



Handout 1.4—Examples of Information/Records, by Function, That Might Be Designated as Essential

Note: Many of these records may exist in more than one format—e.g., paper, microfilm, electronic versions, etc.

Table 1: Key to Designations

ESSENTIAL RECORDS	OTHER RECORDS, NON-ESSENTIAL
1 = Emergency response; health, and safety of staff	6 = Important (30-year-plus retention)
2 = Necessary to resume or continue operations	7 = Useful (10–30-year retention)
3 = Health, safety, property, and rights of residents and the government	8 = Dispensable (less than 10-year retention)
4 = Require massive resources to reconstruct	
5 = Document the history of communities or families	

Table 2: Examples of Information/Records by Function and Designation(s)

ESSENTIAL RECORD TYPE	DESIGNATION
ADMINISTRATION	
Payroll	2
Correspondence of policy-level content by heads of major departments	5
Correspondence of transmittal, of thanks, information requests	8
Purchase orders	8
Insurance	2
Delegation of authority	2
Current ordinances, laws, policies, directives	2
Taxes (paid, unpaid, pending, abated, liens)	3, 4
Property value assessing	3
Computer program documentation	2
Computer system documentation, unpublished manuals	2
Office equipment inventory/repair records	6
Forms for applications, licenses, permits, tax payments	2
Annual reports summarizing the government's activity	5
Published manuals, procedures, reference material	7



Table 2: Examples of Information/Records by Function and Designation(s), continued

ESSENTIAL RECORD TYPE	DESIGNATION
COUNTY, CITY, TOWN CLERKS/REGISTRARS	
Minutes of meetings	2, 5
Birth and death certificates, burial permits, marriage licenses	3
Voter registration lists	3
Deeds, mortgages, land records	3
Licenses, permits issued/applications	3
Case files	3
Adoptions	3
Changes of name	3
Decedents' estates	3
FINANCE, TREASURY, ACCOUNTING	
Accounts payable and receivable	2
Bonds, notes	2
Capital assets	3
Audit reports	5
Audit, internal (working papers)	6
Budget, final official document	4
Budget, working files	6
FACILITIES, PUBLIC WORKS	
Building plans, existing buildings	1
Building plans, no longer owned	8
Infrastructure and utility plans	1
Maps (e.g., tax, roads, subdivisions, hazards)	1
EMERGENCY SERVICES	
Emergency Management Plan	1
Continuity of Operations Plan (contingency plan)	1
Essential records plans, locations of records	1
Emergency delegations of authority	1
Emergency contact information	1
E911 addressing data	1
HUMAN RESOURCES/PERSONNEL	
Employee contracts, status, benefits, retirement	2
Wage rates	2
Applications for employment, position pending	2
Applications for employment, position filled	8