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Policy on Retention of Back-up Tapes

Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance for City agencies regarding the retention of back-up tapes.

Policy: Back-up tapes and other media created for disaster recovery purposes are not normally considered records unto themselves as they contain only duplicates of records stored elsewhere. System Administrators may recycle (overwrite) or dispose of back-up media as appropriate within a documented back-up cycle unless they have received instructions to preserve a specific back-up.

Special handling should be applied to back-ups that are known to contain the only extant copy of particular records, as described below.

Process & Procedure: The NYC Department of Information Technology & Telecommunications (DoITT) currently maintains data back-ups for disaster recovery for a period of 6 months. It is recommended that City agencies align to this standard and retain data for no more than 6 months.

When an agency becomes aware that the original copies of particular records have been lost through destruction or deletion, and that the only remaining copies are those preserved on back-up media, steps must be taken to immediately:

1. Remove the relevant back-up media from the documented back-up cycle;
2. Preserve the relevant back-up media from loss or destruction; and
3. Restore any necessary records to an appropriate medium for use or long-term retention.