

17.100 POLICE RECORDS: STORAGE AND MAINTENANCE, AND INITIATING NEW RECORDS AND FORMS

Reference:

Ohio Revised Code Section 149.43, Availability of Public Records for Inspection and Copying
City of Cincinnati Intranet, [Record Retention Schedule](#)

Definitions:

A public record is a record held by a public office. A record is any item:

- Stored on a fixed medium, regardless of physical form or characteristic (e.g., electronic records, paper, computer, film, etc.)
- Created, received, or sent under the jurisdiction of a public office
- Documents the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations, or other activities of the office.

Purpose:

Provide for initiating, safekeeping, and storage of Police Department records and the systematic disposal of those records.

Policy:

The Police Department will comply with all laws governing record retention, storage, and disposal. All bureaus, sections, districts, and units will maintain the records specified in the Records Retention Schedule for the minimum and maximum periods indicated.

Information:

The Police Department is entrusted, by the public, with the care, custody, and control of records generated by its activities. The Police Department is not the sole proprietor of the records it generates. The right of ownership resides with the public.

All of the records addressed in the Records Retention Schedule have been reviewed and the retention/destruction schedule for original records has been approved by the City of Cincinnati Records Commission, the Ohio Historical Society, and the State of Ohio Auditor's Office.

The Records Retention Schedule will be maintained on the Department Intranet.

Procedure:

A. Records Retention and Destruction

1. In December of each calendar year, Records Section will submit a Form 17 to announce the Annual Records Destruction process in the Department Staff Notes.

- a. District/section/units maintaining any type of record will inspect **all** records to determine if they are properly maintained according to the Records Retention Schedule, located on the Department intranet.
 - 1) If any record is scheduled to expire, is already expired, or is an unauthorized record or copy, the district/section/unit commander or their designee will include those records on an Annual Record Destruction Form, located in CPDFORMS on the H: drive.
 - 2) Use of the Annual Record Destruction Form is required for all department personnel who coordinate records destruction. This form includes specific destruction dates to simplify the process.
 - a) The form is divided into two sections – one tab summarizes documents that have form numbers; the second tab contains documents that have no form numbers.
 - b) Personnel may complete the form by hand or electronically prior to printing for submission.
 - 3) Records stored off-site that meet the criteria for records destruction must be included on the Annual Record Destruction Form.
- b. The completed Annual Record Destruction Form will be submitted to the appropriate bureau commander with a cover Form 17 which includes:
 - 1) A request for disposal of records
 - 2) The number of boxes to be destroyed
 - 3) Inclusive dates
 - 4) Contact information of responsible employee
- c. After review by the affected bureau commander, the request for disposal will be forwarded to the Records Section Director.
 - 1) The Records Section Director will approve/disapprove the request according to the Schedule of Record Retention and Destruction contained in the Records Retention Schedule and have any additional measures taken, if necessary, to comply with State Law and City Ordinances.
 - 2) After approval for destruction, the Records Section Director will arrange the date and time for proper destruction of the records with the involved unit.

2. At the discretion of bureau, district, section, and unit commanders, original records may be retained beyond maximum periods via a Form 17 request. The Form 17 must include extenuating circumstances surrounding the extension request and must be submitted at least two weeks prior to the destruction date. Other than these exigent circumstances, original records must be destroyed as soon as possible after the retention period has expired.
 3. Requests for disposal of an original or copy of any record not specifically listed in the Records Retention Schedule will also be documented on a Form 17.
 - a. The Records Section Director will submit a request for destruction to the City Records Commission.
 - 1) Upon approval, Records Section will advise the affected unit as to the proper method of destruction.
 4. If storage space is required in addition to the available space in the unit facility, Records Section staff will coordinate with the City's vendor for off-site storage.
 - a. All boxes must be clearly marked with the year and type of records, the name of the district/section/unit the records belong to, and a bar code label provided by the vendor.
- B. Initiating New Forms and Discontinuing Forms
1. Any department employee who desires to utilize a record or form not listed in the Records Retention Schedule must submit a prototype and a Form 17 through channels to the Police Chief.
 - a. Upon approval, Planning Unit will format as necessary, assign the form a number and request Records Section establish a retention schedule.
 - b. Technology and Systems Section will revise the Records Retention Schedule on the Intranet.
 2. Any department employee who believes a form or record listed in the Records Retention Schedule should no longer be used will request discontinuation of the form via Form 17 through channels to the Police Chief.