negotiate contracts with labor unions representing employees.	Retain 5 years after contract expiration, or any renewal or extension thereof.
Labor Contracts and Memoranda of Understanding	Contract and other records include date, terms, & appropriate signatures.	Retain 20 years after contract or agreement expiration or any renewal or extension thereof.
Equal Employment Opportunity Records	Includes affirmative action report (EEO-4) showing total number of positions by employment classification and related records, including discrimination complaint files.	Retain EEO-4 and related records 3 years. Retain case files 4 years after resolution of the case.
Union Grievances	Employee allegations of contract violations. Usually includes date, parties, and grievance.	Retain 3 years after final resolution.
Merit System Examination Records & Answer Sheets	Record may include examinee's ID, name address, title & signature, test date & results, and score. Answer sheet: examinee's ID#, score, test date and title.	Retain 5 years.
Training (Not Individual)	Records related to specific courses.	Retain 3 years after course is completed.
Immigration Records	INS Form I-9: Employment Eligibility Verification Forms.	Retain 3 years after date of hiring or 1 year after termination, whichever is later.

5.10 President & Administrative Judges & Court Administrators

Category	Description	Retention Period
Statistical and Annual Reports	Reports describing the performance of various court programs. May include cases filed, cases disposed, pending caseload, etc..	Retain permanently for administrative, legal, and historical purposes.
Administrative Orders and Regulations	Directives issued to augment local Rules and Policies.	Retain permanently.
Judicial Assignment Schedule	Directives setting forth courtroom and program assignments of judges.	Retain weekly schedules for 2 years. Retain Semi-annual and annual schedules for 10 years.
Judicial Seniority Lists	Document filed with the AOPC setting forth the names of judges according to court, birth date, and commencement of term.	Retain permanently for administrative, legal, and historical purposes.
General Administrative Documents	Reports and general correspondence relating to program activity, and policy implementation or interpretation.	Retain 2 years after expiration of term of office.
Memoranda of Understanding and Cooperative Agreements	Written agreements between governmental entities.	Retain permanently.

5.11 Pretrial Services Records

Category	Description	Retention Period
PRETRIAL SERVICES RECORDS		
Pretrial Master Files, Electronic Monitoring Files, and Enforcement Records: Client-Based Files	<p>Pretrial service files that include client’s name, photo ID number, state ID number, address verification, case number, date, type of case, court history, arrest report, risk/needs assessment, enrollment form, home monitoring rules and regulations, home investigative report, progress reports, violation notes, officers’ notes, judicial and related correspondence.</p> <p>May also include bail guidelines, financial eligibility interviews, bail review/reduction petitions, confidential mental health assessments, conditional release records, photographs, copies of bench warrants, and probation detainers.</p> <p>Some files may include physical data about the defendant, including date of entry and expiration date of the monitor device, type of completion, charge code, reports of the defendants’ movements, and related documents. May also include violation and progress reports to judges, system printouts with specific dates and times of curfew violations, judges’ orders, employment information, and overall performance of the defendant while on EM..</p> <p>Also refers to Progress and Incident Reports regarding apprehensions, attempted apprehensions, and contacts with others in the home.</p>	Retain for 3 years from the final conclusion of the case based on the defendant’s latest arrest.
Pretrial Master Files, Electronic Monitoring Files, and Enforcement Records: Administrative Files	Additionally, Pretrial Investigative files may include Shift Incident Logs, Street Logs, CJC Bench Warrant Surrender Hearing logs, Shift Assignment sheets, and vehicle assignment.	Retain for 3 years from the final conclusion of the case based on the defendant’s latest arrest.

5.12 Probation (Adult) Files

Category	Description	Retention Period
ADULT PROBATION/PAROLE MASTER FILES		
Probation/Parole Master Files	Consists of records pertaining to the Office of Probation and Parole, including the following: petitions to release to probation/parole, commitment papers, court orders, pre-sentence investigation reports, background sheets with photo ID, hearing summaries, Prothonotary status reports, correspondence with treatment facilities, community service status, home monitoring and case supervision records, medical records, requests to terminate, interstate and intrastate transfers and related documents.	Retain for a minimum of one year after case is closed, then for as long as of administrative or legal value.
CASE FILE INDEX		
Main Index to the master files.	This index is kept in various forms. May contain probation/parolee's name, date of release to probation/parole and termination date.	Retain as long as of administrative or legal value.

5.13 Protection from Abuse

Category	Description	Retention Period
PROTECTION FROM ABUSE		
Protection from Abuse Records		Retain 18 months after termination of protection order. ⁵

⁵ Statutory changes have necessitated the extension of the Protection from Abuse record retention period from 1 year – as indicated County Records Manual – to the 18 months indicated above.

5.14 Purchasing Records

Category	Description	Retention Period
PURCHASING		
Purchase Order Files	Copy of purchase order usually shows number, name and address of vendor, department and account, date, quantity, unit price and total cost. File may also include invoices, bills of lading and purchase requisitions.	Retain 7 years.
Purchasing Files	Relates to acquisition of services, goods, and equipment. File may include specifications, bids, quotes, contracts, and other related papers (e.g. Requests for Proposals, Requests for Information).	Retain 6 years.
Supply Requisitions	Usually indicates date, department requesting supplies, items needed, total cost and account number.	Retain 2 years.

6. Retention Forms

Unified Judicial System Scheduled Court Records Disposal Certification Request forms and Unified Judicial System Disposal Log for Non-Permanent Records forms are available in electronic and hard copy formats from the AOPC, and may be amended from time to time. Electronic versions will be available from the AOPC through <http://www.pacourts.us/forms/for-the-judiciary/>, and through the website for the Pennsylvania Association of Court Management at <http://pacm.org>. Copies of the forms are appended to this schedule.

COUNTY RECORDS DISPOSAL CERTIFICATION REQUEST

[Pursuant to PA RJA 507(a)]

COUNTY	JUDICIAL DISTRICT	OFFICE OF ORIGIN
PERSON MAKING DISPOSAL REQUEST (RECORD CUSTODIAN)		APPROVAL REQUESTED FOR <input type="checkbox"/> Records Destruction <input type="checkbox"/> Records Transfer to PHMC
ADDRESS		
RECORD TITLE AND INCLUSIVE DATES (<i>one series per form</i>)		
DESCRIPTION OF RECORD (<i>include type of information contained and purpose of record</i>)		
RETENTION PERIOD IN SCHEDULE	PAGE AND SECTION IN SCHEDULE	HAVE ALL AUDIT REQUIREMENTS BEEN MET? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable
QUANTITY		
_____ TOTAL CUBIC FEET		
No of cartons _____	Length _____	Width _____
No of volumes _____	Length _____	Width _____
No of the drawers _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Legal <input type="checkbox"/> Letter <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	Length _____ OF AVERAGE CARTON
HAVE RECORDS BEEN MICROFILMED? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Size: <input type="checkbox"/> 16mm <input type="checkbox"/> 35mm <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ Form: <input type="checkbox"/> Roll <input type="checkbox"/> Cartridge <input type="checkbox"/> Cassette <input type="checkbox"/> Fiche <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____		ARCHIVAL MEDIUM UTILIZED
LOCATION OF SECURITY COPY		
FOR USE BY RECORD CUSTODIAN		
_____ hereby requests that the Record Retention Officer seek approval from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission for permission to dispose of records identified above.		
_____ <i>Date</i>	_____ <i>Signature</i>	_____ <i>Phone Number</i>
FOR USE BY DISTRICT RECORDS RETENTION OFFICER		
PHMC authorization to dispose of or transfer the above-identified records is requested. If destruction of the records is requested, I certify that the records have been reproduced on an archival medium approved by the County Records Committee.		
_____ <i>Date</i>	_____ <i>Signature of Records Custodian</i>	_____ <i>Judicial District</i>
FOR PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL AND MUSEUM COMMISSION		
Approval is given for:	<input type="checkbox"/> Destruction <input type="checkbox"/> Destruction as Amended <input type="checkbox"/> Transfer to PHMC	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Disapproved <input type="checkbox"/> Retain Pending Further Instructions	
Comments/Amendments:	_____	
_____ <i>Date</i>	_____ <i>Signature</i>	_____ <i>Title</i>

**Original must be sent to the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission,
 Division of Archival and Records Management Services, P.O. Box 1026, Harrisburg, PA 17108-1026
 and a copy sent to the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts,
 1515 Market Street, Suite 1414, Philadelphia, PA 19102.
 Keep a copy for your records.**

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