



| Verification | Originator | Approved   | Issued     |
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| Initials     | SMP        | ST         | ST         |
| Date         | 09/26/2014 | 12/15/2014 | 12/15/2014 |

## Title: COFL-GTL-ED- 4.5.4-2 Records Retention & Destruction Policy

**Person responsible:** ESMS Coordinator

**Area of application:** George T. Lohmeyer Wastewater Treatment Plant (GTL)

**Document location:** [www.fortlauderdale.gov/ESMS](http://www.fortlauderdale.gov/ESMS)

### Revisions

| Rev. No. | Date    | Description                                       |
|----------|---------|---|
| 001      | 6/23/15 | Annual Review Maintenance                         |
| 002      | 8/7/15  | Minor text updates.                               |
| 003      | 7/29/16 | Annual review maintenance and minor text updates. |

### Recurring action items

| Activity   | Responsibility   | Frequency                               |
|--|------------------|---|
| 1. Review Records Retention & Destruction Policy with ESMS Core Team | ESMS Coordinator | Annually or Within 30 days of any audit |

### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines to staff regarding the retention or disposal of GTL papers and documents (“records”); provide for the identification, maintenance, safeguarding and disposal of records in the normal course of business; ensure prompt and accurate retrieval of records; and ensure compliance with legal and regulatory requirements.

The **City Manager** authorizes the **ESMS Coordinator** to interpret and implement this policy and to cause to be destroyed any records that meet the policy specifications. For the purpose of this policy, electronic records, including, but not limited to, email must be analyzed and retained in the same manner and to the same extent as paper records.



## Policy

1. **Records and information management (RIM)** is the systematic control of records, regardless of media, from their creation or receipt, through their processing, distribution, organization, storage, and retrieval to their disposition. Information flows through the organization in the form of paper and electronic records such as word processing documents, spreadsheets, e-mail, graphical images, and voice or data transmissions.
2. This policy details the requirements and responsibilities to initiate a well- defined RIM program. The RIM program applies to those departments that require a long-term records retention, storage, and destruction program.
  - A. Ensure only essential records of continuing value are preserved. Records should be retained in the active office areas as long as they serve the immediate administrative, legal, or fiscal purpose for which they were created.
  - B. Establish safeguards against the illegal removal, loss, or destruction of records. Records either should be disposed of in accordance with an approved records retention schedule or transferred to the records retention center until the prescribed retention period has expired.
  - C. Management of records is the responsibility of the owner, or creator, of the record. The **Regional Wastewater Facility Manager** or the designated representative should contact the **ESMS Coordinator** to discuss initiating a records management program or reviewing an existing records management program to properly handle records from their creation through their destruction. Staff can be provided guidance on how records should be organized and stored to ensure timely and efficient retrieval.
  - D. The records retention schedule is the key tool for GTL to use to manage their records effectively. Information is a valuable asset. However, if records that contain information cannot be retrieved efficiently or are retained beyond their legal, regulatory, or administrative retention period, they lose their value and may impose a liability to the organization.
3. Significant recurring activities initiated by the **ESMS Coordinator** include:
  - A. Annual inventory of the records center: The **ESMS Coordinator** will annually inventory records in the records center to confirm information in the records retention tracking system.
  - B. Annual review of the records retention schedule: The **ESMS Coordinator** will have the records retention schedule reviewed and validated annually for accuracy.



- C. Annual files purge program: The **ESMS Coordinator** will advertise and initiate an annual files purge by departments.

## General Guidelines

1. GTL shall generally retain documents in their original form for a minimum of two years unless a differing duration is specifically authorized by State or Federal regulation. GTL's emails are not centrally maintained, and therefore, only specifically designated emails will be retained for the specified duration. The **Management Representative** may authorize the destruction of any duplicate records, including duplicates less than two years old, if no longer needed.
2. Except where a longer retention period is required, at a minimum of three years, GTL, with the **Management Representative's** approval, may destroy any document within GTL's Fenceline.
3. GTL shall retain original administrative, legal, fiscal and/or historical records with continued value as appropriate (e.g. records for long-term transactions, pending litigation and/or special projects) until matters pertaining to such records are completely resolved or the time of or appeal has expired.
5. Except where this policy provides that an original document shall be retained, GTL may retain records electronically, on microfilm or other media meeting the following requirements:
  - A. The item must be scanned, photographed, or otherwise reproduced on film or any other medium which does not permit additions, deletions or changes to the original document in compliance with the minimum standards and/or guidelines as recommended by the American National Standards Institute of the Association for Information and Image Management for recording of permanent records or nonpermanent records, whichever applies.
  - B. The original must be accurately reproduced with details.
  - C. The reproductions must be stored in conveniently accessible file, and provision must be made for preserving, examining and using the files.

## Litigation Holds and Other Special Situations

GTL requires employees to fully comply with its published records retention schedules and procedures as provided in this policy. Employees should note the following general exception to any stated destruction schedule: If you believe, or **City Attorney's Office** informs you, that GTL's records are relevant to current litigation, potential litigation (that is, a dispute that could



result in litigation), government investigation, audit or other event, you must preserve and not delete, dispose, destroy or change those records, including e-mails, until **City Attorney's Office** determines those records are no longer needed. This exception, usually referred to as litigation, hold or legal hold, replaces any previously or subsequently established destruction schedule for those records. If you believe this exception may apply, or have any question regarding whether it may possibly apply, please contact **City Attorney's Office**.