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Department:
Public Works and Roads
North West Provincial Government
Republic of South Africa

RECORDS MANAGEMENTPOLICY
FOR
ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT
OF DEPARTMENTAL RECORDS

NAME OF POLICY:
RECORDS MANAGEMENT POLICY

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1 PREAMBLE

The Department of Public Works and Roads recognize the importance of sound records management. Proper records keeping will enable the Department to exercise transparency, accountability and good governance. The Department is committed to ensure that all public records in its control are managed according to mandatory sound records management practices as prescribed by legislation governing Records Management in South Africa.

2 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this policy document are:

- Ensure that departmental records irrespective of form or medium are properly created, maintained, accessed and disposed of through a Systematic Disposal Programme
- Ensure that the department captures, maintains and protects a memory of decisions and actions that impact on the lives of the people and the environment it governs.
- Promote proper classification and storage of records
- Comply with legislation and records management standards

3 APPROVING AUTHORITY / MANDATE

The National Archives and Records Services of South Africa Act (Act. No. 43 of 1996 as amended)
The Promotion of Access to information Act (Act. No. 2 of 2000).
The Promotion of Administrative Justice Act (Act. No.3 of 2000)
The Public Finance Management Act (Act No. 1 of 1999)
The Electronic Communication and Transaction Act (Act No. 25of 2002.

4 INTRODUCTION

The Department of Public Works and Roads is committed to integrate the document management system for quality service delivery to the business units (internal services) i.e. infrastructure, asset management, roads, transport, district operations, human resource management, legal services, finance, and information technology.

Performance agreements which Senior Management in the department sign on an annual basis should among others reflect their responsibility in relation to Records Management. The aim of the department is to ensure a quicker method of processing documents, proper creation, maintenance, use and disposal of records to achieve efficient, transparent and accountable intergraded document management during operation of the business.

5   DEFINITION OF TERMS

5.1   **Archives**: records that are in the custody of an archives repository or records center.

5.2   **Archivist**: Officer charged with the overall control and maintenance of records stored in records center. This control includes all aspects regarding the custody, care and disposal of Public records.

5.3   **Archives repository**: Building in which records with archival value are preserved permanently

5.4   **Custody**: the control of records based upon their physical possession.

5.5   **Electronic Records**: this is the collective name of all components of an electronic information system, viz. source documents, print- outs, programmes, electronic media and metadata

5.6   **File Plan**: Plan according to which a department arranges its correspondence so as to serve the components' requirements for information retrieval optimally.

5.7   **Public Records**: any records created or received by a governmental body in pursuance of its activities regardless of form or media.

5.8   **Records**: all documents and papers that are received and created in the process of running an office.

5.9   **Records Manager**: an officer appointed as such by the head of department to be responsible for promoting the effective, efficient and accountable management of departmental records and ensuring that the

department complies with the requirements of the National Archives of South Africa Act (Act No. 43 of 1996).

5.10 **Storage Media**: storage devices of data e.g. magnetic tape, digital audio-tape, optimal disc, etc.

5.11 **Disposal**: The action of either destroying or deleting a record or transferring it into archival custody

6 POLICY ELEMENTS

6.1 Records Manager

The Head of Department in terms of section 13 (5) of the National Archives of South Africa Act, (Act No. 43 of 1996), must appoint the Records Manager of the Department of Public Works and Roads.

6.2 Identification

6.2.1 All records created or received during the execution of the department functions including electronic records, for example official e-mails (excluding personal e- mails) are Public records and these records must be managed in accordance with the determined policy guidelines. Public records which are stored must be classified so that they are easily traceable and accessible, thereby facilitating transparency, accountability and democracy.

6.2.2 Before the creation of all departmental circulars, numbers must be obtained from the Main registry.

6.2.3 Registry officials are responsible for opening and closing files.

6.3 Classification

6.3.1 Only classification systems that have been approved by the Provincial Archivist may be used for both paper – based and electronic records.

6.3.2 All Departments' records (including circulars) must be properly classified (according to approved File Plan) and stored in registries for easy retrieval and accessibility.

6.3.3 The records Manager or head of registry section should be contacted in the event when difficulties are experienced with the allocation of reference numbers.

6.3.4 All records created with incorrect or no reference will be returned to the authors (handwritten corrections is not allowed).

6.3.5 Under no circumstances may revisions and additions be made to the classification systems without the records manager's prior approval.

6.3.6 Only National Intelligence Agency approved security classification grades of Restricted, Confidential, Secret and Top Secret must be used for both paper based and e-records.

6.3.7 Case files such as staff personal files, bursary files, disciplinary files etc must be classified using a PERSAL number/alphabetically according to surnames. Classification or numbering systems for all case files are outlined in the "List of Series of Separate Case Files" at the back of the approved filing systems.

6.4 Disposal of Records

6.4.1 No public records may be destroyed, erased or otherwise disposed of without prior written authorization from the Provincial Archivist.

6.4.2 No public records may be removed from one office to the other without prior authorization from the Records Manager.

6.4.3 The office must determine retention periods for non-archival records.

6.4.4 Transparency, accountability, the requirements of democracy, any other legal obligations as well as the concerned offices own functional needs must always be considered when determining retention period.

6.4.5 The Records Manager must be contacted whenever the staff disagrees with an allocated retention period.

6.4.6 Archival paper- based records must be kept for 20 years before they are transferred to a North West Provincial Archives for permanent preservation.

6.4.7 Human Resource Management Records under the control of the Department shall be kept for as long as they are still needed.

7 CUSTODY

7.1 Mini registries

If it is found that officials have mini registries in their offices after the implementation of the approved File Plan necessary steps will be taken against them.

7.2 Photocopy machine

No photocopy machine will be placed at the registry as it encourages unauthorized entry at the registry.

7.3 The information resources of the department are kept in:

- The Main Registry
- Personnel Registry
- Various districts and sub-districts offices.
- Registry of the Executing Authority (MEC)

Care should be taken to ensure:

- That records are stored in areas where they would not be near flammable materials, like paint, petrol, etc.
- That fire extinguisher are made available and placed at strategic and accessible areas in the event there is fire.

7.4 Information resources

Information resources will be placed under the immediate control of the Departmental Records Manager.

7.5 Media resources

The following media resources will be kept by the office of the Records Manager:

- File Plan - Paper based records
- Integrated Document Management System - Electronic records
- Microfilm records
- Films, Video and sound recordings

7.6 Electronic storage media

Records kept on electronic storage media should be refreshed and migrated to new storage media regularly to enable them to be accessible when required.

7.7 Procedure manual

A registry procedure manual should be compiled and kept in all registry sections for purposes of using it to train registry staff. The Records Manager should also keep a copy of the procedure manual.

8   ELEMENTS OF INTEGRATED DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The department of Public Works and Roads shall implement and maintain the Integrated Document Management System in terms of (ISO15489) International Records Management Standards. The system shall provide the following functions:

(a) Managing a corporate file plan.
(b) Managing E- Mails (excluding personal) as records
(c) Managing web- sites as records
(d) Maintaining the relationship between records and files and between the files series and file plan.
(e) Identify records that are due for disposal and managing the disposal process.
(f) Associating the contextual and structural data within the document.
(g) Constructing and managing Audit trials
(h) Managing records Version Control
(i) Managing the integrity and reliability of records once they have been declared as such.
(j) Managing records in all formats in an integrated manner.

Compilation of integrated Document Management System

The functional subject general file plan shall be compiled and submitted to the Provincial Archivist in terms of section 13 (2) (b) (i) of the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act (Act No. 43 of 1996, as amended). The file plan shall be used for electronic records as well as for filing of records in paper based and other formats.

The Records Manager shall accept the responsibility for compiling File Plan and the control and physical management of all electronic records.

8.1 Document Classification

8.1.1 The Department of Public Works and Roads shall provide the record keeping system that routinely capture all records and organize the records in the way that reflects the functions of the office. This system will protect the records from alterations and / or unauthorized disposal and provide access to the information contained in the records.

8.1.2 The Integrated Document Management system should be able to organize records into categories/ subjects through which users can navigate to find individual documents.

8.1.3 The classification system refers to electronic documents kept in the electronic repositories that are assigned to the subjects in the classification system that match the document's subject. The classification system should have disposal instructions with a retention period that are determined for each subject.

8.1.4 The classification system will be done for all electronic documents and paper – based documents. The disposal and retention decision will be properly applied to the right documents. The documents will be archived and destroyed at the right time.

8.2 File Plan Management

8.2.1. The National Archives and Records Services of South Africa prescribed the functional subject file plan that organize documents into categories that reflects the functions, activities, tasks and transactions process during the operation of the business.

8.2.2. The Records Manager must ensure that the paper based records and the electronic records are classified against the same file plan.

8.2.3. The Records Manager/ System Administrator shall have an overall control on additions to the file plan or deleting folders from the file plan structure.

8.2.4. An integral functionality of a file plan should allow file to be closed and new volumes to be opened. The records management software should provide the capability to implement the cut- off instructions for records folders. The cutting of a folder will allow the calculation of the retention period according to the disposal authority issued on the file plan. The records in closed volumes should remain viewable and retrievable.

8.3 Document Filing.

Filing document should be extremely fast, simple and non –intrusive, to enable the users to buy into the concept. The records management software that provides the embedded filing must be the best choice in the paper – based filing system. Documents are filed in a file cover that is used to keep records of the same subject together in chronological order. The same concept applies to electronic records. These records also need to be filed in chronological order in subject folder to enable them to be retrieved in context.

8.4 Storage of Electronic Records/ Paper- based records

8.4.1 The electronic storage media is unstable storage medium. It is influenced by numerous environmental factors namely; temperature, humidity, oxidation, dust and magnetic fields. In order to ensure access to electronic records, both the storage media and the technology used to create the electronic records must be stable. Electronic storage media do not have the longevity of the paper records.

8.4.2 Environmental conditions can adversely affect the ability to read the information stored on media. Electronic records need to be stored in a stable environment. Lower temperatures and humidity will reduce the risk of having binder hydrolysis problems in tape systems and will reduce the rate of corrosion of optical formats. The area where electronic records/ paper based are being stored should be clean and should benefit from best housekeeping programme. Electronic

records are sensitive to physical damage through careless storage, handling and use. The magnetic of tapes or cassettes CD-ROM and DVD are recommended for storage of electronic record.

8.4.3 The paper-based records should be stored in file cover and boxes prescribed by the Provincial Archives and Records services. The strong rooms for the above also affects archiving records mentioned environmental factors therefore preventative measures should be taken into consideration.

8.5 Document Search/ Retrieval

8.5.1 The users realize that retrieval of documents is easier and reliable when they classify the paper – based and electronic records against the same filing plan. An automated records management system should be able to create and update indexes efficiently and automatically. The users will be more inclined to file electronic records to the classification system in the repository.

8.6 Metadata Management

8.6.1 The Provincial Archives and Records services should be consulted to find out what **metadata** will be required for the long-term preservation of electronic records and ensure that the electronic system and / or the users capture those elements.

8.6.2 Automated records management systems should also be generated and used to manage records where the objective is to preserve the authenticity and integrity of the data and to retain context with which to analyze the actual records.

8.6.3 The metadata should be preserved with the specific electronic document that gives context to the document. This helps the user to know where the document comes from, who the creator was, when was it created or where it is allocated. The records management chosen should allow the users to preserve the metadata with the documents they created.

8.7 Retention and Disposal

8.7.1. A systematic disposal programme should be in place for appraisal and disposal of electronic records and paper-based records. The records management must ensure that the retention schedule disposal authority defines how long the records have to be kept by the systems. The disposal instructions and retention periods are applied to each subject file within the file plan.

8.7.2. Series, boxes or files must be identified and coded to represent retention periods. It is important to ensure that adequate safeguards are in place. All disposal decisions should be approved and the actions recorded. It is also useful to ensure the application can produce appropriate histories, lists and reports, box lists, lists of destroyed files, list of files transferred to archival storage and so on. The application should also be set up so that disposal dates are handled consistently. Appropriate controls shall be implemented to protect essential records from loss, destruction and falsification.

8.7.3. The records management software that is chosen should ensure that the right records are destroyed at the right time and should not allow for automatic software – driven destruction to take place. The administrator should be alerted if an electronic file is due for destruction. This allows the administrator to review the retention period of all related files and confirm whether to proceed or cancel the process.

8.8 Version Control

8.8.1 The life span of records will be according to prescripts of records management as determined by legislative framework governing records management for example, once the record is 20 years old it should be transferred to Archives repository for permanent preservation (records with enduring value) and others (with ephemeral value) destroyed. When final version is declared a record editing should not be allowed.

8.8.2 If it is necessary to create a new version of a record it should be possible to check out a copy of the records and to create a new version with the copy. The new version should be checked back

into the repository as a new record. The link between new version and the original record should be maintained where retention of previous version is necessary as evidence of approval or revolution of the document.

8.9 Archiving

8.9.1 An electronic records management system can move the documents from central magnetic disk storage to offline or less expensive storage media. The electronic document management systems support the ability to search document profiles as if they were online, and the documents can be retrieved from offline storage to online use.

8.9.2 These records can also be physically removed from the repository and transferred to an archives repository or off sites storages. The records management software chosen should preserve the format, profiles and contextual information of each document when it is archived.

8.10 Long Term Format

8.10.1 The electronic records management system must provide the functionality to store records in non-proprietary formats or convert records to such format upon checking them in the electronic repository. The non- proprietary formats are better suited for migration than proprietary ones. The data interchange and document format standards will simplify the migration process.

8.11 Security

8.11.1 Access Control

8.11.1.1 In order to create an optimal information and records security environment, a system of security measures would be essential. In this regard access and movement would be prerequisite elements for an effective security system.

8.11.1.2 The electronic records management software must be able to control or limit access to records, files and metadata on user level in the document management system and in records repository.

8.11.2 Security classification

Officials are required to adhere to document security guidelines as outlined in the Minimum Information Security Policy document. When classified records are not in use, they must be stored in the following manner:

- Restricted : Normal filing cabinets/shelves
- Confidential : Reinforced filing cabinets
- Secret : Strong room/reinforced cabinets
- Top secret : Strong room, safe or walk-in safe

8.11.3 Backup and Recovery

8.11.3.1 The system must be provided with controls to provide regular backup of records and metadata and be able to recover any records that are lost because of system failure, accident and security breach. It shall be made on a daily basis. It shall be regularly tested to ensure that they can be relied upon for emergency use when necessary. The retention period shall be determined and documented.

8.11.3.2 The automated backup and recovery can be provided by the records management system or by the integration with the utilities of an electronic document Management System or a Database Management System operating with the records management system.

8.11.3.3 Backup and recovery functions should be divided between the records administrator and IT staff.

8.12 Authenticity

The information contained in every record may be produced as evidence in the court of law. Users and system administrators should always protect the records against alterations.

8.12.1 Audit Trail

8.12.1.1 The Provincial Archivist can authorize the legal destruction of records in terms of the disposal authority. Nobody is allowed to destroy or delete records or their metadata information without the normal disposal functions.

8.12.1.2 The electronic records management software must provide the functionality to record all events that affect the records to make it possible to track authorized and unauthorized deletion of records.

8.12.1.3 The records management should ensure that files and metadata are transferred from one storage medium or location to another as their activities decreases and/or their use changes. This transfer can be either near-line, offline or into archival custody.

8.12.1.4 The records management software must keep an audit trail of:

- All the actions taken on an electronic record, electronic file and file plan
- The user initiating and or carrying out the action
- The date and the time of event.

8.12.2 Digital Certificate and digital signatures

The IT system administrators should ensure that electronic records management application are able to integrate with the digital signature and digital certificates technology as prescribed in the standard issued by SITA.

8.13 Rendition

8.13.1   The electronic records management classification should be able to render records to different formats. The purpose of rendition is to provide electronic documents in formats that are software and hardware independent so that they can be read by any computer system accessing the information. This functionality is useful it protects the original format from being altered.

8.14 Quality Assurance

8.14.1   The Record Manager should be responsible for the quality assurance of the records to ensure their validity as evidence of the business transactions of the department of Public Works and Roads and their legal admissibility.

8.14.2   The records Manager must be able to monitor the volume of documents that are being filed. He/ She must also be able to determine whether the disposal instructions and Retention periods are being applied thoroughly.

8.15 Registries and Files

8.15.1 Central Registries for receiving of incoming Mail and Dispatching of outgoing Mail.

8.15.1.1   An effective registry is the core of effective document control and document security. One registry in the office should be the central /main registry where all incoming mail must be received, opened and distributed internally. Incoming and outgoing mail must be recorded in the relevant registers (whether electronic or hardcopy).

8.15.1.2   Internal distribution should be reflected in registers for incoming and outgoing mail that should be kept at all other registries or offices where internal mail is received. These registers should contain the following particulars:

8.15.1.3   Particulars of incoming post: serial number of the entry; date of dispatch; reference number and date of the document; classification subject/ heading; dispatched/ addressed to; nature of dispatch (courier, by hand, registered post, facsimile, by computer); registered number of postal material; signature of the recipient (courier, registration, person dispatching); receipt number; date when receipt was obtained.

8.15.1.4   Particulars of outgoing Post: Serial number of the entry; date of dispatch; reference number and date of document; classification; subject/ heading; dispatched/ addressed to; nature of dispatch (courier, by hand, registered post, facsimile, by computer); registered number of postal material; signature of the recipient (courier, registration, person dispatching; receipt number; date when receipt was obtained.

8.15.1.5   Apart from being registered, a system of routine cards, or similar, should be implemented to ensure that a document can be traced at any time.

8.15.1.6   Outgoing mail should be forwarded to the central registry from where it will be dispatched. This forwarding and dispatching must be subjected to the control measures as described in the Minimum Information Security Standards.

8.15.1.7   Dispatching documents by courier should be made through the Main Registry. Couriers must be able to identify themselves when fetching or dispatching post. Couriers must have at least a confidential security clearance and it must convey documents in a safe locked container. The dispatching directorate/ chief directorate will pay courier expenditure.

8.16 Registries and Files

8.16.1 Access to Registries

Access into the registries should be controlled. No unauthorized person (s) should be allowed to enter the registry.

8.16.2 Management of Files

8.16.2.1   Files should be opened when there is a need to do so, and not because the file plan provides for the existence of such a file.

8.16.2.2   A register should be kept of all files opened.

8.16.2.3   Classified files must be stored in appropriate facilities.

8.16.2.4   All filed documents must be folio numbered in a chronological manner, i.e. the first documents in the file should be named 'Folio 1' and the second one ' folio 2' etc.

8.16.2.5   No file stored in the registry must be allowed to remain outside the registry for more than one working day without prior arrangement with the Records Manager.

8.16.2.6   All files must be returned to the registry before end of the business day, except in the case where the storage facilities in the office concerned meet the prescribed standard and that the return of the file is followed up on a daily basis by the head of registry.

8.16.2.7   Only authorized persons may be allowed access to classified files. It is important that the Provincial Archivist is informed immediately in writing of any loss of Public records.

8.16.2.8   A counter should be installed to prevent unauthorized entry to where the files are kept.

8.16.3 File E- Mail Records

8.16.3.1 The users must file e-mails messages to the file plan in the repository. The records management software chosen must automatically capture the transfer metadata. This data provides essential context for the message. Secret information shall not be transmitted via E-mail unless encrypted with approved encryption devices.

8.16.3.2 The software should be able to preserve any attachments containing information necessary for decision – making or to understand the intent or context of the message. The records management software must provide the capability to edit the subject or title, author or originator, addressee and other addresses metadata fields prior to filing the e- mail. The Head of Department shall authorize all E-Mail software that is installed and/or upgraded.

9 RESPONSIBILITIES

9.1 Records Manager

The following are duties of the Records Manager:

- Establish and maintain a records management unit
- Formulate and implement a records management policy and related records management procedures.
- Compile and maintain approved records classification systems for paper-based and electronic records
- Manage electronic correspondence systems, e – mail and websites with an integrated Document Management System
- Implement Systematic disposal programmes to reduce the storage cost involved in storing records that are no longer required for administrative purpose
- Keep all records in safe custody
- Ensure that records management and registry staff are trained to apply the proper registry procedures to facilitate sound management of records
- Train the creator of records to allocate file reference numbers/ subjects to records

- Responsible for the management of electronic records
- Ensure that all shortcomings in the safe storage of electronic records are addressed appropriately

9.2 Information Technology Specialist / System Administrator

- The information Technology Specialist is responsible for procedures and actions for documents on Migration
- The IT Specialist should establish formal policies for migration and version control
- The IT Specialist and Records Manager should both be involved in compiling an integrated Document Management System
- The System administrator must ensure that, when providing access to electronic records, read only copies of the information are provided and that the users cannot access the original records.
- The system administrator should conduct regular test samples on the electronic records to ensure that migration and long-term preservation strategies are adhered to and that the records are kept accessible.

9.3 Records Management Committee

The record management committee should be established and meet once a month to discuss matters concerning the management of integrated document management system.

This committee shall consist of these members:

- The Records Manager
- The System Administrator
- The head of Information management directorate and other officials deem fit to serve in the committee.

9.4 Personnel

Officials must adhere to the records management procedures as indicated in the Records Management Policy, Registry Procedure Manual and the File Plan.

10 LEGALITY

10.1 The office should ensure that records are admissible as evidence in courts of law.

10.2 A request for access must be made in the prescribed form to the Department Records Manager at his/her address or fax number or electronic mail address. (ss 18 (1) of the Promotion of Access to Information Act of 2000).

The prescribed form for a request of access mentioned above must at least require the person requesting access:

(a) To provide sufficient particulars to enable the Departmental Records Manager to identify:
   1. The record or records requested and
   2. The requester

(b) To state whether the record concerned is preferred in a particular language.
(c) To specify a postal address or fax number of the requester in the Republic
(d) If, in addition to a written reply, the requester wishes to be informed of the decision on the request in any other manner, to state that manner and the necessary particulars to be so informed; and
(e) If the request is made on behalf of a person, to submit proof of the capacity in which the requester is making the request, to the reasonable satisfaction of the Departmental Records Manager.

10.3 Illiteracy or disability

(a) An individual who because of illiteracy or disability is unable to make a request for access to a record of the Office in writing may make that request orally.

(b) The Departmental Records Manager must reduce that oral request to writing in the prescribed form and provide a copy thereof to the requester.

11 TRAINING

11.1 The Records Manager and the head of Registry should attend a records management course, which is offered by the National Archives.

11.2 The Records Manager should train staff in the allocation of reference numbers.

11.3 The head of Registry is responsible for training the registry staff

11.4 The Records Manager should ensure that all staff members are conversant with the proper registry procedures to enable them to support registry to function properly.

12 INSPECTION BY THE PROVINCIAL ARCHIVES

12.1 The Provincial Archives is entitled in terms of section 13(2) (c) of the National Archives of South Africa Act (Act No. 43 of 1996) to full and free access, at all times to all public records in the custody of the office for inspection purposes.

12.2 The above entitlement is subject to the provision that the inspection of public records that contain information the disclosure of which is restricted by any other Act of Parliament shall be done only with the consent of the Head of the Office.

13 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

13.1 The Records Manager shall be responsible for monitoring the implementation of this policy and review thereof when need arises.
13.2 The Policy shall be reviewed at least once a year.
13.3 The Provincial Archives and Records Service of South Africa and Service Providers shall evaluate the Integrated Document Management System. These two bodies shall ensure that the system's functionality meet the prescribed standards.

N.B

Senior Management must also be responsible for Records Management and ensure that the management of records is a key responsibility in the Performance Agreement of all staff in their units.
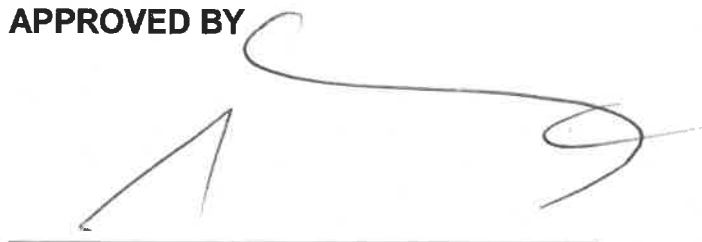
14 COMMENCEMENT OF THE POLICY

This policy shall be effective from the date of approval by the Head of the Department.

15 APPROVAL

This document has been approved by Administrator on behalf of the Department of Public Works and Roads.

APPROVED BY

Date:

Mr Thobakgale
The Administrator