

## Atlanta Police Department – Standard Operating Procedure



### APD.SOP.1050 – Records Management and Retention

Effective Date: November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2025



Chief Darin Schierbaum

Signature by: DS

Date Signed: 11/4/2025

Expires:2029

## SIGNIFICANT CHANGES

APD Staff,

The Policy and Standards Section is dedicated to providing the department, and its employees, with accurate, understandable and transparent policies. In order to publish policies that reflect the most up-to-date standards, the Policy and Standard Section regularly reviews all policies to ensure that they are reflective of the current mission and objectives of the Atlanta Police Department.

During the review and renewal of APD.SOP.1050 – Records Management and Retention, we found the opportunity to merge APD.SOP.6080 – Personnel Files and Orders (archive) to create a stronger and more efficient policy pertaining to records. The policy has been updated to reflect the [City of Atlanta's Record Retention Schedule](#), as well as the proper way for handling, accessing and destroying records and files.

We ask that you please review this policy in its entirety so that by understanding how records are created, stored, and destroyed, employees can help safeguard personal privacy, support open records compliance, and uphold the Department's commitment to professionalism and ethical management of information.

Thank you and stay informed!

Policy and Standards Section  
Planning, Research, and Accreditation Unit



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## 1. PURPOSE

To establish procedures for the maintenance, use, preservation and destruction of records as required by State law.

## 2. POLICY

The Atlanta Police Department will maintain and dispose of its records in compliance with the Georgia Records Act. (CALEA 6th ed. Standard 82.1.3)

## 3. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 3.1 The Chief of Police, or their designee, is responsible issuing personnel orders and for authorizing the type of information to be maintained in personnel files.
- 3.2 The commander of the Personnel Unit, or their designee, is responsible for managing the personnel order system and maintaining Departmental personnel and medical files.
- 3.3 Division, section, and unit commanders are authorized to issue personnel orders to transfer employees within their respective commands.
- 3.4 Unit commanders will maintain unit personnel and medical files for all employees under their command and ensure that each employee has the opportunity to view their unit file when requested.
- 3.5 Section Commanders will appoint an employee to serve as the command's Records Retention Officer and ensure compliance with the City of Atlanta Records Retention schedule and this directive.
- 3.6 The Logistical Support Records Manager will coordinate the records management program through the Department's Records Retention Officers. The Logistical Support Records Manager will direct the records of historical value, such as papers, of police chiefs and public safety commissioners to the attention of the City of Atlanta Records Management Division's Municipal Archives.

## 4. ACTION

### 4.1 RECORD RETENTION OFFICERS

- 4.1.1 Section commanders will identify employees in their respective commands to serve as Records Retention Officers and will submit their names to the Records Manager.
  1. The Logistical Support Records Manager will coordinate the training of the Records Retention Officers by the City's Municipal Records Center staff.
  2. When Records Retention Officers are transferred, the division or section commander will forward replacement names to the Records Manager within 14 days.

### 4.2 RECORDS RETENTION AND DESTRUCTION

- 4.2.1 Records Retention Officers will identify or assist in the development of Application For Records Retention Schedules ([form ARM 2](#)) within their respective work sites on all Functional (Mission) files that are not covered under "Common Records Retention Schedules For Municipal



Government." They will keep copies of the relevant Records Retention Schedules and Applications. They will forward new applications to the Logistical Support Records Manager.

**4.2.2** Records Retention Officers will assist work sites in the development of Report of In-House Records Destruction forms ([ARM-23](#)) when destroying General (Subject) Files. These files for disposition purposes are divided as follows:

1. Policy and Program Records;
2. General Administrative Records; and
3. General Housekeeping Files.

**4.2.3** The records retention officer will shred their unit's records when their respective records have aged past the retention date per approved schedule.

#### **4.3 TRANSFERRING RECORDS**

**4.3.1** Records Retention Officers will ensure that all records and record series stored at the respective work site are labeled with a completed Records Management Control Log form ([Form APD 729](#)), and stored in chronological order of destruction and/or retention date in 15 x 11 7/8 x 9 5/8 brown fiberboard boxes.

**4.3.2** Commanders will coordinate the transfer of records to the archives two (2) years prior to destruction of those records or on a case-by-case basis. Record Boxes that meet destruction criteria will be destroyed by the Records Retention Officers.

**4.3.3** When transferring records to the Archives located in the Annex, Records Retention Officers will properly, and completely, fill out a Records Transfer and Receipt form ([ARM 3](#)) *and* an Application for Record Retention Schedule ([ARM 2](#)). Each box must be labeled from the outside with the Records Transfer and Receipt.

**4.3.4** Records Retention Officers will file a copy of the Records Transfer and Receipt forms with the Records Manager at the Logistical Support Unit.

**4.3.5** The Logistical Support Records Manager will be available to receive records at the archives, located at 3493 Donald Lee Hollowell Pkwy Atlanta, during the scheduled time.

#### **4.4 PERSONNEL FILES**

**4.4.1** The Personnel Unit will maintain the Department Personnel Files, which will include information such as personnel data updates, extra weapons requests, letters of commendation, etc., will be kept in the Department personnel file.

**4.4.2** The unit commander will keep copies of the personnel updates, counseling forms, grievance forms, letters of commendation, certificates of training, evaluations and extra job requests in the unit personnel file, and any other pertinent documents that are directly related to the employee and his or her specific worksite.

**4.4.3** The unit commander will keep copies of sick leave requests and Injured on Duty (IOJ) packages in the unit's medical file.

**4.4.4** A section commander may direct that "unit files" be kept at the section level, depending on the size of the section and its units.



4.4.5 Information placed in the personnel file of an employee will be shown to the affected employee and signed by the employee prior to placement of the information in the personnel file. The employee's signature means only that the employee has seen the information prior to its being placed in his or her personnel file; it is not acknowledgment of concurrence with the information.

4.4.6 In the event of a transfer, the employee's unit file will be forwarded to the commander of the employee's new assignment within Ten (10) business days.

4.4.7 When an employee is terminated or is placed on inactive status, the employee's unit file will be forwarded to the Personnel Unit within Ten (10) business days where it will be incorporated into their Departmental personnel file.

4.4.8 Access to Personnel and Medical Files

1. An employee will not be allowed to review the personnel or medical file of another employee unless it is in accordance with his or her assignment.
2. An employee may make an appointment to view his or her department or unit file. The Personnel Unit Director or their designee will schedule the date of appointment to review the Department file.
3. Only the employee's chain of command or a Personnel Supervisor may review a personnel file.
4. Only the Human Resources Director or their designee may review the medical file of another employee. The review will be limited in scope and in accordance with their duty assignment.
5. When viewing a personnel or medical file, persons will date, sign and state the reason for viewing of the file on the File Review Authorization Form ([Form APD 259](#)) attached inside the folder. Without the permission of the employee, medical files cannot be viewed by anyone other than the supervisor. The Georgia Open Records Act (OCGA § 50-18-70) specifically excludes medical records from disclosure, as release of such information would constitute an invasion of personal privacy.

4.4.9 Information contained in personnel files will be kept in separate sections.

1. Section A will contain the turnaround document, oath of office, Criminal Justice Awareness Statement, resume, military leave orders and other leave forms.
2. Section B will contain the personnel data form, change of address form, incentive pay approval, evaluations, certificate/training records, promotions, reassignments to another rank, previous police experience and advancement to job classification requiring a higher level of skills.
3. Section C will contain grievance forms, extra weapon requests, extra job requests and miscellaneous items.
4. Section D will contain suspension orders, commendations, reprimands and counseling forms.

4.4.10 All information pertaining to sickness (including sick leave forms), medical or psychological concerns or injuries, will be kept separate and secure from the unit and Department personnel file in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (42 U.S.C. 12101).



4.4.11 Records of disciplinary action, such as oral admonishments or written reprimands taken against an employee by the unit or section commander will be kept in the employee's unit file with a copy placed in the Department's personnel file and in the Office of Professional Standards (OPS).

4.4.12 Retention

1. Documents in the Department personnel file will be retained until Ten (10) years after the employee retires or otherwise terminates employment with the Department.
2. Unit personnel files will be kept for five years, or longer at the unit commander's discretion. Documents removed from the unit personnel file will be delivered to the Human Resources Unit for incorporation into the Department file or destroyed.
3. Atlanta Police Department will follow the City Of Atlanta's retention schedules as outlined in [City of Atlanta Approved Retention Schedules](#).

## 5. DEFINITIONS

**Records:** Documents, papers, letters, maps, books, microfilm, magnetic tape or other material regardless of physical form or characteristics made or received pursuant to law or ordinance or in performance of functions by any department, bureau, office or agency.

**Retention schedule:** A set of disposition instructions advising how long, where, and in what form a record series shall be kept.

## 6. CANCELLATION

Cancellation APD.SOP.1050 - Records Management and Retention signed April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2021  
Archived – Personnel Files and Orders signed June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021 (Merged with APD.SOP.1050)

## 7. REFERENCE

[City of Atlanta Approved Retention Schedules](#)