S**ubject:** Fw: SHREDDING OF DOCUMENTS

Good Morning Comrades; There has been some questions concerning the keeping of Membership Files or shredding them. I contacted Ontario Command and here is the reply I received. Personally I along with others feel that they should be kept the same as minutes as they are part of the history of your Branch and as many people today are into genealogy ( I never thought of that one) these files prove to be invaluable.

Please keep in mind the references made below and no current membership files should be destroyed.

If a Branch is going to electronically store records then they MUST scan each file individually as doing it manually is a big job and does not produce accuracy also technology is changing rapidly and if you store the information on a disk as some ie: cd,dvd/sticks are only as good as the current technology and the Branch must keep up with it and are the files going to be stored in a safe place are they going to be offsite. Files being electronically stored especially what is considered to be permanent need to be stored in a current format so that maybe accessed and then printed when requested.

A lot to consider Comrades.  As there is no rule or by-law that pertains to keeping of Membership files the final decision is that of the Branch.

Please forward to your respective Branches.

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Regards

Lynn

“Electronic” copies of files is considered to be a form of “permanent storage”.  So yes to your question regarding this could in effect apply to all types of records.  (see below for additional info)

There is no “rule” or “by-law” that requires a branch to maintain **all** membership files permanently.  Some branches have sufficient space to do this while others do not.  Ultimately it is up to the branch to make the determination for the retention of these records.

1. First and foremost, no current member files should be destroyed, there should be no reason for these files to be “scanned” and destroyed.  The branch should have sufficient room to maintain them in a filing cabinet.
2. Deceased members – the branch should confirm that a Last Post notice (for those eligible) has been sent, this can be verified by searching the Legion Magazine Last Post database. (currently only from 1985 to now).   Some people will say that we should keep these files since perhaps members of their family may want to join sometime in the future.  However, under current privacy laws, we are not allowed to “share” any information with members of the family for the purpose of joining the legion, genealogy or any other reason.
3. Transferred out – If the original documents are in the file, this would indicate that perhaps the file was never sent to the new branch? (I used to keep a photocopy of everything until the new branch confirmed that they had received the file).  Again, does the branch wish to keep them for 3 – 5 years and then destroy?
4. Non-renewed – The branch can determine how long they wish to keep the files – up to 5 years as an example? And then destroy?

If the branch is wishing to maintain the old membership files indefinitely, they should be “scanned”, not manually input.

The branch must keep in mind that the type of electronic storage they use (cd/dvd/sticks) are only as good as the current technology and must keep up with it.  For example some computers no longer have the CD compatibility (only DVD so it must be transferred over).  Same with only having a “USB” port which would only support the “sticks”.   Sometimes the files on these storage items can become corrupted over time.    Also, where are they to be stored afterwards? -In-house Safe? Offsite?   Also, when they are scanned it is usually to a “.pdf” file which can be read by the Adobe software.  Again the file must keep up with the technology as the pdf created 4 years ago may not be able to be opened/read with the current software.

The branch should also maintain a year end copy of the branch membership register that can be downloaded from the Dominion website.