



RECORDS RETENTION AND DISPOSITION GUIDELINES

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Records Retention and Disposition Guidelines is to establish and maintain uniform records management for the control, retention, storage, retrieval, and disposal of recorded information to comply with all statutory, regulatory, and administrative requirements governing the California Institute of Technology, including its Jet Propulsion Laboratory operating division (“Institute”). The California Institute of Technology maintains its Records Retention Schedule [here](http://finance.caltech.edu/documents/186-institute_rrs_final_-_07-01-13.pdf): http://finance.caltech.edu/documents/186-institute_rrs_final_-_07-01-13.pdf

Institute Records are the sole property of Caltech. These records document the Institute’s organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations, and other activities. Institute Records include all forms of recorded information, including electronic records, that are created, received, recorded, or legally filed in the course of Institute business or in pursuance of the Institute’s legal obligations. All records are subject to supervisory review and evaluation prior to destruction.

Institute Records are often generated and used by an office, called the “Active Office.” The Active Office may or may not also serve as the “Office of Record,” the primary repository for the records. An “Active Record” is a record in use, and may be thought of as a working document. Records should be retained in an Active Office only as long as they serve the immediate academic, research, legal, administrative, or fiscal purpose for which they were created. Records remain active for varying numbers of years, depending on the purpose for which they were created. The Office of Record has primary responsibility for producing the record if needed for audit or other purposes.

The management of the Office of Record in each division, department, group, or section should assist employees with the implementation of these Guidelines and the Retention Schedule. Questions regarding how the Retention Schedule should be applied to a particular document should be referred first to management, and then to the Office of General Counsel if further clarification is needed.

The Retention Schedule must be applied consistently and kept up to date to be effective. Each Office of Record is responsible for ensuring that their division, department, group, or section complies with the proper retention periods for its individual Records. Each Office of Record should regularly review the Retention Schedule for compliance and for completeness. If a category is not on the Retention Schedule, any member of the Institute may submit a Request for Revision of Records Retention Schedule form to the Office of General Counsel (available [here](http://finance.caltech.edu/documents/206-request_for_revision_of_records_retention_schedule_00017849.docx): http://finance.caltech.edu/documents/206-request_for_revision_of_records_retention_schedule_00017849.docx). The Office of General

Counsel will determine if an appropriate records category already exists or if a new records category needs to be established.

Contact the Office of General Counsel with questions about records concerning any litigation or investigation.

RECORDS RETENTION AND DISPOSITION SCHEDULE

The Retention Schedule provides categories of records that are common to many divisions, departments, groups, or sections, called administrative and common records, which cross functional areas. In addition, the Retention Schedule provides categories of records that are specific to certain divisions, departments, groups, or sections. The periods of authorized retention are prescribed for each category of record.

All Institute Records are to be kept for the retention periods listed in the Retention Schedule. Institute Records identified in the Retention Schedule refer to originals, both electronic and paper, unless otherwise stated. Copies of original records maintained for convenience are not covered by the Retention Schedule and should not be retained when they are no longer useful.

Archival Records are records that have lasting historical value. Many archival records are used for research and reference by the Institute and the general public. They are retained permanently. The Caltech Archives or JPL Archives should be contacted with any questions, for example, whether records have such enduring value that they should be designated Archival Records (<http://archives.caltech.edu>, <https://beacon.jpl.nasa.gov/archives>).

Vital Records are records whose loss could result in significant damage to the Institute and that would be difficult to reconstruct if lost, stolen, or destroyed. These include records that are essential to document the Institute's legal, financial or research position and to preserve the Institute's ongoing operation, and are indicated as Vital Records on the Records Retention and Disposition Schedule.

DISPOSAL OF RECORDS

Institute Records ready for disposal may be disposed of using regularly established departmental practices for handling recyclable or waste paper. When destroying confidential and sensitive records, the information must be removed from paper records such that it is unreadable and from digital records such that it is irretrievable.

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