

State Records Authority of New South Wales

Functional Retention and Disposal Authority: FA359

This authority covers records documenting the function of emergency management

Issued to State Emergency Service of NSW

This functional retention and disposal authority is approved under section 21(2)c of the *State Records Act 1998* following prior approval by the Board of the State Records Authority of New South Wales in accordance with section 21(3) of the Act.

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Functional Retention and Disposal Authority

Authority no FA359

SR file no 10/0358

Scope

This functional retention and disposal authority covers records documenting the function of emergency management from 1955 onwards.

Public office

State Emergency Service of NSW

Approval date

Geoff Hinchcliffe
Director
State Records Authority of New South Wales

16/02/2015
Date

About the Functional Retention and Disposal Authority

Purpose of the authority

The purpose of this functional retention and disposal authority is to identify those records created and maintained by NSW public offices which are required as State archives and to provide approval for the destruction of certain other records created and maintained by NSW public offices, after minimum retention periods have been met.

The approval for disposal given by this authority is given under the provisions of the *State Records Act 1998* only and does not override any other obligations of an organisation to retain records.

The retention and disposal of State records

The records retention and disposal practices outlined in this authority are approved under section 21(2)(c) of the *State Records Act 1998 (NSW)*. Part 3 (Protection of State Records) of the Act provides that records are not to be disposed of without the consent of State Records with certain defined exceptions. These exceptions include an action of disposal which is positively required by law, or which takes place in accordance with a normal administrative practice (NAP) of which State Records does not disapprove. Advice on the State Records Act can be obtained from State Records.

The authority sets out how long the different classes of records generated by an organisation must be kept to meet its legal, operational and other requirements, and whether the records are to be kept as State archives. The State Records Authority ('State Records') reviews and approves organisations' retention and disposal authorities under the State Records Act. It is the duty of a public office, in submitting a draft functional retention and disposal authority for approval, to disclose to State Records any information which affects the retention of the records covered by the authority.

State Records' decisions take into account both the administrative requirements of public offices in discharging their functional responsibilities and the potential research use of the records by the NSW Government and the public. One of State Records' functions is to identify and preserve records as State archives. These are records which document the authority and functions of Government, its decision-making processes and the implementation and outcomes of those decisions, including the nature of their influence and effect on communities and individual lives. Criteria for the identification of State archives are listed in *Building the Archives: Policy on records appraisal and the identification of State archives*. The Policy also explains the roles and responsibilities of State Records and of public offices in undertaking appraisal processes and disposal activities.

Implementing the authority

This functional retention and disposal authority covers records controlled by the public office and applies only to the records or classes of records described in the authority. The authority should be implemented as part of the records management program of the organisation. Two primary objectives of this program are to ensure that records are kept for as long as they are of value to the organisation and its stakeholders and to enable the destruction or other disposal of records once they are no longer required for business or operational purposes.

The implementation process entails use of the authority to sentence records. Sentencing is the examination of records in order to identify the disposal class in the authority to which they belong. This process enables the organisation to determine the appropriate retention period and disposal action for the records. Advice on sentencing can be obtained from State Records. See *Implementing a retention and disposal authority*.

Where the format of records has changed (for example, from paper-based to electronic) this does not prevent the disposal decisions in the authority from being applied to records which perform the same function. The information contained in non paper-based or technology dependant records must be accessible for the periods prescribed in the classes. Where a record is copied, either onto microform or digitally imaged, the original should not be disposed of without authorisation (see also the *General retention and disposal authority: original or source records that have been copied*). Public offices will need to ensure that any software, hardware or documentation required to gain continuing access to technology dependent records is available for the periods prescribed.

Disposal action

Records required as State archives

Records which are to be retained as State archives are identified with the disposal action 'Required as State archives'. Records that are identified as being required as State archives should be stored in controlled environmental conditions and control of these records should be transferred to State Records when they are no longer in use for official purposes.

The transfer of control of records as State archives may, or may not, involve a change in custodial arrangements. Records can continue to be managed by the public office under a distributed management agreement. Public offices are encouraged to make arrangements with State Records regarding the management of State archives.

Transferring records identified as State archives and no longer in use for official purposes to State Records' control should be a routine and systematic part of a public office's records management program. If the records are more than 25 years old and are still in use for official purposes, then a 'still in use determination' should be made.

Records approved for destruction

Records that have been identified as being approved for destruction may only be destroyed once a public office has ensured that all other requirements for retaining the records are met. Retention periods set down in this authority are *minimum* periods only and a public office should keep records for a longer period if necessary. Reasons for longer retention can include legal requirements, administrative need, and government directives. A public office *must not* dispose of any records where the public office is aware of possible legal action (including legal discovery, court cases, formal applications for access) where the records may be required as evidence.

Once all requirements for retention have been met, destruction of records should be carried out in a secure and environmentally sound way. Relevant details of the destruction should be recorded. See *Destruction of records: a practical guide*.

Organisations should review functional retention and disposal authorities regularly to ensure that they remain relevant as the organisation's functions and activities, operating environment and requirements for records change. Retention requirements may change over time. This can occur when:

- business needs or practices change
- new laws, regulations or standards are introduced
- new technology is implemented
- government administration is restructured and functions are moved between entities, or
- unforeseen or new community expectations become apparent.

State Records recommends that organisations check any functional retention and disposal authorities more than 5 years old to ensure that the retention periods and disposal actions remain relevant.

Regardless of whether a record has been approved for destruction or is required as a State archive, a public office or an officer of a public office must not permanently transfer possession or ownership of a State record to any person or organisation without the explicit approval of State Records.

Administrative change

This functional retention and disposal authority has been designed to link records to the functions they document rather than to organisational structure. This provides for a stable retention and disposal authority that is less affected by administrative change. The movement of specified functions between branches or units within the public office does not require the authority to be resubmitted to State Records for approval.

However, when functions move from one public office to another the public office that inherits the new function should contact State Records to discuss use of any existing retention and disposal authority approved for use by a predecessor organisation.

Amendment and review of this authority

State Records must approve any amendment to this authority. Public offices that use the authority should advise State Records of any proposed changes or amendments to the authority.

State Records recommends a review of this authority after five years to establish whether its provisions are still appropriate. Either the public office or State Records may propose a review of the authority at any other time, particularly in the case of change of administrative arrangements or procedures which are likely to affect the value of the records covered by this authority.

In all cases the process of review will involve consultation between State Records and the public office. If the process of review reveals that this authority requires amendment, the necessary amendments should be made and approved.

Contact Information

State Records
PO Box 516
Kingswood NSW 2747
Telephone: (02) 9673 1788
E-mail: govrec@records.nsw.gov.au

**Functional Retention and Disposal Authority
Emergency management (State Emergency Service of NSW)**

Authority number: FA359

Dates of coverage: 1955+

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No	Function/Activity	Description	Disposal Action
1.0.0	AWARDS AND HONOURS	<p>The function of conferring awards and honours in recognition of bravery and distinction.</p> <p>See General Retention and Disposal Authority <i>Administrative records</i> COMMUNITY RELATIONS - Celebrations, ceremonies, functions for records relating to the presentation of awards and honours to the organisation.</p> <p>See General Retention and Disposal Authority <i>Administrative records</i> PERSONNEL - Performance management for records relating to awards received by staff and volunteers.</p>	
1.0.1		Records relating to the receipt, assessment and approval of successful nominations for awards, honours, etc., awarded to civilians in recognition of courageous or meritorious action.	Required as State archives
1.0.2		Records relating to the receipt and assessment of unsuccessful nominations for awards, honours, etc. to civilians.	Retain minimum of 5 years after action completed, then destroy
2.0.0	COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	<p>The function of managing public communication and community safety and education programs.</p> <p>See EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT for records relating to communicating with the public during an emergency.</p> <p>See General Retention and Disposal Authority <i>Administrative records</i> COMMUNITY RELATIONS - Reporting for records relating to statistical reports on public communications.</p> <p>See General Retention and Disposal Authority <i>Administrative records</i> STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT - Compliance 19.4.4 for records relating to the organisation's</p>	

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No	Function/Activity	Description	Disposal Action
<i>COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT - Community safety programs</i>			
		compliance with regulatory or licensing authority requirements regarding public communications e.g. guidelines for the broadcast of Emergency Public Warnings.	
2.1.0	Community safety programs	The development and implementation of safety programs, campaigns and workshops for stakeholders and the general community.	
2.1.1		Final versions of emergency safety, preparation and awareness program and campaign materials e.g. flood, storm or tsunami safe toolkits.	Required as State archives
2.1.2		Records relating to the development and delivery of emergency safety, preparation and awareness program and campaign activities, including community education workshops and school programs. Records include program plans, programs, lists of attendees, handouts, information packs, pamphlets, evaluations, etc.	Retain minimum of 7 years after action completed, then destroy
3.0.0	EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT	<p>The function of organising and managing resources and responsibilities for dealing with emergencies.</p> <p>See General Retention and Disposal Authority <i>Administrative records</i> GOVERNMENT RELATIONS - Inquiries for records relating to formal inquiries involving the organisation.</p> <p>See General Retention and Disposal Authority <i>Administrative records</i> STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT - Audit for records relating to audits of emergency management operations.</p> <p>See General Retention and Disposal Authority <i>Administrative records</i> STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT - Joint ventures for records relating to the establishment and monitoring of joint ventures with other organisations.</p>	
3.1.0	Advice	The activities associated with offering opinions by or to the organisation as to an action or judgement.	

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No	Function/Activity	Description	Disposal Action
<i>EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT - Advice</i>			
		<p>See EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT - Incident management for records relating to advice provided in relation to a particular incident or emergency.</p> <p>See General Retention and Disposal Authority <i>Administrative records</i> COMMUNITY RELATIONS - Enquiries for records relating to requests for and the handling of enquiries regarding routine information about the organisation and its services.</p> <p>See General Retention and Disposal Authority <i>Administrative records</i> INFORMATION MANAGEMENT - Cases 12.6.6 for requests for information from external sources such as loss adjusters and insurance companies.</p>	
3.1.1		Records relating to the provision of advice on the management of emergencies where the organisation is the lead agency and a detailed response has been provided. Includes advice to Councils on major developments, strategic planning, and risk to life considerations.	Required as State archives
3.1.2		Records relating to the provision or receipt of general advice concerning the management of emergencies.	Retain minimum of 5 years after action completed, then destroy
3.2.0	Agreements	<p>The processes associated with the establishment, maintenance, review and negotiation of agreements.</p> <p>See General Retention and Disposal Authority <i>Administrative records</i> GOVERNMENT RELATIONS - Agreements for records relating to agreements not related to emergency management.</p>	
3.2.1		Records relating to the establishment, negotiation, maintenance and review of agreements with other organisations (for example Mutual Aid Agreements and Memorandum of Understanding) outlining co-operative arrangements between	Retain minimum of 7 years after expiry or termination of

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<i>EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT - Compliance</i>			
		services or level of service each will provide in regards to emergencies, disasters or incidents.	agreement, then destroy
3.3.0	Compliance	<p>The activities associated with complying with mandatory or optional accountability, fiscal, legal, regulatory or quality standards or requirements to which the organisation is subject.</p> <p>See General Retention and Disposal Authority <i>Administrative records</i> STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT - Compliance for records relating to the organisation's compliance with regulatory or licensing authority requirements in regards to support operations</p>	
3.3.1		Records relating to the accreditation or registration of the organisation to operate specialised units such as rescue units, community first responder, etc.	Retain minimum of 10 years after expiry or revocation of accreditation or registration, then destroy
3.4.0	Incident management and response	<p>The activities associated with managing, evaluating and reporting on operations, incidents, emergencies and events.</p> <p>See General Retention and Disposal Authority <i>Administrative records</i> INFORMATION MANAGEMENT - Cases for records relating to requests for recordings or transcripts of emergency calls and dispatch details.</p>	
3.4.1		<p>Records relating to the management of emergency incidents where the organisation is the lead response agency and the incident:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is declared a state emergency or natural disaster • involves the loss of life or extensive damage to multiple properties 	Required as State archives

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<i>EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT - Incident management and response</i>			
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> leads to changes to strategic policies or procedures for dealing with emergencies. 	
3.4.2		Records relating to the management of emergency incidents where the organisation is the lead response agency and where: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the incident is not a declared state emergency or natural disaster does not involve the loss of life or extensive damage to multiple properties does not lead to change to strategic policies or procedures for dealing with emergencies. 	Retain minimum of 12 years after action completed, then destroy
3.4.3		Records relating to the receipt of emergency calls and responses. Includes summary records of emergency calls and the dispatch of resources to an incident. Records include copies of dispatch information forwarded to operational units for action, recordings of emergency calls, dispatches and subsequent radio transmissions, message sheets, radio sheets, log books etc.	Retain minimum of 12 years after action completed, then destroy
3.4.4		Records relating to the provision of assistance in general incidents, such as road accidents, land searches and animal rescues, and the provision of community engagement and support services at events e.g. World Youth Day, APEC meetings.	Retain minimum of 7 years after action completed, then destroy
3.5.0	Planning	The process of formulating ways in which objectives can be achieved. Includes determination and review of services, needs and solutions to those needs. See General Retention and Disposal Authority <i>Administrative records</i> OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY - Planning for records relating to medical evacuation plans and emergency evacuation plans. See General Retention and Disposal Authority <i>Administrative records</i> STRATEGIC	

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No	Function/Activity	Description	Disposal Action
<i>EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT - Planning</i>			
		MANAGEMENT - Planning for records relating to business continuity planning for the organisation.	
3.5.1		Records relating to the development of emergency management and response plans, practices and procedures for flooding, storms and tsunamis. Includes final research reports and final approved copies of plans.	Required as State archives
3.5.2		Records relating to the implementation of emergency management plans, the development and implementation of plans for operational management of activities and research data and primary materials supporting the development and implementation of plans not crucial to the substantiation or understanding of research reports or plans, or which can be readily or practically duplicated and has limited ongoing value.	Retain minimum of 10 years after action completed, then destroy
3.6.0	Policy & procedures	The activities associated with developing and establishing decisions, directions and precedents which act as a reference for decision making and as the basis from which the organisation's operating procedures are determined.	
3.6.1		Records relating to the establishment, development and review of policies and procedures for the management of emergencies, disasters and other incidents. Includes proposals, background research, results of consultations, supporting reports and final documents.	Required as State archives
3.6.2		Records relating to the development and review of operational procedures for emergency response, rescue and other incidents.	Retain minimum of 12 years after superseded, then destroy
4.0.0	OPERATIONAL TRAINING	The function of planning, providing, managing and evaluating training. See General Retention and Disposal Authority <i>Administrative records</i> FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT - Accounting for records relating to payments for training.	

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No	Function/Activity	Description	Disposal Action
<i>OPERATIONAL TRAINING - Assessment</i>			
		See General Retention and Disposal Authority <i>Administrative records</i> STAFF DEVELOPMENT - Training for records relating to non-specialised training and development of staff and volunteers, and administrative arrangements for training. See General Retention and Disposal Authority <i>Administrative records</i> STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT - Planning for records relating to the planning of operational training activities.	
4.1.0	Assessment	The activities concerned with the assessment of competencies of training participants.	
4.1.1		Assessment records for trainees. Includes competencies achieved, examination results, credentials issued.	Retain minimum of 30 years after assessment, then destroy
4.1.2		Individual examination or assessment instrument and workbooks.	Retain minimum of 2 years after examination, then destroy
4.1.3		Training log books (or similar) of officers documenting their individual training, competencies achieved, skills maintenance, etc., e.g. activity record books.	Retain minimum of 7 years after officer retires or leaves agency, then destroy
4.2.0	Compliance	The activities associated with complying with mandatory or optional accountability, fiscal, legal, regulatory or quality standards or requirements to which the organisation is subject.	

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No	Function/Activity	Description	Disposal Action
<i>OPERATIONAL TRAINING - Compliance</i>			
4.2.1		Records relating to the accreditation, licensing or registration of the organisation to conduct vocational courses. Records include certificate of accreditation, applications and supporting documentation, audit and inspection reports of training centre, instructors' qualifications and work history.	Retain minimum of 10 years after action completed, then destroy
4.3.0	Course delivery	The activities associated with the delivery of training.	
4.3.1		Records relating to development and delivery of classroom and on-the-job training manuals and materials. Records include course schedules, lesson plans, overheads, handouts and presenter's notes etc.	Retain minimum of 5 years after superseded, then destroy
4.3.2		Records relating to administrative arrangements for training courses. Includes applications, attendance records, venue bookings, equipment hire, catering arrangements etc.	Retain minimum of 2 years after action completed, then destroy
4.4.0	Curriculum Development	The development of curriculum for emergency management courses presented by the organisation.	
4.4.1		Final copies of specialised curriculum for emergency management training developed or commissioned by the organisation. Includes master copies of programs of study, course curriculum and objectives.	Required as State archives
4.4.2		Working papers and related correspondence documenting the development of the curriculum.	Retain minimum of 5 years after action completed, then destroy
4.5.0	Evaluation	The process of determining the suitability of potential or existing programs, services or systems or products. Includes ongoing monitoring.	

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<i>OPERATIONAL TRAINING - Evaluation</i>			
4.5.1		Record relating to the evaluation of courses, including assessments of courses by participants.	Retain minimum of 2 years after action completed, then destroy
4.6.0	Exercises and training	The activities associated with conducting training exercises. Includes championship events and competitions with other agencies.	
4.6.1		Records relating to the conduct of emergency response and recovery training exercises and inter-agency competitions. Records include program of events, publicity, invitations to participate, staffing arrangements, the use and supply of equipment, handbooks, training documentation, etc.	Retain minimum of 7 years after competition or exercise concluded, then destroy
4.7.0	Policy	The activities associated with developing and establishing decisions, directions and precedents which act as a reference for decision making and as the basis from which the organisation's operating procedures are determined.	
4.7.1		Records relating to the establishment and development of operational training policy. Includes policy proposals, research papers, results of consultations, supporting reports and final documents.	Retain minimum of 10 years after action completed, then destroy