

*This is from the U.S. National Archives, but provides helpful guidelines that apply to all archivists:*

## **THE ARCHIVISTS CODE**

1. The Archivist has a moral obligation to society to take every possible measure to ensure the preservation of valuable records, not only those of the past but those of his own times, and with equal zeal.
2. The Archivist in appraising records for retention or disposal acts as the agent of future generations. The wisdom and impartiality he applies to this task measure his professionalism, for he must be as diligent in disposing of records that have no significant or lasting value as in retaining those that do.
3. The Archivist must protect the integrity of records in his custody. He must guard them against defacement, alteration, or theft; he must protect them against physical damage by fire or excessive exposure to light, dampness, and dryness' and he must ensure that their evidentiary value is not impaired in the normal course of rehabilitation, arrangement, and use.
4. The Archivist should endeavor to promote access to records to the fullest extent consistent with the public interest, but he should carefully observe any proper restrictions on the use of the records. He should work unremittingly for the increase and diffusion of knowledge, making his documentary holdings freely known to prospective users through published aids and personal consultation.
5. The Archivist should respond courteously and with a spirit of helpfulness to reference requests. He should not place unnecessary obstacles in the way of researchers but should do whatever he can to save their time and ease their work. He should not idly discuss the work and findings of one researcher with another; but where duplication of research effort is apparent, he may properly inform another researcher.
6. The Archivist should not profit from any commercial exploitation of the records in his custody, nor should he withhold from others any information he has gained as a result of his professional duties -- either in order to carry out private professional research or to aid one researcher at the expense of another. He should, however, take every legitimate advantage of his situation to develop his professional interests in historical and archival research.
7. The Archivist should freely pass on to his professional colleagues the results of his own or his organization's research that add to the body of archival and historical knowledge. He should leave to his successors a true account of the records in his custody and of their organization and arrangement.

Wayne C. Glover  
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