

Water today, water tomorrow

Ofwat's retention and disposal policy for implementation from 1 November 2011

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About this document

This document sets out our policy on retaining and disposing of documents created and maintained by us. It sets out recommended retention periods for the different types of document we hold. It also includes a list of the documents that will be held permanently under the terms of the Public Record Act.

The aim of the policy is to provide a consistent approach to the way we handle our documents and provides a clear set of guidelines to all of our staff. It serves the purpose of identifying documents that may be worth preserving permanently, as well as preventing the destruction of records that need to be retained for a specific legal or financial period.

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Introduction

This schedule supports the classification and protection of Ofwat's information assets to:

- ensure it fulfils its statutory duties;
- has the right information available to make decisions; and
- avoids making inadvertent disclosures.

As a public body, we have a duty to retain proper records of our activities. This duty does not, however, require us to retain all information indefinitely. The guiding principle is to retain information that allows key regulatory decisions to be explained.

Scope

This schedule covers the whole of Ofwat's information.

It includes all documents, both electronic and paper. It does not include any non-Ofwat documents we hold unless listed in the schedule below.

Retention periods for paper records are the same as for electronic records, although the methods of disposal will differ. The retention schedule helps us to:

- meet our legal obligations regarding which records to keep and for how long;
- provide Ofwat staff with the information needed to make correct disposal decisions;
- reduce storage costs; and
- improve the security of information.

Records needing permanent retention

A number of Ofwat records will be held permanently under the terms of the Public Record Act. The following documents are transferred to The National Archives (TNA) according to the [Operational Selection Policy](#) (OSP 47). Note that since 2002, the TNA acquires web publications by the regular capture of Ofwat's website.

- Annual reports (held by House of Commons Library and British Library);
- consultation papers;
- investigations;
- letters to Managing Directors;
- letters to Regulatory Directors;
- position papers (Ofwat policy statements);
- reports commissioned by Ofwat and published;
- reports on water companies (annual comparative reports which were published);
- submissions, responses, evidence (policy statements to other government departments, or witness statements to the Competition Commission which were published);
- Board minutes and papers (includes any draft papers discussed at meetings);
- Executive Team minutes and papers (includes any draft papers discussed at meetings); and
- price review and interim determinations (final determinations document, methodology paper and financial rule book and IDOKs).

Classification and retention schedule

The tables on the following pages detail the retention schedule under the following headings.

Information type	Top-level categories of Ofwat's information assets
Sub type	Second-level categories of Ofwat's information assets
Retention period	How long Ofwat will keep this information (applies to all documents kept on site and in archive)

Information type	Sub type	Retention period
Regulation		
	Submissions:	Base year of price review until acceptance of next Final Determination (FD) (for example for the 2004 price review it is 2002-03 to January 2010)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> periodic review 	Base year of price review until acceptance of next FD
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> business plan 	Base year of price review until acceptance of next FD
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> company charges schemes 	Seven years from date of approval of charges
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> June return (includes commentaries/data) 	Base year of price review until acceptance of next FD
	Company data (and associated reporting requirements)	Kept permanently in electronic format
	Reporters/Auditors reports	Base year of price review until acceptance of next FD
	Team analysis of company information	Base year of price review until acceptance of next FD
	Company correspondence	Base year of price review until acceptance of next FD
	Interim determinations of price limits (IDOKs):	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IDOK application, including supporting information (correspondence, quality assurance reports, financial models and consultation responses) 	Acceptance of the next FD plus five years (for example) an IDOK application from 2006 is held until five years after the final determination of 2009, that is 2014)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IDOK policy and legal decisions 	Acceptance of the next FD plus 15 years
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IDOK referral to Competition Commission (correspondence, quality assurance reports, financial models and other supporting information and internal documents) 	Acceptance of the next FD plus five years
Casework (Note the Data Protection Act applies to records of a personal nature)		
	Freedom of Information (FOI) (case records, policy,	Refer to The National Archives (TNA) guidance

	statistical data, exemptions, appeals)	
	General public enquiry work (includes media enquiries)	Three years
	Legal and case papers (including complaints and any evidence, includes referrals of determinations to the Competition Commission and applications for new appointments and variations)	Closure of case plus 10 years
	Parliamentary (includes MP's letters)	Five years
Communications		
	External	The National Archives capture of website / follow TNA guidance
	Internal	Two years
	Internal: Observer	10 years
Estate management		
	Building security records	Three years
	Facilities Management records	Three years
	Safety and security records (not personal employee assessments)	Five years
Financial management		
	Accounting ledgers	Refer to TNA guidance
	Internal control records	Refer to TNA guidance
	Legal duty	Refer to TNA guidance
	Resource Management	Refer to TNA guidance
	Supporting ledger information	Refer to TNA guidance
General correspondence		
	Includes contact with other government departments and companies	Two years
Human resource management		
	Employee records (not personal copies of leave, training forms etc.), unsuccessful applicant records	Refer to TNA guidance

ICT management		
	Support records	Seven years
	Development tools/documentation	Seven years
	IT security documents	Seven years
Legal		
	Legislation: development	Five years
	Counsel and key legal advice	Closure of case plus 15 years
	General legal advice	Closure of case plus 10 years
Ofwat management		
	Ofwat proof of meeting legal duty	Five years
	DG Register (includes maps & licences)	For duration of Ofwat (See s195 WIA91 for contents of the DG register)
	Resources (templates, logos etc.)	Two years
	Plans and strategy (including projects)	Until no longer used
	Project documentation	Two years
	Authorisations/delegations	When in force plus six months
Policy and guidance		
	Policy and guidance: external	For long as it remains in force plus five years
	Policy and guidance: internal	For long as it remains in force plus two years
Procurement		
	Contractual (includes leases)	Six years from end of contract
	Unsuccessful tenders	One year after date of last paper
	Successful tenders	Seven years
Research and development		
	Consultancy (excluding market reform)	Five years
	Consultancy (market reform)	10 years
	Comparative work	Five years
	Unpublished research	Five years

Reviewing this policy

This policy will be reviewed one year after publication and then every three years.

Further information

Any queries about the retention schedule should be directed to enquiries@ofwat.gsi.gov.uk



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