

Retention Schedules for Local Church, District, and Annual Conference

East Ohio Conference

The General Commission on Archives and History has created a document called *Guidelines for Managing Records of the Annual Conference and the Local Church*. As the title suggests, the Commission has provided guidelines for retention of various record types, in the hope that local churches, districts and annual conferences will use them to create their own formal retention schedules.

The complete document can be downloaded from www.gcah.org. Look under “**Ministry Resources**” to find this publication. You will also find retention charts that have been excerpted from the publication for **the local church, the district, and the annual conference**. The document and the charts can be easily printed. Links to the charts are provided for easy access, but full explanations of the record types are found within the publication itself. You will notice that the district chart is small. District offices may follow the guidelines for annual conference, with the exception of the record types given in the district chart. For your convenience, the charts are printed on the following pages with the permission of GCAH.

There are three columns in the charts following the type of record and a record description. The column “Total” indicates the total number of years a record should be kept. If the word “Permanent” appears in this column, the records should be kept in perpetuity. If a certain number of years appears in the column, the record creator can shred material once that number of years has passed. The column “Current” indicates the number of years records should be kept accessible for use (e.g. in an office file cabinet). For example, if the chart indicates 7 years in the “Total” column and 2 years in the “Current” column, this means that the record type need be kept a grand total of 7 years, with the 2 most current years kept accessible in an office drawer or accessible location.

Where are the “Permanent” records to be kept? Local church records are to be kept onsite in the local church archives, and are only transferred to the conference archives if the church closes. District and conference permanent records may be deposited at the conference archives, the Archives of Ohio United Methodism, after consultation with the conference archivist.

The Archives of Ohio United Methodism (AOUM) is the official repository for both the East and West Ohio Conferences, located at Ohio Wesleyan University, Beeghly Library, Delaware, Ohio.

- **Local Church Records** – Please note that your “permanent” records need to be archived in your **Local Church Archives**, not the Conference Archives (Archives of Ohio United Methodism, AOUM) located at Ohio Wesleyan University. If a church closes, the items marked “permanent” will be deposited at AOUM by the District Superintendent. When churches merge, the new church should retain all records of the former churches. Membership records (birth, marriage, death, pastoral records) should never be destroyed. In fact, it is recommended that the local church have such records microfilmed. Churches keeping such records electronically are reminded to print them off each year and keep a copy off-site.

- **District and Annual Conference Records** – Boards, Commissions and Agencies are encouraged to deposit minutes and important publications at the Conference Archives (Archives of United Methodism, AOUM) at the end of each quadrennium for permanent safekeeping. Consult with conference archivist to arrange the transfer.

The **Archives of Ohio United Methodism** houses several types of materials:

- **Ohio conference journals** from our current and predecessor denominations – UMC, Methodist Episcopal, Methodist, United Brethren, Evangelical, Methodist Protestant, and EUB.
- Historical collection of periodicals from all of the predecessor denominations (*Western Christian Advocate*, *Pittsburgh Christian Advocate*, *Religious Telescope* (limited holdings) *Evangelical Messenger*, *Christliche Apologete*, *Methodist Magazine*, *Ladies Repository*, etc.)
- Local Church History files – Each church in the Conference has a history file that is constantly being updated by local church historians and others. These files contain published and unpublished histories, anniversary programs, photographs, photo-directories, newspaper clippings, etc. Additions of this type are always welcome. These should be duplicates of material, not one-of-a-kind items.
- People files – Files of clippings, photographs, general biographical information about clergy (non-personnel related), publications, etc.
- Subject files – Files of clippings, brochures, articles related to UMC historical events, topics, organizations, with particular emphasis on the state of Ohio
- Closed Church Records – Membership records, administrative/program material for churches that have closed, deposited by the District Superintendent.
- Minutes and publications of Boards, Commissions, Agencies
- Manuscript diaries, correspondence (clergy and missionaries)
- Published books dealing with UMC history in Ohio and beyond – biographies, theological works, hymnals, Disciplines, etc.

Personal papers of clergy are actively solicited by the Archives of Ohio United Methodism. This includes pastoral records, sermons, published books, photographs, diaries, and correspondence that will help future researchers to understand United Methodism in the state of Ohio. Also solicited are quarterly conference minutes from 19th century circuits that contain records of several churches.

Questions? Contact Carol Holliger

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Websites: library.owu.edu and www.umhso.org

LOCAL CHURCH RECORDS SCHEDULE

More detailed explanations of these series and their retention can be found in the
Guidelines for Managing Records of the Annual Conference & the Local Church
 at GCAH.org under Ministry Resources

RECORD SERIES TITLE	DESCRIPTION	Total	Current	Local Church Archives
Accident and Injuries Records	Workers Compensation Claims Records	Settled+6.	Active	NO
Accounts Payable Records	Claims and Disbursements Records, Expenses, Accounting, Bookkeeping, Paid Invoices, Finance, Purchasing	7	2	NO
Accounts Receivable Records	Membership contributions, offering records	7	2	NO
	Offering envelopes	1	1	NO
Administrative Reports	Charge Conference reports, Administrative Board reports, Council on Ministries report, or administrative council reports	Permanent	2	YES
Annual Fiscal Reports	Closing of the Books Records, Financial Reports, Balance Reconciliation Records, State Accounts Reports	Permanent	4	YES
Architectural Drawings, Blueprints, and Maps		Permanent		YES
Audit Records		Permanent	4	YES
Bank Deposit Books		7	2	NO
Bank Deposit Slips		3	3	NO
Bank statements		7	3	NO
Benefits Policies and Procedures Records		Permanent	Active	YES
Bequest and Estate papers	wills, gift agreements, bequests	Permanent		As Necessary
Budget Records	Annual Budget	Permanent	4	YES
Bulletins	Sunday worship bulletins, special local church occasion bulletins	Permanent	2	YES
Bylaws		Permanent	Active	YES
Cancelled Checks	Cashed Checks	7	1	NO

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RECORD SERIES TITLE	DESCRIPTION	Total	Current	Local Church Archives
Certificates of Deposit, Canceled		3	3	NO
Committee Records	Local church committee records	Permanent	4	YES
Contracts	repairs, maintenance, lease agreements, loans	4 - service contracts 6 -Repairs, Lease, Loans Permanent - new construction	4	NO - expect for those going to Archives
Correspondence - subject	Correspondence on special or topic interest	permanent	Active	YES
Correspondence - transitory	Routine correspondence	1	1	NO
Deduction Authorization Records	Deductions Input List	Active + 4	Active	NO
Deeds	Deeds, Conveyances, Covenants, easements	Permanent		As Necessary
Directories		Permanent	Current	YES
Employment Eligibility Verification Forms		Active +1 (3 yrs Min.)	Active	NO
Employment Policies and Procedures Records	Employment Policies	Permanent	Active	YES
Grievance Records		Active +3.	Active	NO
Insurance Policies		Permanent	Active	YES
Insurance Election Records, Employees		employment +6	Active	NO
Inventories of Property and Equipment		Until superseded	Active	Transfer to Archives for Review

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RECORD SERIES TITLE	DESCRIPTION	Total	Current	Local Church Archives
Invoices		7 (except for major construction)	3	NO (transfer major construction series to Archives)
Membership records	Membership register, baptisms, marriages, transfers	Permanent		YES
Newsletters	Church newsletters, UMW, UMM, UMYF and other church group's newsletters	Permanent	2	YES
Pay Authorization Records		5	2	NO
Personnel Records	Personnel Files	Active+7	Active	NO
Property Files	deeds, title papers, repair history, permits, lease agreement	Permanent		As Necessary
Purchase Orders		7	3	NO
Real Estate Surveys	surveys, plot plans and related correspondence	Permanent		As Necessary
Rejected Applications	Rejected and Incomplete Employment Applications	2	1	NO
Search Records-accepted		Active+7	Active	NO
Search Records - all others		5	1	NO
Shipping and Freight Records		3	3	NO
Staff Meeting Records		Permanent	4	YES
Tax-Exempt Certificates	Certificates and Form 990	Permanent		As Necessary
Tax Returns		7	5	NO
Tax Withholding Authorization Records		Active + 5	Active	NO

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RECORD SERIES TITLE	DESCRIPTION	Total	Current	Local Church Archives
Time Sheets		3	3	NO
Travel Records		5	1	NO

DISTRICT OFFICE & COMMITTEE RECORDS SCHEDULE

District offices follow the guidelines for the annual conference except for the series appearing in this list.
More detailed explanations of these series and their retention can be found in the
Guidelines for Managing Records of the Annual Conference & the Local Church
at GCAH.org under Ministry Resources

RECORD SERIES TITLE	DESCRIPTION	Total	Current	Conference Archives
Administrative Reports	District reports, district conference records	Permanent	4	YES
Charge Conference Reports		1 year		NO
Charters, Constitutions & By-Laws		Permanent		YES
Committee Records	District Committee Records,	Permanent	4	YES
Correspondence - subject	Correspondence on special or topical interest	permanent	Active	YES
Correspondence - transitory	Routine correspondence	1 year	1	NO
Employment Policies and Procedures Records	Employment Policies	Permanent.	Active	YES
Newsletters	District newsletters such as, UMW, UMM, UMYF and other District group's newsletters	Permanent	2	YES
Staff Meeting Records		Permanent	2	YES

ANNUAL CONFERENCE OFFICE & COMMITTEE RECORDS SCHEDULE
 More detailed explanations of these series and their retention can be found in the
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RECORD SERIES TITLE	DESCRIPTION	Total	Current	Conference Archives
Accident and Injuries Records	Workers Compensation Claims Records	settled+6	active	NO
Account Request Forms	Request to establish a new account	active+3	2	NO
Accounts Payable Records	Claims and Disbursements Records, Expenses, Accounting, Bookkeeping, Paid Invoices, Finance, Purchasing	7	2	NO
Accounts Receivable Records	A/Rs, Billing Records, Charges Records, Sales Fiscal Records, Rentals Fiscal Records, Journal Vouchers, Invoice Records	7	2	NO
Act of Incorporation	official papers and records	Permanent		As Necessary
Administrative Reports	Conference journal, Annual Reports for conference agencies or corporations	Permanent	4	YES
Affirmative Action Recruitment Review Records	Affirmative Action Compliance Record, Affirmative Action Compliance Data (AACD), Applicant Pool Reports, Contract Review Records	6	2	NO
Annual Fiscal Reports	Closing of the Books Records, Financial Reports, Balance Reconciliation Records, State Accounts Reports	Permanent	4	YES
Architectural Drawings, Blueprints, and Maps		Permanent.		YES

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RECORD SERIES TITLE	DESCRIPTION	Total	Current	Conference Archives
Audit Records		Permanent	4	YES
Bank Deposit Records		7	2	NO
Bank Deposit Slips		3	3	NO
Bank Statements		7	3	NO
Benefits Policies and Procedures Records		Permanent	Active	YES
Bequest and Estate papers	wills, gift agreements, bequests	Permanent		As Necessary
Budget Records	Annual Budget	Permanent	4	YES
Bylaws		Permanent	Active	YES
Cancelled Checks Records	Cashed Checks	7	1	NO
Certificates of Deposit, Canceled		3	3	NO
Committee Records	Conference Committees Records, Agency Committee Records, Board Committee Records	Permanent	4	YES
Contracts	repairs, maintenance, lease agreements, loans	4 - service contracts; 6 -Repairs, Lease, Loans; Permanent - new construction	4	NO - except for those going to Archives
Correspondence - subject	Correspondence on special or topical interest	permanent	Active	YES
Correspondence - transitory	Routine correspondence	1	1	NO
Deduction Authorization Records	Deductions Input List	Active +4	Active	NO

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RECORD SERIES TITLE	DESCRIPTION	Total	Current	Conference Archives
Deeds	Deeds, Conveyances, Covenants, easements	Permanent		As Necessary
Employment Eligibility Verification Forms		Employed +1 (3 yrs min)	3	NO
Employment Policies and Procedures Records	Employment Policies	Permanent.	Active	YES
Grievance Records		Settled +3	Active	NO
Insurance Policies		Permanent	Active	YES
Insurance Election Records, Employees		employment +6	Active	NO
Inventories of Property and Equipment		Until superseded	Active	Transfer to Archives for Review
Invoices		7 (except for major construction)	3	NO (transfer major construction series to Archives)
Pay Authorization Records		5	1	NO
Personnel Records, Staff	Personnel Files	active+7	Active	NO
Personnel records, ministerial	members of the annual conference	genealogical / appointment - Permanent Rest - Active +25	Active	YES for permanent material
Property Files	deeds, title papers, repair history, permits, lease agreement	Permanent		As Necessary
Purchase Orders		7	3	NO
Real Estate Surveys	surveys, plot plans and related correspondence	Permanent		As Necessary

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RECORD SERIES TITLE	DESCRIPTION	Total	Current	Conference Archives
Rejected Applications	Rejected and Incomplete Employment Applications	2	1	NO
Search Records- accepted		Active+7	Active	NO
Search Records - all others		5	1	NO
Shipping and Freight Records		3	3	NO
Staff Meeting Records		Permanent	4	YES
Supervisory Files, Ministerial	Members of the annual conference	Active+25	Active	NO
Tax-Exempt Certificates	Certificates and Form 990	Permanent		As Necessary
Tax Returns		7	5	NO
Tax Withholding Authorization Records		Active +7	Active	NO
Time Sheets		3	3	NO
Travel Records		5	1	NO