

POLICY TYPE:

**POLICY TITLE: Document and Data Records Retention Policy**

Date Adopted by Board:

---

### **BACKGROUND**

Generally, BCCA Employee Benefit Trust (BCCA EBT) retains both paper and electronic records. Paper records are kept onsite and electronic records are kept on servers outside of the province in Canada. BCCA EBT does not destroy paper records pertaining to client files. Both paper copies and electronic copies of client paper records are retained because they may be needed in the future, i.e. for claims adjudication or eligibility determination.

The risks of not having clear retention and destruction guidelines are:

- **Inconsistent retention practices** across departments.
- **Higher costs** of storing unnecessary records.
- **Non-compliant with privacy legislation** that sets limits on how long personal information is to be kept.
- **Unauthorized disclosure of personal information** that should be destroyed.
- **New systems/applications** do not have data retention/destruction capabilities.

**The purpose of this policy is to retain documents and data records only as long as is required to satisfy business and/or legal requirements.**

In this policy “data” and “information” are used interchangeably. A “record” is a paper document stored in a filing cabinet or desk, and electronic data stored on specific media (e.g. CD ROM, magnetic tape), or on a computer device (e.g. mainframe computer, servers, desktop computers, laptops, Blackberrys, iPhones and other PDA devices).

### **PURPOSE OF POLICY**

The policy seeks to:

- Promote compliance with provincial, federal and other legal requirements for record retention.
- Promote the efficient management, sharing, and transfer of information among authorized staff within prescribed security standards.
- Effectively utilize limited office space for active records.
- Dispose of records no longer needed to satisfy legal, regulatory or other requirements.
- Ensure that no record is disposed of unless authorized
- Ensure that the means of disposal and destruction is appropriate for the type of record under consideration.
- Ensure the preservation of records of permanent value.
- Ensure that record retention policies, schedules and procedures are reviewed and modified as necessary to respond to changes in technology or regulations.
- The purpose of this policy is to ensure that necessary records and documents are adequately protected and maintained and to ensure that records that are no longer needed or of no value are destroyed at the appropriate time.

## SCOPE

This standard applies to all employees of the BCCA EBT. New employees will receive instruction on this standard during their new hire orientation. This standard will be reviewed and updated as needed.

## RESPONSIBILITY

It is the responsibility of the Chief Executive Officer to implement and maintain the storage and protection of original documents as described by this policy.

## PROVISIONS

It is the policy of the BCCA EBT to keep documents for the greater of time periods established by this policy or time periods mandated by provincial and federal laws and regulations. Documents and electronically stored information will be managed and disposed of in accordance to provincial and federal regulations and standards.

## BENEFITS OF POLICY

- **Compliance with legal retention requirements** – legal requirements for each category of records is documented to ensure legal compliance.
- **Protection during litigation or audits** – the retention and destruction policy ensures records are available as required.
- **Protection of personal information** – a well-managed retention and destruction policy provides assurances personal information is kept only as long as legally required and is destroyed in a secure and effective manner. This reduces the risk of inadvertent or negligent disclosure of personal information, which reduces the costs associated with privacy breaches, requests for personal information, and corporate reputation.

## TYPES OF INFORMATION AT BCCA EBT

### 1. Personal Information

Personal information is any information about an identifiable individual, including employee personal information. It includes health, financial and tombstone data.

BCCA EBT complies with all applicable privacy laws and regulations [*Personal Information Protection Act (BC)*, *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (Canada)* and *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (BC)*].

These best privacy practices are important:

- Keep personal information only as long as necessary to satisfy the purposes for which it was collected.
- Establish guidelines and procedures for retaining and destroying personal information.
- Destroy, erase or render anonymous information that is no longer required for an identified purpose or a legal requirement.

### 2. Corporate Information

Corporate information includes confidential proprietary information and non-proprietary data. Examples are strategic planning documents, agendas/minutes of the Board of Directors and Board Committees,

agendas/minutes of the Executive Committee, legal documents, intellectual property, etc. This information is generally kept for as long as an organization is in business.

### 3. Emails

All e-mail messages, including personal emails, sent or received using company systems are considered company business and the property of BCCA EBT. BCCA EBT can access, copy, delete, monitor, or retain any message that is sent or received through the dedicated BCCA EBT email server.

The following guidelines for retention of emails:

- Education is important for effective management of emails and BCCA EBT will encourage staff to archive and delete emails on a regular basis.
- BCCA EBT will encourage staff to keep no more than **3 years** of emails on the network (the time may be shorter depending on allocated space). We recommend that emails be permanently deleted after 3 years. If some emails must be kept longer they should be archived to a PST file (on hard drive) or to disk. Archived emails should be limited to **2 years**. Emails stored on the hard drive should be permanently deleted and disks should be broken or shredded.
- BCCA EBT has the capability of purging emails from the network. Advance notice of the purges will be provided to staff.

## LEGISLATION

The following provincial/federal laws, regulations and bulletins are applicable to this policy:

- *Electronic Transactions Act* (BC)
- *Employment Standards Act* (BC)
- *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (BC)
- *Insurance Act* (BC)
- *Limitation Act* (BC)
- *Personal Information Protection Act* (BC)
- *Workers Compensation Act* (BC); *B.C. Reg. 296/97*
- *Unclaimed Property Act* (BC); *B.C. Reg. 463/99*
- *Canada Pension Plan* (Canada)
- *Employment Insurance Act* (Canada)
- *Income Tax Act* (Canada); *Income Tax IC78-10R4*
- *Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions Canada Bulletin E-5*

## PAPER AND ELECTRONIC RECORDS

Under the *Electronic Transactions Act* (BC), BCCA EBT is not required to keep duplicate paper and electronic records. Electronic documents can replace the paper equivalent, provided the electronic version is legible and accessible. Additionally, all data is securely backed up on SharePoint, ensuring that records are always easily accessible.

This policy proposes all strategic systems/software have the capability of retaining, archiving and purging/deleting data.

## ONSITE STORAGE

All paper copies of records are securely stored in our fire-rated and theft-protected storage room within the BCCA EBT Office. The room has a time sensitive lock and alarm system, ensuring that your records are securely protected. Only authorized BCCA Staff have access to this room. Older records are kept in our basement storage, securely locked in a concrete room. Only authorized BCCA staff have access to this room.

### *OFFSITE STORAGE*

BCCA EBT does not currently require offsite storage for paper documents or files. Electronic documents and data are stored and backed up on servers managed by PEER1™ in eastern Canada. The onsite storage facility has been constructed with appropriate commercial fire grade and theft prevention specifications.

### *DESTROYING RECORDS*

Records have to be kept for a minimum of six years from the end of the last tax year to which they relate. At BCCA EBT records are destroyed at this time, unless clients are still active on our plan. If they are still active, beneficiary cards and original enrolments are securely kept for claims adjudication purposes.

Urban Impact™ is contracted to collect and destroy the paper discarded in recycling bins at the office location every Friday. They pick up all materials that need to be shredded and place in a locked bin or console that is then transported to their secure facility. All documents and digital materials are destroyed within 36 hours of arrival at their facility. Urban Impact™ can also destroy data stored on CDs, flash drives and magnetic tape.