

Administration

Holdings on the Destruction of Electronic Information and Paper Records

I. RECORDS CUSTODIAN

These regulations are designed to assist in implementation of Board Policy 2030 regarding holds on the destruction of electronic information and paper records. The Superintendent of Schools shall designate a Records Custodian who will be responsible for implementation of District policies and regulations for the preservation of paper records and electronically stored information, including e-mails.

II. HOLDS ON THE DESTRUCTION OF ELECTRONIC INFORMATION AND PAPER RECORDS

Upon receipt of notice that the District is involved in litigation as a party to a lawsuit, the District is issued a subpoena by a party to a lawsuit in which it is not a party, or if the District receives information that would lead a reasonable person to anticipate the possibility of litigation, the Records Custodian is to immediately take steps to ensure that any paper records and electronically stored information that could be related to the litigation or potential litigation are preserved from deletion or destruction. Actions to preserve records and electronically stored information shall include, but are not limited to, the postponing or canceling of any automatic deletion of electronically stored information until relevant information and documents can be identified and stored, notification to employees of a “litigation hold” to prevent the deletion and destruction of documents that might be related to the litigation or potential litigation, and the identification of documents and information that are subject to preservation. This litigation hold triggers the duty to preserve documents, such as transitory messages, that otherwise could be deleted under the district’s record retention policy.

The Records Custodian shall issue a “litigation hold” memorandum that specifically describes the types of documents and information that must be preserved and describes how those materials are to be identified, maintained and stored. The memorandum shall specifically state that the duty of preservation is ongoing and that it is the responsibility of employees to continue to identify and preserve relevant documents until notified via a subsequent memorandum that the litigation hold is no longer in effect. All employees who are sent a “litigation hold” memorandum are to acknowledge receipt and understanding of the memorandum in writing, which may be in the form of an e-mail response. A copy of any “litigation hold” memorandum shall to be sent to the District IT department.

The Records Custodian shall be responsible for the collection and coordination of the retention of documents that are subject to the litigation hold, including electronically stored information. He/she shall work with the District’s IT personnel to ensure compliance with the litigation hold. Specifically, the Records Custodian shall determine the types of electronically stored information that exist and where that information is maintained, identify where both identified paper documents and electronically stored information will be stored, and implement procedures to ensure that District employees are complying with the litigation hold. No system wide process for automatic deletion of electronic information will be implemented while a litigation hold is in

Administration

Holds on the Destruction of Electronic Information and Paper Records (continued)

effect without prior notice to the Records Custodian and verification by the Records Custodian that the deletion process will not destroy documents or information that is subject to a litigation hold. The Records Custodian may need to periodically reissue the “litigation hold” memorandum and will ensure that the “litigation hold” memorandum is provided to new employees who may have access to relevant information. Finally, the Records Custodian shall ensure that all steps taken by the District to identify and preserve relevant information are documented.

Legal References:

General Letters 98-1, 96-2 and 2001-1 of the Public Records Administrator
Record Retention Schedules Towns, Municipalities and Boards of Education
Rules 34 and 45 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure
Silvestri v. General Motors Corp., 271 F.3d 583 (4th Cir. 2001)

Regulation issued: November 17, 2009
Regulation revised: March 20, 2014
Regulation revised: September 19, 2019

WATERFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Waterford, Connecticut

**NOTICE REGARDING A LITIGATION HOLD
CONCERNING ELECTRONIC INFORMATION AND PAPER DOCUMENTS**

This memorandum places a “litigation hold” on all documents, both paper and electronically stored information, concerning **[identify the matter that is subject to the litigation hold]**. Materials that fall under this litigation hold include, but are not limited to, e-mail, word processing documents, spreadsheets, databases, calendars, voice mail, internet usage files and network access information **[the school district can be more specific in the identification of documents if that information is available]**. All District employees are to immediately suspend any and all document destruction, including any scheduled document destruction or electronic information deletion programs, for any materials that might fall within the parameters of this memorandum. If you have questions as to what materials are subject to the litigation hold, you are to contact the Records Custodian **[insert name and contact information]**.

If you are in possession of materials subject to this litigation hold, you shall take steps to preserve and store these materials. Paper documents are to be copied and segregated in a separate hard copy file. Electronic information is to be stored in computer folders and saved on the network drive and/or saved to a removable disk which is to be clearly marked and stored in a safe and appropriate location **[the school district can develop its own set of storage guidelines for identified materials]**. Under no circumstances are you to destroy or delete materials, documents or electronic information that might be subject to this litigation hold without the written permission of the Records Custodian.

You must give prompt attention to the issues addressed in this memorandum, specifically the responsibility to identify and preserve documents and electronic information concerning **[the matter that is subject to the litigation hold]**. Serious consequences may result from the failure of District employees to take immediate and reasonable precautions to properly preserve information. Therefore, you must acknowledge your receipt and understanding of this memorandum in writing or via e-mail.

The restrictions put into place by this memorandum are ongoing until you receive notice in a memorandum from the Records Custodian that the litigation hold is no longer in effect. You are encouraged to direct any questions concerning this memorandum to the Records Custodian.