

The **Shoe Box** represents the records, documents and information that are key to your charity's operations. These need to be preserved, updated regularly and *passed on*. The Shoe Box can be an actual box or filing cabinet or and it can be a CD or travel drive with electronic versions of your necessary documentation.

What goes inside the Shoe Box?

1. Organizational History

This can be in the form of a narrative that describes:

- Why the charity was formed
- Key players, drivers, supporters
- Initial sources of funding
- Milestones including: Dates of founding meetings, incorporation, charitable status, locations etc.

2. Governing Documents

- Articles of Incorporation
- Letters Patent
- Objects, mission, mandate
- Constitution
- Bylaws & policies
- Key correspondence with regulators

3. Legal Contracts

- Leases
- Personnel Contracts
- Service Contracts
- Funding/Contribution Agreements
- Membership Agreements
- Memoranda of Understanding
- Letters confirming financial arrangements, collaborative relationships, or other issues key to the functioning of the organization

4. Financial Records

This includes records of accounts (keep for 7 years), copies of charitable receipts (kept for a minimum of 2 years), annual financial statements, and Registered Charity Information Returns (T3010B).

Be aware of legal requirements regarding documentation including those from:

- Provincial/territorial incorporations and societies acts
- Canada Revenue Agency
- Funders
- Accreditation bodies

5. Contact Information

Contact information for key contacts including:

- Members, participants, clients
- Funders, donors, supporters
- Volunteers
- Paid employees
- Service-Providers
- Consultants

6. Programs, Services, & Products

If you had to start all over again, this file should contain:

- Manuals and Guides
- Templates and Samples
- Procedures and Check-lists
- Master Copies of Key Documents

7. Archives

This file can include:

- Annual Reports from each year
- Promotional Material
- Reports
- Souvenirs from Special Events
- Photos

Summary: If your entire board vanished in a single day, your organization should still have the supporting documentation and collective organizational knowledge to carry on fulfilling the organization's mandate. Take the necessary steps to prepare, to avoid confusion and loss of efficiency in the future.