

§ 749.2 What must a credit union do with vital records?

The board of directors of a credit union is responsible for establishing a vital records preservation program within 6 months after its insurance certificate is issued. The vital records preservation program must contain procedures for storing duplicate vital records at a vital records center and must designate the staff member responsible for carrying out the vital records duties. Records must be stored every 3 months, within 30 days after the end of the 3-month period. Previously stored records may be destroyed when the current records are stored. The credit union must also maintain a records preservation log showing what records were stored, where the records were stored, when the records were stored, and who sent the records for storage. Credit unions, which have some or all of their records maintained by an off-site data processor, are considered to be in compliance for the storage of those records.

§ 749.3 What is a vital records center?

A vital records center is defined as a storage facility at any location far enough from the credit union's offices to avoid the simultaneous loss of both sets of records in the event of disaster.

§ 749.4 What format may the credit union use for preserving records?

Preserved records may be in any format that can be used to reconstruct the credit union's records. Formats include paper originals, machine copies, micro-film or fiche, magnetic tape, or any electronic format that accurately reflects the information in the record, remains accessible to all persons who are entitled to access by statute, regulation or rule of law, and is capable of being reproduced by transmission, printing or otherwise.

§ 749.5 What format may credit unions use for maintaining writings, records or information required by other NCUA regulations?

Various NCUA regulations require credit unions to maintain certain writings, records or information. Credit unions may use any format, electronic or other, for maintaining the

writings, records or information that accurately reflects the information, remains accessible to all persons who are entitled to access by statute, regulation or rule of law, and is capable of being reproduced by transmission, printing or otherwise. The credit union must maintain the necessary equipment or software to permit an examiner access to the records during the examination process.

APPENDIX A TO PART 749—RECORD RETENTION GUIDELINES

Credit unions often look to NCUA for guidance on the appropriate length of time to retain various types of operational records. NCUA does not regulate in this area, but as an aid to credit unions it is publishing this appendix of suggested guidelines for record retention. NCUA recognizes that credit unions must strike a balance between the competing demands of space, resource allocation and the desire to retain all the records that they may need to conduct their business successfully. Efficiency requires that all records that are no longer useful be discarded, just as both efficiency and safety require that useful records be preserved and kept readily available.

A. What Format Should the Credit Union Use for Retaining Records?

NCUA does not recommend a particular format for record retention. If the credit union stores records on microfilm, microfiche, or in an electronic format, the stored records must be accurate, reproducible and accessible to an NCUA examiner. If records are stored on the credit union premises, they should be immediately accessible upon the examiner's request; if records are stored by a third party or off-site, then they should be made available to the examiner within a reasonable time after the examiner's request. The credit union must maintain the necessary equipment or software to permit an examiner to review and reproduce stored records upon request. The credit union should also ensure that the reproduction is acceptable for submission as evidence in a legal proceeding.

B. Who Is Responsible for Establishing a System for Record Disposal?

The credit union's board of directors may approve a schedule authorizing the disposal of certain records on a continuing basis upon expiration of specified retention periods. A schedule provides a system for disposal of records and eliminates the need for board approval each time the credit union wants to dispose of the same types of records created at different times.