

Virginia Master Naturalist Records Retention Schedule

How long should documents be kept, before they are destroyed?



A. Signed VMN Enrollment Agreements (aka Enrollment Forms/Applications)

<i>Who</i>	<i>How Long</i>
Active VMN members	In perpetuity, as long as the member is still active.
People who were not accepted into the class for whatever reason	<p>Retain for 5 years after the application deadline, then destroy.</p> <p>Once the screening process has begun, the Enrollment Agreement has been activated. It is also important to keep this in case of a challenge from the applicant.</p>
People who were accepted into the class but never finished it	<p>Retain for 5 years following the END of the trainee's participation, then destroy.</p> <p>Even if the person is not to return to finish, the Enrollment Agreement is valid and should be kept for the 5 years following the pause in their training.</p>
Members who are deceased	Retain for 5 years following the END of the volunteer's participation, then destroy.
Members who have transferred from your Chapter to another VMN Chapter or moved out of state and won't be returning to the VMN program	Retain for 5 years following the END of the member's participation, then destroy.
Inactive members	Retain for 5 years following the END of the member's participation, then destroy.

The Virginia Master Naturalist program is open to all, regardless of age, color, disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, veteran status, or any other basis protected by law. An equal opportunity/affirmative action employer. 1

B. Other Signed Chapter Documents – examples

<i>Who</i>	<i>How Long</i>
Member – Chapter Questionnaire/Info sheet	In perpetuity, as long as the member is still in an active status.
Chapter – e.g. EIN, bank account opening forms, VMN Charter; Facility Use contracts*	In perpetuity, as long as the chapter is still active. * Before destroying Facility Use contracts that are no longer valid, consider if they may be useful for any future reapplication use.

C. Other Chapter Documents to Keep

Board and Committee minutes and decisions, Annual Reports, historical info as deemed important	In perpetuity, as long as the chapter is still active. These should also be made available for membership to read at any time, such as on the chapter’s VMS or member website pages, but they do not need to be made publicly available. (Be cognizant of member privacy.)
Chapter Financial Records: Financial Reviews – annual and external Pertinent - such as equipment receipts and warranties Expiring – e.g. monthly bank statements	Financial Reviews – Retain for 3 years from the date the review was completed, <u>along with supporting documents.</u> Pertinent – Keep as long as needed for the purpose set out by that particular record. Expiring – Use financial reviews and other supported reports to determine length needed to retain.
VMS Member and Trainee profile details, such as contact information, emergency contacts details, etc.	In perpetuity. If a member no longer participates in the VMN program for any reason, <u>do not delete them</u> from the VMS/Chapter records. Instead, make them ‘inactive’ . It is important for a chapter and the VMN state office to know who a member or trainee was. A trainee has a year to complete their course requirements. A note should be made in their VMS record as to when they took their initial Basic Training Course.

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<i>Who</i>	<i>How Long</i>
Trainee attendance at Basic Training Course	Until trainee has fully graduated. Need to know if met minimal requirements for graduation, e.g., # of field trips, days missed and made up.
Instructors', local partners', & sponsors' contact details and other pertinent info	Retain as long as needed. Important to pass on during Board transitioning.
Civil Rights educational 'contact' demographics of both members and non-members, collected during volunteer service projects	Retain for 5 years from the date the demographics were taken, then destroy.
Records demonstrating "all reasonable efforts" (ARE) to achieve a balanced membership, and public participation in educational activities as part of civil rights compliance.	Retain for 5 years from the date the ARE records were gathered, then destroy.

Document Storage: *Decide a plan now and stick with it.*

Enrollment Agreements and other Membership Application forms

Store these all together as hardcopies in locked location, such as your Advisor's office. Note this location in your Operating Handbook. Treat these forms as confidential. Delete all digital copies as soon as possible, once hardcopies have been confirmed and stored properly.

Other Signed Chapter Documents

These may be digitally stored, but please make sure they are all together in a safe location, such as a password-protected website or VMS, where Board members in the future can access them. You might decide, for example, that those documents related to the Finances remain with the Treasurer to then pass down to the next Treasurer. Decide which Board member will be responsible for those signed documents and maybe note that in your Operating Handbook.

Other Chapter Documents to Keep

Make sure they are all together in a location that Board members in the future can find. Decide which Board member will be responsible for those documents and maybe note that in your Operating Handbook.