

Records

Recordkeeping fact sheet 1

What is a record?

Everything you create, send or receive that provides evidence of departmental work is a record. Records can be information in any format, including:

- hardcopy and electronic documents
- emails, letters and file notes that provide evidence of business decisions or actions
- intranet and website pages
- purchase orders, invoices, receipts and statements
- photographs
- audio-visual recordings
- maps and plans.

Why are records important?

Records document what we do and why. We keep records to protect our corporate knowledge and to satisfy our legal obligations. Records:

- increase transparency and accountability by providing proof of business practices, communications, decisions and actions
- help to protect the rights of clients, employees, service providers and the public
- support collaboration and informed decision-making
- support continuity and consistency in management and administration
- provide an audit trail to meet business and legal requirements
- reduce the risk of being unable to produce evidence of departmental activities.

What is the difference between records and information?

Records *are* information, but not all information is a record. A record has certain properties to ensure it can be found, and when found it can be relied upon as evidence.

The following are characteristics every record must have:

Accuracy

All records must be a correct reflection of what was done, communicated or decided. An accurate record is one that can be trusted as a true representation of the transactions or events which it documents.

Authenticity

An authentic record is one that can be proven to:

- be what it claims to be
- have been created or sent by the person claimed to have created or sent it
- have been created or sent at the time claimed.

Integrity

A record with integrity is complete and unaltered, now and in the future. It can be proven to have been managed appropriately through time.

Records must be tamper-proof. They should be protected against unauthorised access, alteration, deletion or loss.

Usability

A record must be understandable, complete, retrievable and available through time. For this reason, records may only be kept in authorised business systems.

When creating and managing records, care should be taken to ensure the records can be understood in the future or by users who were not directly involved in the events documented.

Your responsibilities

The DHHS *Records management policy* requires that all departmental staff (including contractors and volunteers) create and keep full and accurate records of their daily work. These obligations arise from legislation such as:

- Public Records Act 1973
- Evidence Act 2008
- Freedom of Information Act 1982
- Health Records Act 2001

Where should records be kept?

The department currently manages records in a predominantly hardcopy environment. The F:Drive can be used to save draft documents, however final versions of documents must be printed and placed on a TRIM file, or saved into an authorised business system.

Authorised systems include:

- TRIM
- CRIS
- eMinisterials
- HiiP
- Oracle

Records must not be kept in personal folders or lever-arch files, CDs, DVDs or portable storage devices.

Recordkeeping checklist

- Keep all information that provides evidence of departmental work.
- Document your work activities, including decisions made, work performed, notes of meetings and relevant conversations.
- Save electronic records in authorised business systems.
- Keep hardcopy records on registered TRIM files.
- Ensure records include appropriate contextual information – for example, the date and location of a meeting and who was involved.
- Title records according to *naming conventions*, to ensure that records can be understood in the future.

- Do not destroy, delete or alter records. Records may only be destroyed by authorised Records Management staff.
- Do not lose records in your care.
- Do not remove records from departmental premises without permission.
- Do not disclose records to unauthorised parties.

Related documents

- Records Management Policy

Further information

For further assistance, please contact the:

Records Service Centre: 9096 8999
Email: RecordsService.Centre@dhhs.vic.gov.au

or your local Records Management unit:

Records Unit East Division: 9843 6090
Records Unit North Division: 9412 5427
Records Unit South Division: 8765 7164
Records Unit West Division: 5333 6088

To receive this publication in an accessible format phone 9096 8999, using the National Relay Service 13 36 77 if required, or email RecordsService.Centre@dhs.vic.gov.au