



College of
Occupational Therapists
of British Columbia

**COTBC Practice Standards for
Managing Client Information, 2014**

**Practice Standard #6: Retention and
Destruction of the Occupational
Therapy Record**

#402-3795 Carey Road
Victoria, BC V8Z 6T8

Tel: (250) 386-6822
Toll-Free BC: 1 (866) 386-6822
Fax: (250) 386-6824

Practice Standards for Managing Client Information

Practice Standard #6: Retention and Destruction of the Occupational Therapy Record



If the occupational therapist is the primary record keeper,
he or she will establish a process for the retention and destruction of records that ensures that regardless of the medium used, records are maintained for the required period of time and destroyed in accordance with legislative retention and destruction requirements.

If the occupational therapist is not the primary record keeper,
he or she will ensure that the record is maintained and that he or she will have access to it during the minimum retention period, and be knowledgeable about the organization's policies and procedures for occupational therapy record retention and destruction.

Practice Standards for Managing Client Information

Practice Standard #6: Retention and Destruction of the Occupational Therapy Record, continued



Expectations 1 and 2 are aligned with the *Limitation Act*.

Practice Expectations

The occupational therapist will ensure the following:

1. A client record is retained safely and securely stored for at least 16 years from the date of the last entry in the record or in the case of a minor, the date 16 years after the day on which the client reached or would have reached 19 years old, whichever is later.
2. The record is maintained after the 16-year period if the occupational therapist reasonably knows that a piece of health information will be required after this time for a valid reason (e.g., ongoing care, legal proceeding).

Practice Standards for Managing Client Information

Practice Standard #6: Retention and Destruction of the Occupational Therapy Record, continued



Practice Expectations, continued

3. Prior to the occupational therapist's resignation, cancellation, or suspension of registration with COTBC, the client retains the right to access his or her record. The occupational therapist will do one of the following:
 - i. Maintain the client record for at a minimum the retention period defined in this practice standard or any other relevant statute or regulation, and notify the client at the last known address that the occupational therapist intends to resign or is no longer able to provide occupational therapy services, and provide information on how the client can obtain copies of the record; or
 - ii. Transfer the records to either another person who is legally authorized to hold the records, or a successor in keeping with the provisions defined in privacy legislation (FOIPPA, PIPA, and COTBC Bylaws 80–84); and when transferring the record, make reasonable efforts to notify the client at the last known address before transferring the record, or as soon as possible after transferring the record.
4. Destruction of electronic and paper records is done in a secure manner that prevents anyone from accessing, discovering, or otherwise obtaining the information (e.g., cross-shredding, incinerating, erasing, or destroying files from personal computers and servers).
5. A list of names and dates for those records that have been destroyed is maintained in perpetuity or until no longer necessary in accordance with statutory requirements.

Additional Resources

College Resources

[COTBC Bylaws](#)

Refer to Bylaws 75–86 for other important regulations on protecting client information, such as when information can be disclosed, what to do when you stop practising and/or sell your business, and how to dispose of client information.

Links

Freedom of Information and
Protection of Privacy Act
([FOIPPA](#)) 1996
[Limitation Act](#) (2012).
([PIPA](#)) 2003

COTBC thanks the College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario for permission to adapt content from their *Standards for Record Keeping* (2008).