



5 c: Retention

Personal information should only be retained for as long as it serves its purpose. Certain legislation and regulatory directives stipulate how long patient information is required for ongoing care and treatment. Here is a checklist to guide you:

- How long are we required to retain employee records?
- How long are we required to retain patient records?
- How do we safely destroy, erase or de-identify information that is no longer required for an identified purpose or to meet legal requirements?

Review your personal information inventory and procedures. Here is a checklist to guide you:

- Institute minimum and maximum retention periods that take into account legal requirements or restrictions and redress mechanisms
- Establish a records retention schedule
- Dispose of information that does not have a specific purpose or no longer fulfills its intended purpose
- Dispose of personal information in a way that prevents a privacy breach (e.g., shredding paper records or deleting electronic records)
- Before disposing of any electronic devices such as computers, photocopiers and mobile phones, ensure that all personal information is fully deleted
- Establish policies and procedures for retention
- Conduct regular reviews to determine whether information is still required
- Establish policies and procedures for retention
- Ensure employees are trained about how long records need to be retained

References:

Canada Revenue Agency Records Retention Requirements <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/records/>
College of Physicians and Surgeons of BC <https://www.cpsbc.ca/files/pdf/PSG-Medical-Records.pdf>