

Schedule No. **1**

General Records Schedule

Local Government Records Committee
Adopted 1996
Last Revised August 2017

MONTANA LOCAL GOVERNMENT RETENTION SCHEDULE

DEPARTMENT: **General Records Schedule For Records Common To All Local Governments**

NOTE: The general retention schedule should be followed, unless a different retention is given in a specific schedule.

ITEM	RECORD TITLE AND DESCRIPTION	RETENTION	COMMENTS
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Before You Shred, Think Ahead

Introduction to Public Records Management

All public records have a specific value—whether administrative, fiscal, legal, historical, transitory (short-term) and whether created internally or received from an outside source. Some of them are so vital to government operation, that they must be preserved for perpetuity or protected to ensure continuity. Every local government entity is legally required to manage its public records in an orderly and systematic way.

Disposition & Destruction of Public Records

There are two different legal procedures that must be followed before it disposes of its public records. The first relates to records under ten years old. The second process relates to documents exceeding the ten-year retention limit.

- **Records Under Ten Years:** *Montana Local Government General Schedules* dictate how long a record must be kept before destruction or transfer. Before any action is taken, the agency must complete the *Request for Records Disposal or Transfer Authorization* form and submit it to the Montana Department of Administration, Local Government Services Bureau, P.O. Box 200547, Helena, MT 59620-0547. A template disposal form is located at [Request for Records Disposal. Instructions](#) for completing the form are also available.

Once approved by the Local Government Services Bureau and the Montana Historical Society, the form will be returned to you. You may then dispose of approved items ***that are not ten years old or older***. Complete and file the form after adding destruction completion signature and date.

- **Records Over Ten Years:** If there are records older than 10 years the process changes because by [Law 2-6-1205, MCA](#) non-confidential records must be held for 60 days before they are destroyed. The 60-day notice alerts entities like Montana Historical Society-State Archives, colleges/universities, historical museums, genealogy societies, and the general public who may want to obtain those documents.

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	<p>To activate the 60 day notice complete the <i>Request for Records Disposal or Transfer Authorization form</i> and submit it to the Local Government Services Bureau. The Bureau then sends it to the Montana Historical Society who will forward the Request to the Secretary of State Records & Information Management (RIM) Division. The items will be posted on the Local Government Records list-serve for the 60-day notice period.</p> <p>If you are contacted during the 60-day period, it must transfer the record(s) to the requesting party in the priority order shown in MCA 2-6-1205. The requesting party is required to pay all costs associated with the transfer. If no one has requested the records after the 60-day period, they can be destroyed or deleted and the Request should be signed off by the person conducting final removal.</p> <p>The Local Government Records Committee recommends that each local government agency adopt a policy to manage multiple requests for the same record(s).</p>		

Technical Assistance

All requests for technical assistance should be emailed to SOSLocalGovtRecCom@mt.gov.

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1.	ACCIDENT REPORTS: Accidents which involve injury to persons on local government property in which the local government might be sued. a. Reports of accidents to adults b. Reports of accidents to minors	a. 5 years b. 5 years or 3 years after the minor reaches age 18, whichever is longest	
2.	AFFIDAVITS OF PUBLICATION: (include any tear sheets or clipping proofs) a. Publication of ordinances b. Election notices: See Election Schedule #3 c. All other published legal notices	a. Permanent b. See Election Schedule #3 c. 2 years	
3.	ANNEXATION AND OTHER JURISDICTIONAL RECORDS: a. Records pertaining to the annexation or disannexation of territory to or from a local government, or abolishes or affects its territorial jurisdiction of service area. Includes associated documents including reports, correspondence, public hearing reports, and similar records. b. Contacts relating to territorial jurisdiction or delivery of services between two or more governments.	a. 5 years b. Length of contract	Review before disposal. Many of these records may have historical value.
4.	CHARTERS	Permanent	
5.	COMMUNICATIONS – VOICE MAIL a. Voice Mail b. Voice Mail Backup	a. Erase or destroy following action taken. b. 1 month after back-up is run	

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6.	CONTRACTS, LEASES, AGREEMENTS: Includes reports, correspondence, performance bonds and related records pertaining to administration, renewal or termination.	7 years after expiration or termination of the record	Note: Does not apply to Construction Contracts
7.	COMPLAINTS: Received from the public, a governing body, or officer or employee of a local government relating to government policy. Complaints of a general nature, that are not covered under schedules such as fire hazards, etc.	2 years after resolved or dismissed	
8.	DEEDS/EASEMENTS: Documents evidencing public ownership of real property.	Permanent	
9.	INSURANCE POLICIES: Including documentation relevant to the implementation, renewal, modification and replacement of policies. a. Expired b. Current but revised	a. 7 years after Expiration b. One copy of each revision	
10.	LEGAL OPINIONS	Permanent	
11.	LITIGATION CASE FILES: All cases in which a local government is a party unless the case file is noted elsewhere in this or other schedules. Distinguished from Municipal and County Attorney files and official Court's case files.	As long as needed after closed or after appeal time expired.	Review for historical significance
12.	NEWS RELEASES	As long as is valuable.	
13.	OPEN RECORDS REQUESTS: Documents relating to the Request.	1 year after final decision on request	
14.	ORGANIZATIONAL CHARTS	Until superseded	
15.	PERMITS AND LICENSES: Records that document the application and issuance of permits and licenses for sales; solicitation; facility use. Does not include permits found in other sections of the Local Government Record Schedules	2 years after expiration, cancellation, revocation or denial.	
16.	POLICY AND PROCEDURES: Documents that define these records.	5 years after superseded	Review for historical significance
17.	PUBLICATIONS: Created by a local government agency to educate the public to the services provided.	1 copy Permanent	

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18.	CORRESPONDENCE: OFFICIAL/PROGRAM/POLICY Incoming and outgoing letters, memoranda, and email pertaining to the formulation, planning, and implementation of the mission, policies, programs, operations and projects are prime candidates for permanent retention. Records with permanent value include, but are not limited to: records documenting the policy process; records that document how it is organized and how it functions; its pattern of action and decision-making; its policies, procedures, official opinions and achievements; and that serve to substantiate accountability.	Permanent	Keep the recent 3 years in the office; after that may transfer to a permanent storage facility
19.	CORRESPONDENCE: ROUTINE Incoming and outgoing letters, memoranda, and email pertaining to the normal and routine administrative functions. Consists of correspondence providing general information and requests for information, referring inquiries elsewhere, forwarding materials, acknowledging incoming letters, making arrangement for routine meetings or other events, and similar matters of minor administrative character which contain no substantive information.	Retain 3 years; destroy	
20.	CORRESPONDENCE: TRANSITORY Incoming and outgoing letters, memoranda, and e-mail that, while part of business, are purely informational with a very short time-value. Examples include routine correspondence for which a record is needed only for a limited time, such as incoming or outgoing transmittal/cover messages that do not add information to that contained in the transmitted material (“enclosed please find...”); routine questions and answers that require no administrative action, no policy decision, and no special compilation or research for reply (“our address...,” “the deadline is...,” “please send 10 copies of...”); thank-yous, acknowledgements, congratulations; information copies of correspondence on which no documented administrative action was taken.	Retain for at least 30 days. Destroy if no longer needed for administrative purposes.	

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21.	CORRESPONDENCE: NON-RECORD The following materials are not records and may be destroyed/deleted at any time, unless they become part of some official record as a result of special circumstances; correspondence and memoranda generated by another entity and kept by your office for reference purposes; unofficial employee activities (parties, softball games, etc.); internal office announcements (“Ms. Jones is here to see you,” “Joe Smith called,” “is this afternoon’s meeting still on?”); quasi-official notices (notices of holidays, charity appeals, etc.); junk mail; list serve messages, other than those you post in your official capacity	Destroy/delete at will	
22.	CORRESPONDENCE: READING FILES Copies of outgoing communications arranged chronologically and maintained for periodic review by staff; these copies are in addition to the copies kept in either the Program/Policy Correspondence or the Routine Correspondence files.	Retain until no longer needed; destroy.	
23.	CORRESPONDENCE: SUSPENSE/TICKLER/FOLLOW-UP FILES Files arranged in chronological order as a reminder that an action is required on a given date or that a reply to action has not been received and should be traced on a given day.	Incorporate into the Program/Policy correspondence if appropriate. If not, destroy after action has been taken.	

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24.	<p>CORRESPONDENCE: E-MAIL E-mail is just another form that records come in. Formally it is a document created or received on an electronic mail system, including brief notes, formal correspondence, or substantive narrative documents, and any attachments, such as word processing and other electronic documents, which maybe transmitted with the message.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Records including sender and receiver identification; time and date sent and received; and complete message maintained on individual computers; servers; hard disk or floppy disk. b. Routine non-record communication c. E-mail backup systems. d. Printed e-mail directories and distribution lists e. Computer maintained e-mail directories and distribution lists. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a & b. Retain for retention time of other forms of the record series. c. 4 years after date backup was run. d. 1 year e. Maintain current 	
25.	<p>Building Records: blueprints, chemical identification data, and Safety Data Sheets (MSDS).</p>	<p>(Minimum retention: Life of structure)</p>	
26	<p>Equipment Calibration Records: May include logs, reports, and related records.</p>	<p>(Minimum retention: Life of equipment)</p>	
27	<p>Equipment Maintenance Records: Records may include vendor statements.</p>	<p>(Minimum retention: 1 year after equipment disposed of)</p>	
28	<p>Technical Manuals Specifications and Warranties: Owners manuals and warranties for agency-owned equipment. Manuals often include specifications and operating instructions.</p>	<p>(Minimum retention: (a) Manuals: Until disposition of vehicle or equipment (b) Warranties: Until expiration).</p>	

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29.	<p>HAZARD COMMUNICATION PROGRAM: EMPLOYEE EXPOSURE RECORDS An employee exposure record is a record containing any of the following kinds of information: environmental (workplace) monitoring or measuring of a toxic substance or harmful physical agent; biological monitoring results; material safety data sheets indicating that the material may pose a hazard to human health; or, in the absence of the above, a chemical inventory or any other record which reveals where and when used and the identity of a toxic substance or harmful physical agent.</p> <p>a. Background data to environmental (workplace) monitoring or measuring, such as laboratory reports and worksheets.</p> <p>b. Material safety data sheets</p> <p>c. Chemical inventory (or any other record which reveals where and when used and the identity of a toxic substance or harmful physical agent).</p> <p>d. Biological monitoring results designated as exposure records by specific occupational safety and health standards.</p>	<p>a. Retain 1 year, as long as the sampling results, the collection methodology (sampling plan), a description of the analytical and mathematical methods used, and a summary of other back-ground data relevant to interpretation of the results obtained. Are retained for at least 30 years; destroy.</p> <p>b. & c. Need not be retained for any specified period <i>as long as</i> some record of the identity of the substance or agent, where it was used, and when it was used is retained for at least 30 years; destroy.</p> <p>d. Retain as required by the specific standard.</p>	<p>29 CFR 1910.1020 (d) (formerly 1910.20), as adopted by the Montana Department of Labor and Industry</p> <p>The form, manner, or process by which an employer preserves a is not mandated <i>as long as</i> the information contained in the record is preserved and retrievable, except that check X-ray films shall be preserved in their original state.</p>
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30.	<p>HAZARD COMMUNICATION PROGRAM: EMPLOYEE INFORMATION/TRAINING RECORDS</p> <p>a. Information Employees shall be informed of: the requirements of this section; any operations in their work area where hazardous chemicals are present; and the location and availability of the written hazard communication program, including the required list(s) of hazardous chemicals, and material safety data sheets.</p> <p>b. Training Employee training shall include at least: methods and observations that may be used to detect the presence or release of a hazardous chemical in the work area; the physical and health hazards of the chemicals in the work area; the measures employees can take to protect themselves from these hazards; and the details of the hazard communication program developed by the employer; the employer shall keep a record of the dates of training sessions given to employees and the names of the employees attending.</p>	<p>a. Retain until superseded; destroy</p> <p>b. Employee training records shall be placed in the employee's personnel file</p>	29 CFR 1910.1200 (h) and 50-78-204 & 305, MCA
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31.	<p>HAZARD COMMUNICATION PROGRAM: EMPLOYEE MEDICAL RECORDS An employee medical record is a record concerning the health status of an employee which is made or maintained by a physician, nurse, or other health care personnel or technician, including: medical and employment questionnaires or histories; the results of medical examinations; medical opinions, diagnoses, progress notes, and recommendations; first aid results; descriptions of treatments and prescriptions; and employee medical complaints.</p> <p>a. Health insurance claims records maintained separately from the employer’s medical program and its records</p> <p>b. First aid records (not including medical histories) one-time treatment and subsequent observation of minor scratches cuts, burns, splinters, and the like which do not involve medical treatment, loss of consciousness, restriction of work or motion, or transfer to another job, if made on-site by a non-</p> <p>c. Medical records of employees who have worked for less than year for the employer.</p>	<p>Retain for at least the duration of employment plus 30 years; destroy</p> <p>a. & b. Need not be retained for any specified period</p> <p>c. Need not be retained beyond the term of employment if they are provided to the employee upon the termination of employment.</p>	<p>29 CFR 1910.1020 (d) (formerly 1910.20), as adopted by the Montana Department of Labor and Industry</p>
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32.	<p>HAZARD COMMUNICATION PROGRAM: LABELS AND OTHER FORMS OF WARNING Employers shall ensure that each container of hazardous chemicals in the workplace is labeled, tagged, or marked with the following information; identity of the hazardous chemical(s) contained therein, and appropriate hazard warnings. The employer may use signs, placards, process sheets, batch tickets, operating procedures, or other such written materials in lieu of affixing labels to individual stationary process containers.</p>	Retain until superseded; destroy	29 CFR 1910.1200(f) and 50-78-206, MCA
33.	<p>HAZARD COMMUNICATION PROGRAM: MATERIAL SAFETY DATA SHEETS (MSDS) Employers shall have a material safety data sheet in the workplace for each hazardous chemical which they use. It shall contain at least the following information: the identity used on the label; physical and chemical characteristics; the physical hazards and the health hazards of the hazardous chemical; the primary route(s) of entry; any exposure limits; whether the hazardous chemical is a carcinogen or potential carcinogen; any generally applicable precautions and control measures; emergency and first aid procedures; date or preparation or update of the MSDS; and the name, address, and telephone number of the responsible party who can provide additional information. Each employer shall maintain a copy of any correspondence sent or received by the employer in an effort to obtain a material safety data sheet when none was provided by the chemical manufacturer or distributor.</p>	Current sheets must be readily accessible; when no longer current the sheets themselves need not be retained for any specified period <i>as long as</i> some record of the identity of the substance or agent, where it was used, and when it was used is retained for at least 30 years; destroy; (the correspondence, once the material safety data sheets are provided, may be retained per the correspondence series).	29CFR 1910.1200 (g) an 29 CFR 1910, 1020 (d) (formerly 1910.20), and 50-78-203, MCA May be kept in electronic form, microfiche, or other alternatives as long as no barriers to immediate employee access are created by such options.

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34.	HAZARD COMMUNICATION PROGRAM: WORKPLACE CHEMICAL LIST Each employer shall compile and maintain a workplace chemical list which must contain the chemical name of each hazardous chemical in the workplace, cross-referenced to any generally used common name; the chemical abstracts service registry number, if available, must accompany all chemical names on the list; and the list must indicate the work area in which each hazardous chemical is normally stored or used.	Must be updated as necessary but not less than annually; destroy when superseded.	50-78-202, MCA
35.	HAZARD COMMUNICATION PROGRAM: WRITTEN HAZARD COMMUNICATION PROGRAM Employers shall develop, implement and maintain at each workplace, a written hazard communication program which at least describes how the criteria for labels and other forms of warning, material safety data sheets, and employee information and training will be met; includes a list of the hazardous chemicals known to be present using an identity that is referenced on the appropriate material safety data sheet; includes the methods the employer will use to inform employees of the hazards of non-routine tasks and the hazards associated with chemicals contained in unlabeled pipes in their work areas.	Retain until superseded; destroy	29 CFR 1910.1200 (e)
36.	MINUTES OF MEETINGS a. Board/Committee/Commission b. Staff and any other copies	a. Permanent (one copy) b. Permanent	May be microfilmed.
37.	NON-RECORD MATERIALS Examples include copies of other documents retained only for convenience; outdated blank forms, routing slips which do not contain annotations of significance, catalogs, journals and other publications not produced by the organization, and stocks of the organization's publications and printed documents which have been superseded or updated. Personal correspondence kept at the office for convenience should be kept in a separate file.	May be destroyed when no longer needed.	

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38.	REQUEST FOR DESTRUCTION OR TRANSFER AUTHORIZATION - With or without 10 year rule notifications	Permanent	Per MCA 2-6-405(2)
39.	REFERENCE FILES Copies of documents retained strictly for reference and informational purposes and are not part of the official files. These may include copies of reports, studies, special compilations of data, drawings, or other externally-generated publications for which the originating agency maintains the original "record" copy, periodicals books, clippings brochures, catalogs, trade journals, vendor price lists, extra copies of manuals, publications, etc.	Review annually and destroy material of no further value.	
40	SECURITY VIDEOS Video files generated by security cameras/systems owned by a local government entity used to deter improper or criminal behavior or to document it, if it occurs.	Retain 30 days or less, unless the video becomes part of an official investigation or case file—then retain as long as the relevant record series. Once retention is met, recordings may be erased or recorded over. NO DISPOSAL FORM REQUIRED	The retention time is a minimum. Check to see if your organization has a more specific policy for retaining video files before disposing and follow the longer retention period.
41.	SUBJECT FILES:ORGANIZATIONAL/PROJECT Files arranged by subject, relating to projects, administrations, and procedures. May contain correspondence, formal memoranda, administrative directives, policy studies and reports, minutes and/or reports of special advisory committees and task forces, and similar records documenting the formulation and implementation of projects, policies, programs, operations of departments, fiscal or personnel matters legislation and regulations.	Permanent	Select and retain documents of continuing administrative, fiscal, legal, or research value/use May be microfilmed.

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42.	SUBJECT FILES: HOUSEKEEPING Records received by or created by the office and filed by subject which concern internal office procedures and DO NOT pertain to the performance of the mission functions of the office. Examples include routine correspondence, memoranda, publications, reports, administrative announcements, statements, documents concerning hours of duty, individual duties which do not have continuing applicability, documents concerning housekeeping activities such as participation in charitable affairs, emergency tests, office security, parking, safety excess or obsolete forms, property inventory sheets, lists or directories, phone logs, clippings, etc.	Review annually and destroy when no longer needed.	
43.	TASK FORCE OR COMMITTEE FILES Records relating to the establishment, organization, membership, and policy of any task forces or committees for which the office is the presiding official or the logical keeper of the records. These records may include minutes, agenda or meetings correspondence, policies, procedures, final reports and other relevant supporting material.	Permanent	May be Microfilmed.
44.	WORKING PAPERS/PROJECT FILES Project background records, studies, analyses, notes, preliminary drafts, interim reports, which have been summarized in a final report or other form. Does not include construction projects.	Final report: Permanent Working papers: Retain 1 year after final action is taken on project, unless no report is prepared, then keep permanently.	

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Revision 1.1 9-2004

General Records Schedule typed in word and new format to schedule.
Added 1-18

Item #2 Page GRS2
Removed the word municipal

Item #20 Pages GRS4
Changed to CORRESPONDENCE – OFFICIAL/PROGRAM/POLICY
Included official opinions
Removed municipal and municipality

Items #22 Page GRS4
Removed municipal and municipality

Revision 1.2 11-2004

Heading GRS2
Added a Note: The general retention schedules should be followed, unless a different retention is given in a specific schedule.

Item #12 Page GRS3
Removed #12 STAFF MEETING MINUTES: Internal

Item #33 Page GRS9
Staff and Other copies – b. changed to permanent retention

Revision 1.3 04-2005

Added a Note: The general retention schedules should be followed, unless a different retention is given in a specific schedule on pages GRS3 through GRS11.

Revision 1.4 04-2010

Added: Personnel Files – Item #17
Renumbered Items #18 - #40

Revision 1.5 05-2011

Added: Request for Destruction and Transfer Authorization – Item #36
Re-number Items #37-40

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Revision 1.6 11-2011

Modified: Item 11 – to include series description language that clarifies: distinguished **from Municipal or County Attorney case files and Court’s case files.**

Modified: Item 11 - to include retention language stating: or after appeal time expired.

Removed: Item 16 – Non-Textural Media deleted. Media “content” scheduled, not media.

Added: Item 16 – Application for Employment: Not Hired (plus related documentation).

Revised 5-2014

Removed item 16 and 17 (Applications for employment: not hired; Personnel-Employee file).

Renumbered as needed.

Revised 4-2017

Added county maintenance department series (see series 25-28). Subsequent series renumbered.

Revised 8-2017

Added SecurityVideo series 40. Subsequent series renumbered.