



## VITAL RECORDS

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. When was the Vital Records Program established?

A. The San Diego City Council established the program in July of 1986.

Q. What are Vital Records?

A. Records that are crucial in assisting departments to get back to business as soon as possible after a disaster.

Q. What types of records are normally considered Vital Records?

A. Records such as: City Charter, Municipal Code, tax and financial records, utility systems, land records, list of safety personnel and list of locations of emergency supplies, Articles of Incorporation, City Council resolutions, minutes and ordinances.

Q. What is the percent of Vital Records for an organization?

A. Normally, vital records makeup only two to five percent of an organization's total volume of records.

Q. How long are Vital Records kept?

A. Vital Records that contain static information that does not change is kept permanently. However, some vital records that have short term retention such as annual budget records, bank reconciliation files, and certificate of sales are kept until superseded by the new information and then the old information is tossed.

Q. How do I know if a record is vital?

A. Identify the key functions/responsibilities of your office first, and then give some consideration to the following questions:

- Is this information obtainable from another source?
- What function will we be unable to do if this record is disposed?
- What will be the consequences to the City if these records are lost? Will any employee or public citizen suffer loss of rights or be severely inconvenienced if these records are lost?
- If these records have to be reconstructed, what will be the cost in terms of time, money and or labor? Will the information in these records have to be reconstructed or could operations be maintained without this information?