

SESLHD PROCEDURE COVER SHEET



Health
South Eastern Sydney
Local Health District

NAME OF DOCUMENT	Records Management – Storage and Protection
TYPE OF DOCUMENT	Procedure
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LEVEL OF EVIDENCE	Standard 1 – Governance for Safety and Quality in Health Service Organisations NSW Legislation – NSW State Records Act 1998 (Under review)
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FORMER REFERENCE(S)	Former Illawarra Corporate Governance Procedure CGOV-20 Area PD025 – issued September 2005 Area P-CGOV-20 issued October 2004
EXECUTIVE SPONSOR or EXECUTIVE CLINICAL SPONSOR	Director Corporate and Legal Services as nominated Senior Responsible Officer for Corporate Records.
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POSITION RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DOCUMENT	Manager Executive Services
KEY TERMS	Records Management; Storage
SUMMARY	Health Managers are to ensure the seven principles for storage of records (contained in <i>NSW State Archives and Records NSW, Standard on the Physical Storage of State Records</i> , April 2000) are implemented in their area of responsibility and that, at a minimum, requirements included in the checklist at Appendix A of this procedure are achieved.

COMPLIANCE WITH THIS DOCUMENT IS MANDATORY

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1. POLICY STATEMENT

Health Managers are to ensure the seven principles for storage of records (contained in NSW State Archives and Records [Standard on the Physical Storage of State Records, Published March 2012 / revised February 2015](#)) are implemented in their area of responsibility and that, at a minimum, requirements included in the checklist at Appendix A of this procedure are achieved. Implementation of these principles will ensure that:

- Records are stored in the most cost effective manner possible;
- Record storage facilities, shelving, containers and equipment comply with Occupational Health and Safety requirements and the [National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards](#).
- Records are protected, secure and accessible for as long as they are required to meet business and accountability needs, and
- Records of continuing value that will be transferred to NSW State Archives and Records control and/or custody as State Archives are stored in the best possible conditions.

Note: This procedure does not cover the storage of digital records in online systems or network servers

2. BACKGROUND

This procedure sets out the minimum compliance requirements for the storage of records which have a physical format, including:

- Paper files and documents including maps, plans charts, drawings, photographic medical, audio cassettes, videos, CD and DVDs
- Active and semi active records in the custody of Local Health District or commercial storage providers, or outsourced records.
- Archives and inactive records.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

Chief Executive has ultimate responsibility with delegated responsibility to Tier 2 Directors as above.

The Director Internal Audit may audit compliance with this procedure.

4. DEFINITIONS

Active records - Those records required for the day to day functioning of an agency or person, also referred to as current records.

Inactive records - Those records no longer required for the conduct of business and which may be transferred to intermediate storage, archival custody or destroyed.

Manual Handling - Any activity requiring the use of force exerted by a person to lift, lower, push, pull, carry or otherwise move, hold or restrain any animate or inanimate object.

Records - Recorded information, in any form, including data in computer systems, created or received and maintained by an organisation or person in the transaction of business or the conduct of affairs and kept as evidence of such activity.

Relative humidity - The ratio, expressed as a percentage, of the amount of water vapour present in the atmosphere to the amount required to saturate it at the same temperature. Relative humidity varies with temperature.

Retention period - The period of time, usually based on an estimate of the frequency of current and future use, and taking into account statutory provisions, that records need to be retained before their final disposal.

Semi active records - Those records that are required so infrequently in the conduct of current business that they can be transferred from offices to separate storage areas.

State Archives - Records that have been transferred to the control of NSW State Archives and Records under Part 4 of the State Records Act, 1998 (under review).

Storage - The function of storing records for future retrieval and use.

Storage facilities - Any building, equipment, or system that houses records, including commercial storage facilities, in-house storage facilities and archival storage facilities.

5. PROCEDURE

Introduction

The department should identify the likely retention periods of records at or before their creation. This will allow the creation of records on suitable media, and to store the media in environmental conditions suitable for that format and for the retention period of the records. It will also enable timely and cost efficient culling and destruction of records in line with relevant disposal schedules.

Departments may store records that they need “on hand” in their work area. All files that are not immediately required, but are current, should be stored appropriately in secondary storage or offsite, to avoid inefficient use of office space, and to ensure optimal conditions for archival preservation.

5.1 Seven Principles of Document Storage

There are seven principles that should be taken into account when storing records

5.1.1 Principle 1 – Authorisation

Records are stored only in authorised areas and facilities. Decisions on where records should be stored should involve assessment of the records storage areas and facilities against [NSW State Archives and Records Standard on the Physical Storage of Records](#) and be authorised by appropriate Tier 2 Director or General Manager.

5.1.2 Principle 2 – Location and buildings

Sites for records storage should be located away from known hazards and unacceptable risks. A risk assessment is to be undertaken of all storage areas and facilities to identify and mitigate possible risks to records

Buildings should not be located near known risks such as heavy atmospheric pollution, known presence of asbestos, hazardous industries, flood plains, rivers and creeks, land liable to subsidence, strategic installations and bushfire prone areas. If any of these risks are present, protection measures should form part of the organisation's disaster management plans.

Buildings chosen for records storage should be soundly constructed of appropriate materials, have good drainage and water run-off, be secure against intruders and have controlled access. Storage areas must not be located near areas of known risk, including chemical storage areas, kitchens, washrooms and air conditioning units, or in attics and basements which do not meet the requirements of the standard.

Within buildings, walls should, wherever possible, divide storage areas from non-storage areas such as work spaces.

5.1.3 Principle 3 - Environmental controls

Records should be stored in environmental conditions that are appropriate to their format and retention period and integrated pest management controls are implemented to ensure that records are not damaged by pest activity.

Records that require long term retention (30 years or more) or are to be transferred as State archives, should be stored in the best possible environmental conditions from the time of creation.

Temperature and humidity requirements for records storage areas:

- within a range of 15° to 27° Celsius and 30% to 60% relative humidity
- direct sunlight should not enter the records storage area
- air must circulate freely and there should be intake of fresh air
- computer disks and tapes should be protected from magnetic fields.

When records identified as having archival value are moved to inactive storage they must be placed in an environmentally controlled storage area and maintained at temperature and humidity levels as close as possible to those described in the [NSW State Archives and Records Standard on the Physical Storage of Records -](#)

5.1.4 Principle 4 - Shelving and Packaging

The shelving, equipment and containers for records storage should ensure that records are secure, accessible and protected from deterioration.

Shelving, racking, cabinets, other storage devices and handling equipment should be suitable for the type of record stored, clean, in good state of repair, and strong enough to carry potential loads. Shelving should be raised off the floor by 85-150mm as a disaster precaution, and lockable if it is to hold sensitive records. The floor of the building must be capable of holding the weight of fully loaded shelving and racking. Containers used for records should be appropriate to the record format and retention, in good condition and the correct size for the records they contain.

Long-term records should be stored in archival or permanent acid-free file covers, folders and envelopes and acid free boxes.

Records storage facilities, shelving, containers and equipment should comply with Occupational Health and Safety requirements, including provision of sufficient working space and elimination of risks from manual handling.

5.1.5 Principle 5 - Maintenance

Programs for the maintenance and regular inspections of records and storage areas should be implemented to ensure ongoing safety, security and stability of storage areas.

Programs may involve checking and treating factors such as:

- environmental conditions including light and pollution levels, temperature and humidity
- building surrounds and fabric
- physical security of buildings and storage areas
- electrical equipment and pipes, and structures like shelving
- cleanliness of storage areas
- fire detection mechanisms
- presence of mould or pest infestation

5.1.6 Principle 6 – Identification and control

Records are controlled so that they can be identified and retrieved. Mechanisms for improving accessibility should be balanced with the need to safeguard records against unauthorised access or theft.

Handling Records

Only authorised users should be able to access and retrieve records.

The retrieval of records from storage areas or facilities should be subject to controls in order to prevent damage or deterioration and adequate steps must be taken to promote the correct handling and use of records to minimise damage and ensure their preservation for as long as they are required. See [NSW State Archives and Records Handle with Care for guidelines](#).

Where staff are involved in storage operations and in the moving of records, it is appropriate that they receive manual handling training or instruction.

If records are transferred to the custody of another organisation for short periods of time (for example, court) the organisations should inform the temporary custodian of their responsibilities for records protection and security.

Records of long-term or archival value need to be handled with great care to ensure that they survive for as long as they are needed and arrangements should be made for the transfer of records required as State archives.

5.1.7 Principle 7 – Security

Security measures, including entry controls, should be applied to records storage areas and facilities, including when records are stored by service providers to prevent intruders. Serious breaches should be reported to General Manager, Tier 2 Director and Chief Executive and rectification action is taken where appropriate.

Records should be classified according to their value, legal requirements, sensitivity and criticality to SESLHD. These classifications will influence security requirements for records and determine how they should be managed, accessed and stored. Records identified as containing critical, sensitive or in-confidence material should be handled, stored and protected according to these security classifications. For example, instituting a clean desk policy which requires all such records and loose documents to be stored in a lockable cupboard at the end of each work day.

5.2 Annual Compliance Audit

The Department Manager should ensure that an annual compliance audit is conducted and take corrective action to rectify any areas of non-compliance. **Appendix A – Compliance Checklist**

The Manager is responsible for ensuring that recommendations from the Compliance audit are retained for 6 years after completion of actions as per GA 28 (12.4.1) Administrative Records.

6. REFERENCES**6.1 External**

[National Safety and Quality Health Service Standard – Standard 1 Governance for Safety and Quality in Health Service Organisations](#)

[State Records Act, 1998](#)

[NSW State Records General Disposal Authorities 8, 11, 17 & 21](#)

[NSW State Records General Authorities 26, 28 & 45](#)

[NSW Health Corporate Governance and Accountability Compendium Section 4.1.5 State Records Act](#)

[NSW Ministry of Health Policy Directive PD2012_069 Health Care Records - Documentation and Management](#)

[NSW Health Policy Directive PD2009_057 Records Management – Department of Health](#)

6.2 Internal

[SESLHDPD/196 – Records Management](#)

[SESLHDPD/192 – Health Records Disaster Management](#)

[SESLHDPR/219- Records Disaster Management](#)

7. REVISION & APPROVAL HISTORY

Date	Revision No.	Author and Approval
October 2002	0	Geraldine Silveri and approved by the Area Finance and Administration Committee
October 2004	1	Re-formatted with minor changes approved by Area Records Officer and re-issued by Systems Integration & Improvement Manager
September 2005	2	Minor changes made by Records Manager, Executive Support Unit following feedback from consultation with stakeholders. Approved by the Area Executive Committee 27 Sept 2005
February 2011	3	Minor changes made by CHN Clinical Information and Admin Services Manager in conjunction and consultation with the Area Corporate Records Committee
September 2012	4	Rebadged into LHD template
October 2012	5	Approved by District Executive Team
November 2012	6	Minor changes made by Manager Executive Services in consultation with Chief Executive.
November 2012	7	Minor change. Appendix A with link to State Records site added
July 2016	8	Minor changes by Records Coordinator to align with revised NSW State Records Standard on the Physical Storage of Records Addition Appendix A – Compliance checklist
July 2016	8	Updates endorsed by Executive Sponsor
May 2020	9	Review undertaken - minor changes made by Records Coordinator, District Executive Services.
May 2020	9	Minor review – updated hyperlinks Endorsed by Executive Sponsor Processed by Executive Services prior to publishing.

Appendix A	Compliance Checklist	Yes	No
Principle 1 Authorisation			
1.1	The Nominated Senior Officer or appropriate agency representative has authorised all records storage areas and facilities.		
1.2	All State records are stored in storage areas or facilities, including records stored by service providers that have been assessed as being compliant with this standard.		
1.3	Storage areas and facilities are regularly inspected and assessed for compliance.		
Principle 2 Location and buildings			
2.1	The location of each records storage area and facility has been subject to risk assessment to identify and mitigate possible risks to records.		
2.2	The storage facilities have been assessed as being suitable for the storage of records.		
2.3	Records storage facilities built since 2011 need to be compliant with the Building Code of Australia and associated codes at the time of construction.		
2.4	Buildings used for records storage are weatherproof and have good drainage.		
2.5	Storage areas and facilities are dedicated to either records or records / library storage.		
2.6	Each storage area and facility has a current disaster reaction and recovery plan which is regularly revised and equipment / supplies to assist in the recovery of records after a disaster.		
2.7	Storage areas and facilities have appropriate and comprehensive fire detection and protection systems and equipment, in compliance with the Building Code of Australia and Australian Standards.		
Principle 3 Environmental controls			

Appendix A	Compliance Checklist	Yes	No
3.1	Records of short term value are stored in conditions which ensure preservation until they are no longer required.		
3.2	Records of long term and archival value are stored in conditions which will ensure their preservation; maximum temperature of 25 degrees and maximum Relative Humidity of 60%.		
3.3	Records of archival value are transferred to archival storage once they are no longer active.		
3.4	Temperature and humidity levels within storage areas and facilities are monitored for stability and action taken to minimise any significant fluctuations.		
3.5	Records are stored away from direct light, including sunlight.		
3.6	The air in records storage areas circulates freely and there is an intake of fresh air.		
3.7	Magnetic media is protected from magnetic fields.		
3.8	Records storage areas and facilities have an integrated pest management system.		
Principle 4 <i>Shelving and packaging</i>			
4.1	Shelving and handling equipment is clean, in good condition and appropriate to the format and retention period of the records.		
4.2	Item containers are clean, in good condition, and appropriate to the format and retention period of the records they hold.		
4.3	Records storage facilities, shelving, equipment, and containers meet workplace health and safety requirements.		
Principle 5 <i>Maintenance</i>			

Appendix A	Compliance Checklist	Yes	No
5.1	Records storage areas and facilities are maintained as part of the organisation's building maintenance program.		
5.2	Regular checks of records and containers in records storage areas and facilities are undertaken to identify signs of pest infestation, mould, or other deterioration.		
5.3	Mould or pest infestation is treated promptly and appropriately.		
5.4	Appropriate conservation action is undertaken as required but repairs to records do not damage the records further.		
Principle 6 Identification and control			
6.1	Records are controlled in a system which allows them to be identified, located, retrieved quickly and easily, and returned to storage after use.		
6.2	Procedures for the appropriate handling and use of records are defined and communicated to all users.		
6.3	Procedures for the safe transport of records are defined and communicated to all staff and contractors.		
6.4	Policies and procedures are implemented to ensure that records of long term value and archives are handled with care.		
6.5	Records are converted or digitised according to recognised standards.		
Principle 7 Security			
7.1	Storage areas and facilities are intruder resistant and access controlled.		
7.2	Records which are identified as critical, sensitive or containing in-confidence material, are appropriately protected.		