

ARCHIVES AND DATA RETENTION POLICY

This policy represents the intention of Central United Church (Central) with regard to management, and retention. archiving and disposal of paper and electronically stored church records and data.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE AND BELIEF

At Central, we care about all aspects of the life of our Community of Faith (COF), including the management, retention, archiving and disposal of the personal, administrative, and historical information that is gathered in the governance of the church.

Central strives to act as a responsible and legally compliant member of The United Church of Canada (UCC) with respect to its personal information gathering and record keeping.

Church records management is primarily controlled by protocols outlined by the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) and the UCC. Such protocols include the reference to a statute of limitations for actions that could arise under provincial or federal laws. This policy provides guidelines regarding:

- (a) which records must be kept and for how long.
- (b) which documents must be archived.
- (c) historical documents and their use.
- (d) whether some or all records may be stored electronically.
- (e) document disposal guidelines.

It is important to note retention periods can vary widely, depending on the jurisdiction that governs them. In some cases, for example, there are no formal minimal legal requirements for the retention of documents, either paper or digital. Therefore, caution must be exercised at all times in the disposal of church documents.

PAPER FILES

- (a) The Administrative Team shall maintain a master document index file indicating the name of the document, its retention period and which group within the church is responsible for its disposal.
- (b) During the close of business hours, desks, countertops, bookcases, and credenzas will be cleared of confidential paper files.



- (c) Financial records including statements, tax returns, and appropriate backup documentation (e.g., contracts, bank statements, statements of account and tallies) shall be secured by the Finance Team for six years from the end of the last tax year (*CRA, Government of Canada*).
- (d) Insurance policy documents shall be retained for a period of three years prior to the current year's records. These documents shall be secured by the Board of Trustees (Trustees).
- (e) All real estate records, including Land Title documentation, shall be kept permanently in a secure place (e.g., vault, locked desk, locked filing cabinet).
- (f) All staff and contract employee information shall be kept by the Ministry and Personnel Committee (M&P) in a secure place for three years after the resignation or retirement of a staff member or contract employee.
- (g) Terms of call or appointment forms of ministry personnel shall be retained in a secure place by M&P until such time as a resignation or retirement occurs, at which time the forms are shredded. Terms of call or appointment forms are archived by the Chinook Winds Regional Council.
- (h) Workers' Compensation Benefit records and correspondence shall be retained for a period of three years prior to the current year's records. These documents shall be secured by M&P.
- (i) All copyrighted documents and materials used by Central (i.e., books, manuscripts, curriculum) shall be kept in a secure place until no longer needed, then shredded.
- (j) Original paper documents shall be scanned and stored in digital files.
- (k) Paper files shall be shredded when their retention expiry date is reached.

ELECTRONIC RECORDS

- (a) All computer systems owned by the church shall be "backed up" to an external hard drive or "the cloud" on a regular basis, at a minimum of once a week.
- (b) All computer systems shall be protected with current industry-standard virus protection.
- (c) All personal financial information (e.g., credit card numbers) shall be protected by data encryption software. Encryption details must not be shared or exchanged.
- (d) All computers owned by the church shall be password protected. Passwords must not be shared with anyone except the paid, accountable staff and volunteers approved by the Board. All passwords shall be kept in escrow by the Board.
- (e) Minutes of church meetings shall be forwarded in a timely manner to the Office Administrator by the Recording Secretary of each Team and Committee and stored electronically.
- (f) Minutes shall be stored electronically for ten years prior to the current year's records. Such minutes shall include agendas and records of proceedings of meetings conducted by the Trustees, the Board and its operating committees and governance teams.



- (g) When conducting business related to Central, employees, and contractors are to use only Central email addresses (e.g., email addresses that feature the "centralchurch.ca" domain).
- (h) Portable computing devices include laptop computers, tablet computers, and smartphones. They may be owned by Central or individuals. Such devices may be used for storing and processing data without being tied to a particular location. Data collected on such devices are the property of Central. Information stored on these devices must be protected in a manner like data on the church's office computers and servers.
- (i) Central's business data and personal data must be kept separate. Central data that originates on portable devices must be replicated on other Central office devices or servers in a manner that makes it accessible. This replication is in addition to backup which is used to restore the device.
- (j) Electronic mail which is of importance to the ministry of Central shall be retained for a minimum of thirteen months.
- (k) Once electronic files have been retained for their required time periods, they shall be destroyed by the Office Administrator, using secure deletion software.

ARCHIVAL MATERIAL

- (a) Once personal and administrative information is no longer needed, it must be destroyed, except in cases where federal or provincial retention rules apply or where the records have archival value (e.g., Annual Reports, minutes of meetings).
- (b) Baptism, Burial, and Marriage Registers, as well as the Historic Roll, have archival value and must be kept until each registry book is filled, then sent to the UCC Archives, located at the Provincial Archives of Alberta in Edmonton.
- (c) Baptism, Burial, and Marriage Registers, as well as the Historic Roll, must be stored in a secure place (e.g., vault, locked desk, locked filing cabinet). Their retention period, as mandated by the United Church of Canada Archives (UCCA) is permanent and only duly appointed persons may have access to them.
- (d) The network of UCCA across the country respects the protection of personal information found in archival records. Although these records are permanently preserved because of their historical value and potential research use, privacy must be maintained. Therefore, the UCCA restricts the use of records containing personal information. Such restrictions vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, therefore, compliance with the UCC website www.united-church.ca is required. Personal information is restricted for 100 years from the date of birth of the person.
- (e) Information contained in baptismal, marriage and burial records shall be shared only when a written request is received by the Office Administrator from the person(s) whose information is contained in the record or by family members making such a request.



- (f) Information contained in the Historic Roll of Central must only be shared when a written request is received by the Office Administrator from the person(s) whose information is contained in the record or by duly recognized family members or by the Worship Team.
- (g) The Worship Team which is tasked with reviewing the roll for purposes of updating or removing names from the roll is granted access to the roll by the Board.
- (h) The Administrative Team is responsible for maintaining and updating the Historic Roll on a regular basis.

HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS

- (a) Original historical documents of the church (e.g. history books, photo directories, letters, correspondence) shall be maintained in a secure location at the church.
- (b) Original historical documents shall not be released unless permission to do so is granted by the Board.
- (c) Copies of historical documents may only be released for purposes of historical research and only with permission of the Board.
- (d) Personal information shall not be released in compliance with federal and provincial privacy legislation.
- (e) Historical documents of Central may be used for educational purposes, both inside and outside of the faith community, with permission of the Board.
- (f) Historical documents may be sent to the UCCA archives, located in the Provincial Archives of Alberta in Edmonton when deemed appropriate by the Board.

ADMINISTRATION

The Administrative Team shall execute this policy by training staff and volunteers about document retention and by forwarding archival material to the UCC Archives, located at the Provincial Archives of Alberta in Edmonton, in compliance with a schedule established by the Board.

This policy is a living document that can be changed at any time with the approval of the Board.

The Board shall inform the congregation about the policies that have been established by the Board and will seek ratification of each policy change at an Annual Congregational Meeting.

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