GUIDE TO THE STANDARD FOR RETENTION OF PROJECT DOCUMENTATION

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PREFACE

This *Guide to the Standard for Retention of Project Documentation* (the "Guide") was developed by Engineers and Geoscientists British Columbia to explain the standards of practice, conduct, and competence for Professional Registrants when creating, using, and retaining Records related to their professional practice.

This current revision was undertaken to incorporate Registrant Firm requirements and address the use of artificial intelligence (AI) as it relates to retention of project Documentation.

This Guide provides Engineers and Geoscientists BC's interpretation of Section 7.3.2 of the Bylaws. Professional Registrants and Registrant Firms are required to meet this standard by having regard for the information provided in this Guide. Professional Registrants are required to exercise their professional judgment when applying this standard in their practice. Registrant Firms are required to have documented policies and procedures in their Professional Practice Management Plan (PPMP) to meet this standard. This Guide is a living document that is to be revised and updated as required to reflect the developing state of practice.

ABBREVIATIONS

ABBREVIATION	TERM
AI	Artificial Intelligence
BC	British Columbia
CADD	Computer-Aided Drafting and Design
EGBC	Engineers and Geoscientists BC
PGA	*Professional Governance Act*
PPMP	Professional Practice Management Plan

DEFINED TERMS

The following definitions are specific to this Guide. These words and terms are capitalized throughout the document:

TERM	DEFINITION
Act	The *Professional Governance Act*, S.B.C. 2018, c. 47.
Bylaws	The Bylaws of Engineers and Geoscientists BC made under the *Act*.
Check (and derivatives)	A documented process to confirm the professional engineering or professional geoscience work is complete, meets all input requirements, and is suitable for its intended use or purpose. This encompasses all of the various Checks that occur or ought to occur throughout the development, presentation, production, and performance of any Regulated Practice work in any sector.
Document(s)	Includes any physical or electronic Record, including but not limited to a report, certificate, memo, specification, drawing, map, or plan, that conveys a design, direction, estimate, calculation, opinion, interpretation, observation, model, or simulation that relates to the Regulated Practice.
Documentation	See the definition for "Record."
Engineers and Geoscientists BC	The Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of the Province of British Columbia, operating as Engineers and Geoscientists BC.
Firm	As defined in the *Act*: "(a) a government registrant; (b) a legal entity or a combination of legal entities that is engaged in a regulated practice, whether the practice occurs solely within the firm or in the provision of services to a person or entity outside the firm, unless the legal entity or combination of legal entities is exempted from this Act by regulation of the Lieutenant Governor in Council;".
Guide	A guide to a program or regulatory topic, published by Engineers and Geoscientists BC. These include Guides to quality management standards that in accordance with the *Act* and Bylaws define professional obligations related to specific processes and explain the minimum standards of practice, conduct, and competence expected from Professional Registrants and Registrant Firms.
Permit to Practice	A certificate bearing a Permit to Practice number that is issued to a Registrant Firm by Engineers and Geoscientists BC and confirms the Registrant Firm is entitled to engage in the Reserved Practice in BC, subject to any suspensions, limitations, conditions, or restrictions on the Registrant Firm's registration.
Professional Practice Management Plan	A Document developed and maintained by a Registrant Firm, which must meet the requirements set out in Section 7.7.3 of the Bylaws.
Professional Registrant	A Registrant of Engineers and Geoscientists BC who is registered in one of the following categories of Registrants: (a) professional engineer; (b) professional geoscientist; (c) professional licensee engineering; (d) professional licensee geoscience; (e) life member prior to 1998; (f) honorary life member.

TERM	DEFINITION
Record (Documentation)	Any Document that is evidence of Regulated Practice activities, events, or transactions, or is evidence that a Professional Registrant has met their professional and contractual obligations.
Records Management	The systematic control of all Records, regardless of media, from creation to disposal.
Registrant	As defined in the *Act*: "(a) a professional engineer, (b) a professional geoscientist, (c) a firm that is registered with the regulatory body under this Act, if firms may be registered in respect of that regulatory body, or (d) an individual or firm, as applicable, that is registered with the regulatory body as another category or subcategory of registrant in accordance with the bylaws of the regulatory body".
Registrant Firm	A Firm that is registered with Engineers and Geoscientists BC as a Registrant and is a holder of a Permit to Practice.
Regulated Practice	As defined in the *Act* and the *Regulation*, the carrying on of a profession by a registrant of a regulatory body, which for the purposes of this Guide means the practice of professional engineering or the practice of professional geoscience.
Regulation	The *Engineers and Geoscientists Regulation*, OIC 2021/037.
Reserved Practice	As defined in the *Act* and the *Regulation*, a Regulated Practice for which the right to practice is reserved for registrants of a regulatory body.
Retention Period	The period of at least 10 years after the later of the completion of the project or when the Documentation is no longer used, during which complete project Documentation must be retained and preserved.

VERSION HISTORY

VERSION NUMBER	PUBLISHED DATE	DESCRIPTION OF CHANGES
4.0	September 1, 2026	Incorporated content and guidance specific to Registrant Firms from the retired *Regulation of Firms Permit to Practice Manual*; addressed the use of AI as it relates to retention of project Documentation; minor editorial corrections.
3.0	June 15, 2023	Updated content to conform with the *Act* and updated Bylaws; minor editorial corrections and clarifications.
2.0	February 17, 2021	Updated the content and terminology to conform with the *Act* and updated Bylaws; changed the main title to *Guide to the Standard for Retention of Project Documentation*; changed the document category from "quality management guidelines" to "quality management guides."
1.3	January 9, 2018	Updated the format to align with the new Engineers and Geoscientists BC brand; minor editorial corrections.
1.2	October 7, 2013	Minor editorial corrections.
1.1	February 25, 2013	Minor editorial corrections.
1.0	May 2012	Initial version.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 OVERVIEW

1.1.1 Engineers and Geoscientists BC is the regulatory and licensing body for the engineering and geoscience professions in British Columbia (BC). To protect the public interest, Engineers and Geoscientists BC establishes, monitors, and enforces standards for the qualifications and practice of Professional Registrants and Registrant Firms.

1.1.2 Engineers and Geoscientists BC provides practice resources to Professional Registrants and Registrant Firms to assist them in meeting their professional and ethical obligations under the *Act* and Bylaws. One category of these practice resources is Guides to quality management standards, which explain the standards of practice, conduct, and competence for quality management in professional activities.

1.1.3 This Guide explains the standards of practice, conduct, and competence expected of Professional Registrants when creating, using, and retaining Records related to their professional practice. It explains how Professional Registrants should create, use, and store evidence of engineering or geoscience-related activities, events, or transactions, or evidence that a Professional Registrant has met their professional and contractual obligations.

1.1.4 This Guide provides Engineers and Geoscientists BC's interpretation of the standard described in Section 7.3.2 of the Bylaws. Professional Registrants and Registrant Firms are required to meet the standard by having regard for the information included in this Guide. Professional Registrants are required to exercise their professional judgment when applying the standard in their practice. There may be limited circumstances where, in a Professional Registrant's professional judgment, there are sound technical or ethical reasons to depart from the interpretation in this Guide. In those circumstances, Professional Registrants should record the technical or ethical reasons for the departure and use their professional judgment to make sure the resulting work still meets the intent of the standards in the Bylaws. Any opinion, analysis, or other Document containing technical or ethical reasons for the departure is inherently related to the Regulated Practice and therefore constitutes a Record which must be maintained. When departing from the interpretation in this Guide, Professional Registrants remain responsible for exercising their professional judgment to conduct their practice in a manner that meets the intent of the standards in the Bylaws.

1.2 PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

1.2.1 This Guide provides a common approach applicable to all Professional Registrants who create Records as part of their professional activities or work.

1.2.2 For Professional Registrants, this Guide is intended to:

- describe the minimum standards for retention of project Records;
- assist Professional Registrants in establishing and maintaining a documented quality management procedure for retaining complete project Records;
- explain what types of Documents constitute Records that must be retained;
- describe the qualities and procedures necessary to ensure retained Records are useful and reliable;
- describe the procedures necessary for the creation, use, and retention of reliable Records; and
- provide guidance on how to meet the quality management requirements under the *Act* and Bylaws when engaged in creating, using, and retaining Records in a Regulated Practice.

1.2.3 For Registrant Firms, this Guide details the requirements governing the retention of complete project Documentation. The principal obligation of the Registrant Firm is to establish and maintain documented policies and procedures detailing their approach to Document management. The Registrant Firm must also ensure Professional Registrants employed by or under contract with the Registrant Firm follow these policies and procedures. These policies and procedures are intended to ensure complete project Documentation is retained and preserved for the Retention Period, defined in the Bylaws as being at least 10 years after either the completion of the project or the last use of the Documentation, whichever is later. These policies and procedures should also address how project Documentation will be retained and preserved if the Registrant Firm enters bankruptcy proceedings or otherwise ceases to exist as an independent operating entity.

1.3 ROLE OF ENGINEERS AND GEOSCIENTISTS BC

1.3.1 This Guide was developed under the direction of Engineers and Geoscientists BC's Board and, prior to publication, underwent final legal and editorial reviews. This Guide forms part of Engineers and Geoscientists BC's continuing commitment to establishing and monitoring the quality of professional services Registrants provide to their clients and to the public.

1.3.2 Retention of project Documentation is a critical requirement for assisting Professional Registrants in fulfilling their professional obligations, including holding paramount the safety, health, and welfare of the public. Retention of project Documentation ensures Professional Registrants are appropriately keeping Records of the professional engineering or professional geoscience work they are carrying out or delegating to a subordinate.

1.4 SCOPE

1.4.1 Proper and appropriate retention of complete project Documentation is fundamental to upholding the *Act* and Bylaws, including the Code of Ethics in Schedule A of the Bylaws, which require all Professional Registrants hold paramount

the safety, health, and welfare of the public, including the protection of the environment, and the promotion of health and safety within the workplace.

1.4.2 As required by the Bylaws, Professional Registrants must meet the requirement for retention of complete project Documentation for all projects. The Documents and Records created by Professional Registrants are highly variable, depending on the circumstances and requirements of the work. As such, this Guide establishes the requirements for professional practice in broad terms. Professional practice in specific industries may require compliance with other legislative or regulatory requirements for the retention of Documents and Records. This Guide establishes the minimum expected of Professional Registrants.

1.4.3 Registrant Firms are required to establish, maintain, and ensure adherence to documented policies and procedures in relation to the retention and preservation of complete project Documentation for the Retention Period.

1.4.4 This Guide is intended to assist Professional Registrants in establishing and maintaining a documented quality management procedure for retaining complete project Records that complies with the requirements of the *Act* and of the Bylaws by addressing:

- which project Documents to retain as Records;
- the roles and responsibilities for controlling and retaining project Records;
- keeping digital Records;
- the Retention Period; and
- considerations for effective Document control and retention.

1.4.5 This Guide is intended to assist Registrant Firms in ensuring:

- documented policies and procedures are contained within their PPMP for their Professional Registrants to follow in order to meet the intent of this Guide;
- the applicable sections of their PPMP are communicated to and followed by all individuals employed by or under contract with the Registrant Firm; and
- reasonable steps are taken to assist Professional Registrants in meeting their obligations as set out in the Bylaws and in this Guide.

1.4.6 Both Professional Registrants and Registrant Firms have obligations to retain Documentation. However, for Professional Registrants employed by Registrant Firms, Documents and Records are generally the property of the Registrant Firms; therefore, the means by which Registrant Firms manage and retain Documents and Records are often established by the Registrant Firms themselves. Professional Registrants employed by Registrant Firms are not required to maintain a separate set of Documents and Records when the means and methods by which the Registrant Firms retain project Records are consistent with the intent of the Bylaws and this Guide. Engineers and Geoscientists BC recognizes this may mean Professional Registrants may lose access to professional engineering or professional geoscience Documents and Records when they leave Registrant Firms, or in the event of dissolution or bankruptcy of Registrant Firms.

1.4.7 If a Professional Registrant is working for a Firm which does not have a Permit to Practice, the Professional Registrant still has the obligation to manage and retain Documents and Records if they are engaging in the Regulated Practice. In this case, the Professional Registrant must ensure a documented policy and procedure is in place for managing and retaining Documents and Records.

1.4.8 Project Records in the context of this Guide include Documents related to any continuing Regulated Practice, which may not have a discrete start and end date, may result in or apply to a service or product, and may occur in any industry.

1.4.9 Terminology used within an industry may not match the terminology used in this Guide. However, the obligations of Professional Registrants and Registrant Firms in all industries remain the same: to ensure the retention of Documents and Records meets the intent of the *Act*, the Bylaws, and this Guide.

2.0 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

2.1 Section 57(1) of the *Act*, Standards of conduct and competence, states that:

"(1) Subject to subsection (2) and (3), the board of each regulatory body must make bylaws establishing the following:

(a) standards of professional and ethical conduct for registrants, which standards may be different for different categories or subcategories of registrants;

(b) standards of competence for registrants, which standards may be different for different categories or subcategories of registrants or different areas of practices;

..."

2.2 Section 7.3.2 of the Bylaws, Standard for Retention and Preservation of Complete Project Documentation, states that:

"(1) A Professional Registrant must establish, maintain, and follow documented procedures for the retention and preservation of complete project documentation related to the Regulated Practice engaged in by the Professional Registrant, including copies of physical or electronic versions of

(a) correspondence,

(b) investigations,

(c) surveys,

(d) reports,

(e) data,

(f) background information,

(g) assessments,

(h) designs,

(i) specifications,

(j) documentation related to reviews, including independent reviews and field reviews,

(k) testing information,

(l) models,

(m) simulations,

(n) quality assurance documentation,

(o) drawings,

(p) calculations, and

(q) copies of all Authenticated Documents.

(2) A Registrant Firm must establish, maintain, and follow documented policies and procedures for the retention and preservation of complete project documentation related to the Regulated Practice engaged in by the Registrant Firm, including copies of physical and electronic versions of

(a) correspondence,

(b) investigations,

(c) surveys,

(d) reports,

(e) data,

(f) background information,

(g) assessments,

(h) designs,

(i) specifications,

(j) documentation related to reviews, including independent reviews and field reviews,

(k) testing information,

(l) models,

(m) simulations,

(n) quality assurance documentation,

(o) drawings,

(p) calculations, and

(q) copies of all Authenticated Documents.

(3) Complete project documentation must be retained and preserved for at least 10 years after the later of the completion of the project or when the documentation is no longer used.

(4) A Registrant Firm must do all of the following:

(a) establish and maintain documented policies, plans, and procedures

(i) in order to ensure that, if any of the situations set out in section 5.32(4) of the Bylaws [*Information Collected Immediately and not Published on the Register*] occur with respect to a Registrant Firm, complete project documentation is preserved in accordance with subsection (3) and such documentation is accessible in the event of a request pursuant to the PGA or Bylaws, and

(ii) for all individuals employed by or under contract with the Registrant Firm to follow in relation to the retention and preservation of complete project documentation and the obligations of Professional Registrants and Registrant Firms pursuant to this section of the Bylaws;

(b) ensure that all individuals employed by or under contract with the Registrant Firm adhere to the documented policies and procedures of the Registrant Firm established pursuant to subsection (a);

(c) take reasonable steps to facilitate the Professional Registrants employed by or under contract with the Registrant Firm in adhering to the obligations of Professional Registrants pursuant to subsections (1) and (3).

(5) A Professional Registrant who is employed by or under contract with a Registrant Firm may satisfy their obligations pursuant to this section of the Bylaws with respect to any project documentation produced during the course of their employment or contract with the Registrant Firm by

(a) taking reasonable steps to confirm that

(i) the Registrant Firm has in place documented policies and procedures for the retention and preservation of all project documentation produced by the Professional Registrant during the course of or related to their employment or contract with the Registrant Firm, and

(ii) that the documented policies and procedures referred to in subsection (a)(i) are in accordance with the requirements set out in subsections (2), (3), and (4), and

(b) consistently adhering to the documented policies and procedures of the Registrant Firm with respect to retention and preservation of project documentation established pursuant to subsection (4)(a) during the course of the Professional Registrant's employment or contract with the Registrant Firm.

(6) A Professional Registrant who ceases to be employed by or under contract with a Registrant Firm may continue to satisfy their obligation to retain and preserve complete project documentation pursuant to subsection (3) by ensuring that

(a) an agreement is in place with the Registrant Firm regarding the retention and preservation of all project documentation produced by the Professional Registrant during the course of their employment or contract with the Registrant Firm, and

(b) the agreement referenced in subsection (a) requires either the Professional Registrant or the Registrant Firm, or both, to retain and preserve all project documentation in accordance with the requirements in this section of the Bylaws."

2.3 This Guide is intended to assist Registrants in understanding the standard of practice and in fulfilling their professional obligations in accordance with Section 7.3.2 of the Bylaws. This Guide may be used by Engineers and Geoscientists BC in disciplinary proceedings as evidence of professional standards, and of the conduct expected of a Registrant in particular circumstances, in support of allegations of conduct unbecoming a Registrant, incompetence, or professional misconduct.

3.0 STANDARDS FOR PRACTICE

3.1 PURPOSE AND REQUIREMENTS OF RETAINING PROJECT RECORDS

3.1.1 Retaining complete and easily retrievable project Records is critical to the professional practice of Professional Registrants and Registrant Firms. Having a full set of properly retained project Documents allows a Registrant to cooperate with other individuals or firms working on the project, and to ensure an orderly handoff from one project manager or other team member to another, even when the handoff is unexpected or on a short timeframe. It can make the difference between a well-run project that meets client objectives and professional standards, and one that does not.

3.1.2 After the completion of the activities or work, complete Records enable Professional Registrants to demonstrate how they have met their regulatory obligations, as required in the *Act* and Code of Ethics, and the intent of Section 7.3.2 of the Bylaws. The Records may also allow Registrants to resolve issues, meet legal and regulatory requirements, document decision-making procedures, defend claims, facilitate undertaking future work, or make intellectual property readily retrievable for future solutions.

3.1.3 To comply with the Bylaws, Professional Registrants must have established, or have access to through the Registrant Firm's PPMP, documented quality management procedures that address Retention of Records related to the Regulated Practice.

3.1.4 A documented quality management procedure may be captured in a written procedure, process flowchart, set of checklists, forms, or other Documentation developed to suit the nature of the work undertaken by Professional Registrants.

3.2 WHAT DOCUMENTATION SHOULD BE RETAINED AS RECORDS AND WHEN

3.2.1 A Record is anything that contains information that needs to be kept as evidence of a decision or action, regardless of medium or form. The types of Documents generated vary widely across areas of Regulated Practice, so the question of whether a Document should be retained as a Record is best answered by examining the purpose of the Document. Documents should be retained as Records if they are evidence of professional engineering- or professional geoscience related activities or work, events, or transactions, or are evidence that Professional Registrants have met their professional and contractual obligations.

3.2.2 Documents not relevant to the Regulated Practice, such as insignificant correspondence about lunches, appointments, newsletters, advertisements, and social exchanges, do not need to be retained as Records and may be discarded once they are no longer useful

to Professional Registrants. Duplicates and convenience copies of Documents, including those containing content related to the Regulated Practice, do not need to be retained as Records where the original Documents are retained. Registrants should be aware that other statutory or legal retention requirements may apply and such obligations are beyond the scope of this Guide.

3.2.3 Records may be created and stored in various media and formats. It is the function, not the form, that determines whether a Document should be retained as a Record. Evidence of Regulated Practice activities or work, events, or communications, or evidence that a Professional Registrant has met their professional and contractual obligations may be in hard copy or digital form, so long as the Records are retained, accessible to the relevant Registrants, and can be produced during a regulatory proceeding. For example:

- handwritten notes;
- voice mail;
- email; or
- files created by software used for
  - word processing,
  - spreadsheets,
  - computer-aided drafting and design (CADD), or
  - presentations.

3.2.4 Documents that are evidence of professional engineering or professional geoscience-related activities or work, events, or communications, or are evidence that Professional Registrants have met their professional and contractual obligations, must be retained as Records for the Retention Period.

3.2.5 Statutory or regulatory requirements in a jurisdiction, such as the provincial *Limitation Act*, may mandate retention duration longer than the Retention Period. Business and contractual obligations must be considered and may also necessitate longer retention durations. Current and anticipated litigation, audits, government inspections, or other legal issues may require the destruction of Documents be postponed to beyond the Retention Period.

3.2.6 Conversely, clients may request Professional Registrants surrender or destroy Documents or Records before the Retention Period has elapsed. Professional Registrants should be aware contractual terms do not supersede or eliminate their professional responsibility to maintain Records for the Retention Period.

3.2.7 When an AI-based system is used, appropriate project Documentation must be maintained and retained. The level of project Documentation will depend on the extent to which the AI-based system has been used in a project. For example, if AI is used to assist with written content for a report (e.g., grammar or paragraph structure) and this content is then reviewed by a Professional Registrant, this may not need Documentation. However, if AI is used to generate results for a report or to make design decisions, then its use must be documented to the same extent as if a Professional Registrant had researched the sources or completed the calculations themselves, as the responsibility for the work product rests entirely with the Professional Registrant regardless of whether AI-based systems are used.

3.2.8 Refer to the practice advisory *Use of Artificial Intelligence in Professional Work*

(Engineers and Geoscientists BC 2024) for guidance on using AI appropriately in professional activities or work. As this is a rapidly evolving context, professional judgment should be applied to the specific circumstances, recognizing that the published guidance may not keep pace with technological change.

3.2.9 Professional Registrants should exercise professional judgment to ensure the Records created and retained are appropriately complete given the nature of the work, the specifics of the situation, and any applicable Records retention program.

3.3 WHAT MAKES A GOOD PROFESSIONAL RECORD

3.3.1 Documents being retained as Records may be used as evidence in court or administrative tribunals, including hearings of Engineers and Geoscientists BC's Discipline Committee. No matter what form or media the Documents are in, certain qualities make Documents reliable as evidence, and therefore good Records:

- **Authenticity** – being able to show, through security and access control, the origin of the Document and the identity of those who created and revised it.
- **Integrity** – being able to show controls are in place to prevent the material content and meaning of the Document being changed after its creation or acceptance as a final version.
- **Accuracy** – being able to show the Document is correct and factual.
- **Completeness** – being able to show all parts of the original Document are intact.
- **Trustworthiness** – being able to demonstrate the Document control and Records Management systems provide authentic, reliable, accurate, and complete Records.

3.3.2 For ease of organization, Documents including emails should have easy references, titles, or labels that are project-specific and related to the subject of the Document. The project name alone may not provide enough context for Document-retention purposes.

3.3.3 When Documents encompassed only hard-copy originals, it may have been simpler to provide Records that met the qualities listed in Clause 3.3.1 of this Guide. However, with many or most Records being initiated and retained in digital formats, more consideration must be given to the procedures and systems for the control of Documents and Records to safeguard the qualities listed in Clause 3.3.1 of this Guide.

3.4 WHAT SHOULD BE IMPLEMENTED TO MANAGE DOCUMENTATION

3.4.1 RECORDS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

3.4.1.1 An effective program to manage Documents and Records must generally be in place before the start of the Regulated Practice activity, so that any Document created or received throughout the course of the project or work can be trusted as a Record.

3.4.1.2 The retention of professional engineering and professional geoscience Documents should be an integral part of an overall Records Management program. An effective program will typically include a policy, processes or procedures, and training.

3.4.2 POLICY

3.4.2.1 A policy for managing Documents and Records should include:

- definitions of what constitute Documents and Records;
- criteria for determining which Documents are considered Records and therefore must be retained;
- rules for how long Documents should be retained;
- descriptions of roles, responsibilities, and accountability for Documents and Records throughout their life cycles;
- rules to be followed throughout the life cycles of Documents and Records;
- rules regarding the review of and access to Documents;
- references to any related processes and procedures;
- rules related to confidentiality and security considerations; and
- logistics of how Documents will be preserved if the Registrant Firm ceases to exist as an independent operating entity (e.g., if the Registrant Firm dissolves, is acquired, or enters bankruptcy proceedings).

3.4.2.2 In the event the Registrant Firm ceases to exist as an independent operating entity, the Registrant Firm may wish to have the Responsible Officer or a Responsible Registrant take charge of retaining the Documents or have the Documents placed into the responsibility of a designated legal representative.

3.4.2.3 Although the Bylaws only require Registrant Firms to retain Documents that are evidence of professional engineering or professional geoscience activities or work, or evidence that the Registrant Firm and its Professional Registrants met their professional obligations, a Registrant Firm may wish to create retention policies for other categories of information.

3.4.3 PROCEDURES

3.4.3.1 Processes and procedures should be put in place to control Documents and Records through their life cycles, describing how they will be created, revised, received, coded or named, filed, issued, archived, stored, and destroyed.

3.4.3.2 Registrant Firms should decide what is relevant and keep procedures as simple as possible, while considering the size and complexity of the Registrant Firm.

3.4.3.3 For guidance on what to include and consider for procedures throughout the Documentation life cycle, refer to Appendix A: Checklist of Considerations for Document and Records Management.

3.4.4 SYSTEMS

3.4.4.1 Optional systems, such as applications that provide Document control and/or storage, may help facilitate effective Document and Records Management.

3.4.4.2 Registrant Firms should create and use systems suited to their size and complexity. There is no universal system for retaining Documentation that will work equally well in all Registrant Firms.

3.4.5 TRAINING

3.4.5.1 All users, especially the managers of Documents and Records, should be trained

on the policies, procedures, and systems. This will improve the effectiveness of the overall program.

3.4.5.2 Registrant Firms must ensure all individuals employed by or under contract with the Registrant Firm are trained in how to use these instruments to meet the obligation to retain Documents. The goal of training should be that these individuals are able to apply the policies, procedures, and systems to the extent handling and retaining Documents is part of their activities or work.

3.5 WHAT SHOULD BE CONSIDERED

3.5.1 CREATING DOCUMENTS

3.5.1.1 To create Documents that may be relied upon as Records, consider using the following methods:

- develop and use standard templates and forms listing the names of the author(s) and identify the dates Documents are created or revised, so the same required information is included in each Document; and
- complete the Document properties or metadata associated with electronic files (which do not usually automatically appear), so information important to the Document and its audit trail is retained as part of the Document.

3.5.2 RECEIVING DOCUMENTS

3.5.2.1 When Documents were in hard copy format and arrived by traditional mail or courier, processes to code them, distribute them to those who needed to act on them, and file them could all be managed by one person or one position. Today, digital files are often received by everyone in a Firm. Each recipient must understand how to manage Documents they receive by:

- recording when, how, and by whom the Document was received;
- addressing the Document's contents and recording that action;
- assessing whether the Document is considered a copy that may be kept for convenience as long as it is useful, or is a Record that must be retained; and
- if the Document is a Record, how it should be retained.

3.5.3 CODING OR FILE-NAMING DOCUMENTS

3.5.3.1 Properly coding or labelling hard copies helps facilitate filing and retrieval of paper files in their appropriate folder in a file drawer.

3.5.3.2 Standard file-naming with appropriate components for electronic files can help identify where to file a Document and help retrieve it at a later date.

3.5.4 REVISING DOCUMENTS

3.5.4.1 An audit trail of revisions is necessary for a Record to be considered reliable and trustworthy. This can be accomplished by providing a revision history of who created, revised, and reviewed the Document, and when they did so. This would apply to Documents such as reports, surveys, drawings, and other Documents that are revised and issued periodically or throughout the activity or work. Metadata saved with electronic files can provide an audit trail for other types of Documents.

3.5.5 FILING DOCUMENTS

3.5.5.1 Standard File Structure

- Creating a file structure that suits the type of work being undertaken, is simple to understand, and is standardized across the Professional Registrant's activities or work will facilitate:
  - proper and correct filing of Documents;
  - consistency across the activities or work;
  - efficient search and retrieval of Documents by those involved in the activities or work and others who require them; and
  - smooth transition or transfer of files to new team members.
- Engineers and Geoscientists BC recognizes clients may impose file structures on projects that vary from those generally used by Registrants. In these cases, the use of the client-imposed file structure is acceptable, provided the arrangement is appropriately documented and the applicable Record retention requirements are still met, including ensuring the project Records remain complete, retrievable, and retained for the required Retention Period.
- Properly referencing hard copies of all Documents with the project or work name and number and filing them in chronological order will make Documents easier for others to retrieve. Using consistent file-naming formats that include project references for electronic files will allow for easier retrieval of electronic Documents.
- Standard file structures and orderly filing will not make the transfer of responsibilities from one team member to another instantaneous. It will, however, allow a new person who may be unfamiliar with the project or work to readily retrieve the files, understand the decision-making, and assess the status of the activity or work from a complete and orderly set of Records. That person may then begin to take over responsibilities with less risk of errors on important issues. The quality of Records should be such that another Professional Registrant referring to these files can fully understand the requirements of the activity or work, the professional engineering or professional geoscience processes that went into it, and the assumptions that led to the resulting product.

3.5.5.2 Hard Copy versus Digital Filing

1. Documents may be filed and stored in hard copy format, digital format, or a combination of both. Engineers and Geoscientists BC will accept any of these options as satisfying the requirements of this Guide, as long as Documents are shown to be present, meet the intent of the standards in the Bylaws, and can be readily retrieved by users.
2. If a specific format is used, policies should be established to address when each type of Document should be converted for retention, as well as when and how to discard the convenience copies.
3. If both formats are used, a cross-referencing system should be

established so users know where specific Documents can be located and which system contains what would be considered the master copy for each type of Document.

4. A better solution may be to designate either the digital files or the hard copy files as the primary system containing the master copy of Documents. Professional Registrants must be confident that the primary system includes a complete set of all Documents. This means ensuring email Records related to an activity or work are identified as such and filed in the primary project filing system. Documents in the non-primary or secondary system would be considered convenience copies that may be destroyed when no longer in use. Special consideration is necessary with respect to authenticated Documents, and Professional Registrants should refer to Section 3.2.2.5 of the *Guide to the Standard for the Authentication of Documents* (Engineers and Geoscientists BC 2026a).

5. Preventing unauthorized access to files that contain personal or confidential information may assist Professional Registrants in meeting their obligations under privacy legislation and non-disclosure agreements.

3.5.6 ISSUING DOCUMENTS

3.5.6.1 Maintaining an audit trail indicating who received information and when it was received will assist anyone picking up a new file and may make all the difference in being able to defend a claim. This can be accomplished by keeping a transmittal Record (form, email, or other) or using a system that prepares and logs transmittals.

3.5.7 ARCHIVING RECORDS

3.5.7.1 When archiving Records at the end of a project, or when the activity or work they represent is no longer active, Professional Registrants must:

- be clear about what is and what is not a Record to retain;
- cull files to remove Documents that have no continuing purpose or value and do not need to be retained;
- group, label, and log project Records for easy search and retrieval; and
- confirm Records are trustworthy (authentic, reliable, correct, and complete; refer to Section 3.3 of this Guide for more information).

3.5.8 STORING RECORDS

3.5.8.1 Procedures for storing Records for the duration of their Retention Period must address:

- search and retrieval;
- availability to those authorized to access them;
- security and media that prevent Records from being altered;
- environmental controls to preserve and prevent deterioration of the Records;
- retaining older hardware and software to allow access to older media;
- keeping a log of any lost or damaged Records; and
- confidentiality and security requirements.

3.5.9 DESTROYING RECORDS

3.5.9.1 Before destroying Records:

- review and confirm retention requirements have been met;
- confirm there is no longer any legal requirement prohibiting destruction; and
- record what is destroyed and when.

4.0 REFERENCES AND RELATED DOCUMENTS

4.1 LEGISLATION

Engineers and Geoscientists Regulation, OIC 2021/037.

Limitation Act, S.B.C. 2012, c. 13.

Professional Governance Act, S.B.C. 2018, c. 47.

4.2 CITED WORKS

Engineers and Geoscientists BC. 2026a. Quality Management Guides – Guide to the Standard for the Authentication of Documents. Version 5.0. Burnaby, BC: Engineers and Geoscientists BC. [accessed: 2026 August 18]. https://www.egbc.ca/Practice-Resources/Individual-Practice/Quality-Management-Guides.

Engineers and Geoscientists BC. 2026b. Quality Management Guides – Guide to the Standard for Documented Checks of Engineering and Geoscience Work. Version 4.0. Burnaby, BC: Engineers and Geoscientists BC. [accessed: 2026 August 18]. https://www.egbc.ca/Practice-Resources/Individual-Practice/Quality-Management-Guides.

Engineers and Geoscientists BC. 2024. Practice Advisory – Use of Artificial Intelligence in Professional Work. Version 1.0. Burnaby, BC: Engineers and Geoscientists BC. [accessed: 2026 August 18]. https://tools.egbc.ca/Registrants/Practice-Resources/Guidelines-Advisories.

5.0 APPENDIX

Appendix A: Checklist of Considerations for Document and Records Management..... A-1

APPENDIX A: CHECKLIST OF CONSIDERATIONS FOR DOCUMENT AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT

CONSIDERATIONS		√
PREPARING DOCUMENTS		
1.	Developing Document standards for consistent, professional appearance that clearly identifies the Registrant Firm creating them	
2.	Creating standard templates and forms for commonly used Documents	
3.	Deciding on software and media for creating and maintaining Documents	
4.	Developing and using standard coding or labelling for hard copies	
5.	Developing and using standard file naming for electronic Documents	
6.	Including Document identifiers (not commonly found on the Document) in Document properties or metadata stored with each electronic file	
7.	Setting up a protocol for including the activity or work name, number, and file folder in the subject line of the activity or work-related email containing information that must be retained	
8.	Creating and implementing a standard Checking process appropriate to the type of Document being created	
9.	Training users in how to prepare Documents	
FILING DOCUMENTS		
10.	Creating and implementing a standard, Registrant Firm-wide file structure	
11.	Identifying primary filing system (electronic or hard copy) or deciding to use both	
12.	If using both electronic and hard-copy filing, creating a cross-reference guide showing in which system, and in which folder, Documents are located	
13.	For hard copy filing, labelling Documents with project or work and folder name and number	
14.	For electronic files, creating and using standard file-naming conventions that identify the activity or work and file folder	
15.	Filing all activity or work email messages that must be retained in the appropriate folder of their related activity or work file structure	
16.	Regularly backing up servers containing activity or work filing, and storing media off-site so that the files can be restored in case of a failure or disaster	
17.	Controlling access to files containing confidential or personal information	
18.	Filing issued electronic Documents in read-only format exactly as issued	
19.	Setting up a check-in/check-out system wherever multiple users have access to working Documents	
20.	Training users and Document managers in how to file and store Documents	
REVISING DOCUMENTS		
21.	Including a revision Record indicating revision number, what was revised and by whom, on Documents where version control is required (e.g., drawings, reports)	
22.	Clearly identifying the revisions (see the Engineers and Geoscientists BC *Guide to the Standard for Authentication of Documents* (Engineers and Geoscientists BC 2026a))	
23.	Creating and implementing a standard Checking process for all revisions (see the Engineers and Geoscientists BC *Guide to the Standard for Documented Checks of Engineering and Geoscience Work* (Engineers and Geoscientists BC 2026b))	
24.	Training users in Document revision procedures	
ISSUING DOCUMENTS		
25.	Including an issue Record on Documents, indicating the purpose for issuing the Document and when it was issued, where version control is required (e.g., drawings, reports)	

CONSIDERATIONS		√
26.	When issuing electronic Documents, providing, and retaining the file in a read-only format exactly as issued	
27.	Using some form of transmittal (e.g., form, email, or other) as a Record of what was sent to whom, when it was sent, and how it was sent	
28.	To create an audit trail, retaining a Record of who receives which Document revisions and when they receive them	
29.	Ensuring the most recent or current revisions of Documents are issued to those who require them	
30.	Training users and Document managers in how to issue Documents	
RECEIVING DOCUMENTS		
31.	Recording when Documents are received, how they are received, and by whom they are received	
32.	Setting up a standard distribution indicating expectations of those receiving the Document (e.g., approve, action by, information only)	
33.	Recording actions taken based on received Documents	
34.	If receiving hard copy Documents, coding and filing in the hard copy project or work file structure, or scanning, naming, and filing in this electronic file structure	
35.	If receiving electronic Documents, naming and filing in the electronic file structure or printing and filing in the hard copy file structure	
36.	Determining whether the Document is a Record to be retained or a Document that is kept for convenience until no longer needed	
37.	Training users and Document managers in procedures for Documents they receive	
ARCHIVING RECORDS		
38.	Defining which Documents are Records	
39.	Creating a table to identify categories of Records and their respective Retention Period	
40.	Deciding on media for retaining Records (e.g., hard copy, electronic, or combination)	
41.	Deciding on the means by which the integrity of the archived Records is protected	
42.	Culling non-Records and convenience copies from files	
43.	Grouping, labelling, and logging Records with their date of destruction	
44.	Deciding on storage media (e.g., server, tapes, CDs, DVDs, hard copy)	
45.	Deciding on storage location (e.g., onsite, external)	
46.	Migrating or transferring Records to their storage medium and location	
47.	Training Document managers in archiving procedures	
STORING RECORDS		
48.	Setting up a system for storing Records or using a qualified external provider	
49.	Securing access so only those with permission can access files	
50.	Limiting access to confidential and personal information	
51.	Providing environmental controls to preserve Records in storage (e.g., protection from moisture or fire)	
52.	Migrating Records to current media, or maintaining hardware and software able to access them for the duration of their Retention Period	
53.	Training Document managers in storage procedures for retained Records	
DESTROYING RECORDS		
54.	Destroying all Records that have met all retention requirements and that are not under a legal hold for pending litigation or a regulatory requirement	
55.	Keeping a Record of what was destroyed, when it was destroyed, and by whom it was destroyed	

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