

Solutions for storage: guidelines on the physical storage of State records

Issued 2000
Revised 2004, 2012, 2015, 2019

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1. Introduction

As the NSW Government rapidly transforms to digital business operations, the challenge for public offices is to manage the legacy of paper and physical records until these older paper records are time-expired, and can be destroyed or transferred as State archives.

The *State Records Act 1998* requires each public office to 'ensure the safe custody and proper preservation of the State records that it has control of' (section 11). To assist public offices in understanding and implementing this obligation, the revised [Standard on the physical storage of State records](#) (issued 2019) sets out the minimum compliance requirements for the storage of those State records which have a physical format. The standard applies to records created and maintained by contractors and service providers on behalf of public offices in the course of outsourced government business.

Importantly, the requirements of the standard are applicable to all storage areas and facilities which are controlled and managed by the public office. Public offices engaging commercial storage services should ensure that the storage area/facility and services to be provided under a contractual arrangement meet the requirements of the standard.

This guidance is designed to assist public offices implement the requirements of the Standard and to guide public offices in decisions and actions for storing State records to ensure that:

- storage is cost-effective and efficient
- all records are secure, protected and accessible for as long as they are required, to meet business and accountability needs, and that
- all records identified as required as State archives are stored in the best conditions possible.

The guidelines contain recommendations only. If a public office wishes to meet the compliance requirements in the Standard in other ways, they may do so.

1.1 Scope of guidelines

These guidelines cover semi-active records in the custody of a public office which have a physical format, including:

- paper files and documents
- volumes and registers
- maps, plans, charts and drawings
- photographic media such as photographic prints and negatives, film, microforms and x-rays
- magnetic media such as digital tape, video and audio cassettes
- optical media such as CDs and DVDs, and
- digital records stored on tapes, disks or portable hard drives.

These guidelines do not cover:

- active records, as these are likely to be created on a digital format and stored in network servers or data centres, or the cloud
- storage of digital records on network servers, in data centres, or in the cloud, or the
- storage of State archives

NSW State Archives and Records does not recommend the use of USB memory sticks for the short or long term storage of records.

Records identified as *required as State archives* in retention and disposal authorities are to be stored in the best conditions practically possible while the records are still under

the control of the public office. This includes records that are subject to *still in use determinations* under section 28 of the State Records Act. At the very minimum, records required as State archives, should be kept according to the requirements in the *Standard on the physical storage of State records*. The storage of State archives in the custody of a public office or other body under a distributed management agreement, made under section 30 of the Act, is governed by the terms of the agreement rather than the standard.

The standard and this guidance refer to storage requirements based on the retention period of the records. The main categories are:

- **short term storage** of records (records required to be retained for up to **10 years**);
- **medium term storage** of records (records required to be retained for **10-30 years**); and
- **long term storage** of records (records which have **long retention periods of more than 30 years**) and those that potentially may be required as State archives.

Short and medium term records, i.e. records that are only to be retained for **30 years or less**, should be stored in good storage conditions until they are authorised for destruction. Conditions for short term records are not as exacting as the conditions for long term records/archival storage. See [Table A - Storage environment conditions and housing requirements for short and medium term temporary records](#).* (This table is also included in the Standard.)

Long term records, i.e. records that are retained for 30 years or longer or those records required to be transferred as State archives, should be stored in the best environmental conditions possible. See [Table B - Storage environment conditions and housing requirements for long term temporary records and State archives](#).*

* *These requirements are based on temperature and humidity controls defined in international or Australian standards.*

1.2 Structure of guidelines

As the guidelines are intended to support the *Standard on the physical storage of State records*, they are roughly structured according to its principles. There is also a section on planning records storage to assist public offices to meet aspects of the principles.

1.3 Acknowledgments

NSW State Archives and Records acknowledges the use of the National Archives of Australia and the Public Record Office Victoria storage standards, specifications and guidelines in the development of these guidelines.

These guidelines also include a bibliography of further references.

2. Planning records storage

Records storage should be a planned and coordinated activity within your organisation. This ensures that storage arrangements and strategies are efficient and cost-effective.

2.1 Responsibilities for storing records

Principle 1 of the *Standard on the physical storage of State records* requires that the Senior Responsible Officer for records management or their delegate, has ensured that all records storage areas and facilities used by the public office, including arrangements with commercial providers, have been inspected to ensure that they are appropriate for the storage of records and approved for use by the public office. The Senior Responsible Officer should also have oversight of the organisation's storage plan and thus the organisation's storage strategy.

Your organisation should assign responsibility for decision-making about records storage to the Senior Responsible Officer or their delegate. Additionally, the Senior Responsible Officer should ensure that it is standard practice for records to be sentenced, using current approved retention and disposal authorities before records are sent to storage, and that records are regularly disposed of, either through physical destruction when minimum retention periods expire or transfer as State archives.

Records identified as *required as State archives* in a current approved retention and disposal authority which are no longer in use for official purposes in the organisation should be routinely and systematically transferred to NSW State Archives and Records' control and care. Your organisation should not retain records *required as State archives* unnecessarily, particularly if your organisation is unable to provide a suitable storage environment for such records.

In many cases, the Senior Responsible Officer will also need to ensure that the organisation has established a strategy and program to sentence and dispose of older accumulations of "unsentenced" records already held in storage areas and facilities. Undertaking such activities will assist in managing and reducing records storage costs. This is in keeping with [Ministerial Memorandum M2007-08 Efficient and cost effective management of records](#).

2.2 Matching records to appropriate storage

To effectively plan and manage records storage, your organisation needs to know:

- the types of records it creates and receives
- the format of these records, are they in digital or physical format
- the yearly quantity of creation/generation of records that are in a physical format
- how frequently/urgently each type of record may need to be retrieved from records storage, and
- how long each record type needs to be retained.

This information will assist you in determining what types of records storage your organisation needs, the environmental conditions required, and how much records storage your organisation requires now and into the future. If you have an accurate understanding of the types of records storage required and how much storage you need, then you can achieve economies of scale in your records storage arrangements and procurement.

Generally records storage decisions will correspond to the business usage of the records.

If you have ...	Then you will need ...
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<p><i>active records</i> in a physical format which are frequently used and are required for the day to day functioning of your organisation</p>	<p><i>primary storage</i> for physical records located near the office or work areas so that records can be quickly retrieved. This type of storage is usually expensive.</p> <p>Note: Generally, most NSW Government organisations are creating records in a digital format. If your organisation is creating active records in a physical format, the organisation will need to establish business rules for the creation, management and storage of 'active records'.</p>
<p><i>Semi-active records</i> which are required infrequently or are inactive and awaiting disposal</p>	<p><i>secondary storage</i> or <i>semi-active storage</i> which is located away from the centre of the city, in a storage repository managed by the organisation or a commercial facility.</p> <p>Note: Secondary or semi-active storage offers low cost bulk storage but retrieval costs need to be factored in.</p>
<p><i>State archives or long term temporary records</i></p>	<p><i>archival storage</i> facilities. These are specially designed repositories with suitable environmental conditions to ensure that the records will survive as long as possible.</p>

Here is an example of how you could start to identify your storage needs. This example is based on *General retention and disposal authority: local government records (GA39)*:

Type of record	Accumulation per year	Retention period	Disposal action	Storage requirements
Accounts receivable records (invoices, purchase orders etc.)	50 type 1 boxes (10 metres) per year	Retain minimum of 7 years after end of financial year in which record was created (GA39 12.1.1)	Destroy	Secondary or semi-active storage
Development application files and associated plans	100 type 1 boxes (500 metres) per year	Required as State archives (GA39 7.2.1)	Transfer to NSW State Archives and Records or	Archival storage
		retain minimum of 10 years after action completed or until structure is removed or demolished, whichever is longer (GA39 7.2.2)	Destroy, depending on nature of application	Secondary or semi-active storage
Time sheets (excluding those employees who work with children)	5 metres per year	Retain minimum of 6 years after action completed (GA39 22.16.2)	Destroy	Secondary or semi-active storage

Infringement notice books	6 metres per year	Retain minimum of 7 years after action completed (GA39 19.2.1)	Destroy	Secondary or semi-active storage
Companion animal registration and microchipping records	2 metres per year	Retain minimum of 2 years after creation of record (GA39 19.4.4)	Destroy	Secondary or semi-active storage
Minutes of Council (includes agenda papers)	10 metres per year	Required as State archives (GA39 13.6.1)	Transfer to NSW State Archives and Records	Archival storage
Parking permits (includes applications and determinations)	1 metre per year	Retain until expiry or termination of permit (usually 1 year) (GA39 30.8.1)	Destroy	Secondary or semi-active storage
Vehicle log books (paper log books)	20 books (1 box) per year	Retain minimum 5 years after end of FBT year (GA39 23.14.4)	Destroy	Secondary or semi-active storage

In the above scenario, the organisation will need approximately 540 linear metres of shelving for these records.

Each year, the organisation may need to add to this quantity of records storage. This is where understanding the patterns of growth (i.e. how many metres of physical records do we create and receive each year? Are we still creating these records in a physical format?) becomes important. Additionally, the organisation should estimate how many metres of records it will dispose of annually, either through transferring records identified as required as State archives to the State Archives Collection and destroying time-expired records. With these two estimates, the organisation can then predict how much storage it is likely to need each year. Based on this forecast, the organisation can then make appropriate arrangements and achieve greater efficiencies in storage procurement.

One way to estimate and forecast the growth of records held in offsite storage is to compare quantities of records stored in offsite storage over a number of years.

Moving to digital recordkeeping and reducing the quantity of paper that is stored will also greatly assist in reducing storage costs.

2.3 Storage planning

To assist in managing the storage of its records, organisations are encouraged to develop a comprehensive storage plan covering:

- all types of records (semi-active, State archives and long term temporary), storage media and storage locations
- forecasts of future storage needs, including growth of quantities of records requiring physical storage
- planned upgrades required for storage areas/facilities
- projected reductions of storage areas/facilities due to better disposal practices, imaging of records and destruction of hard copy originals under [General retention and disposal authority: original or source records that have been copied \(GA45\)](#) and reduced quantities of records.

A storage plan will ensure that appropriate arrangements for storage are in place which will assist the maintenance, security and accessibility of your organisation's records, and that future storage requirements have been forecast and included in planning.

3. Location of storage areas and facilities

Records are stored in appropriate storage areas and facilities and located away from known and unacceptable risk. (Principle 1)

3.1 Risk assessments

The physical integrity of records can be affected by exposure to risks such as fire, flood, earthquake, and hazards like dangerous industries and vandalism. Records are an important information asset for an organisation, so every effort must be made to identify potential dangers and to ensure that records are not stored in their vicinity. Client or staff convenience should also be a consideration when choosing a location, but guarding against dangers is also a primary concern.

Before your organisation purchases or leases a building for records storage, engages a commercial storage provider, or designates an area within a building to be used for records storage, a documented risk assessment should be undertaken in order to identify risks and dangers to records and the strategies required to mitigate risks.

Any risks to records identified in the assessment process will also need to be identified and managed in your organisation's risk register and business continuity plan.

Records **should not** be stored in locations that risk exposure to high or fluctuating temperatures or the likelihood of water incursions, such as attics or basements. These areas can only be used for records storage if appropriate measures are undertaken to mitigate risks.

Assessing records storage locations for hazards and risks

Records storage areas and facilities should not be located near known natural and man-made hazards:

- heavy atmospheric pollution
- hazardous industries
- flood plains, rivers and creeks
- land liable to subsidence
- land liable to flooding in a tsunami event
- strategic installations such as fuel depots or munitions factories, and
- bush fire prone areas.

Other risks, such as the presence of flight paths and the risks of vandalism, should also be taken into account.

The proximity of a records storage facility to known risks should be calculated as part of the assessment process. Methods of collecting information about the site may include:

- checking newspapers and other literature to determine any known local problems (natural, industrial or social)
- inspecting the site and its surrounds
- examining local government records, such as contour and flood maps, and
- discussing the site with those with local or specialist knowledge.

Once potential hazards in the locality have been identified, estimates of how far the site should be located away from each known hazard will pinpoint the most suitable area to locate the facility or storage area. Research, inspections and decisions regarding the location of sites should be documented. Sometimes an organisation may have little choice about where buildings are located, however the locality should be investigated thoroughly in order to identify risks.

If risks are identified, then these need to be included in the public office's risk register and mitigated through a range of protection measures:

- inclusion in the organisation's business continuity and counter disaster plan
- choosing an alternative building at a lower risk location
- modifying an existing building to ensure risks are removed or minimised
- modifying existing services and practices, e.g. not storing records on the ground floor, changing security and access arrangements or undertaking building maintenance
- implementing protective mechanisms such as:
 - detection and suppression systems and security systems
 - boxes or secure packaging for all records and fire proof safes for business critical records
 - developing policy and procedures to address risks in practices or service provision, and
 - developing and implementing a counter disaster plan for records for each storage area and facility.

For example, if a records storage facility is to be located in proximity of a flood plain, then records should not be placed on lower floors of the building or in the basement, and shelving should be at least 85-150 mm above the level of the floor.

Records storage areas within buildings should be isolated from hazards and not co-located with:

- kitchens and toilets
- overhead plumbing
- drainage pipes
- chemical storage areas
- flammable materials
- electrical plants
- machinery or air conditioning units.

Ideally, records storage should not be located under plumbing or water pipes. All electrical wiring should pass through conduits. Adjacent activities should pose no risks to records.

Buildings and spaces within buildings to be used as potential storage areas should be investigated for potential risks. Methods of collecting information about a building include:

- inspecting the site and its surrounds, including drainage
- checking building plans
- discussing the building and potential storage areas with those with relevant or specialist knowledge, like the facilities manager, building maintenance staff, structural engineers, fire inspectors, and disaster management experts.

Research, inspections or decisions regarding the location and construction of records storage buildings and storage areas should be documented.

Records should not be stored in attics or basements unless measures have been taken to mitigate risks. These areas of a building do not meet the requirements of the Standard without improvements or rectification work being undertaken.

If compromises regarding a building or storage areas must be made, **steps should be taken to protect records**. Your organisation must introduce protection measures. For example, if records are stored in a basement as this is the only storage space available, then the basement must be waterproof and well ventilated, humidity levels must be managed so that mould is not encouraged, and storage shelving must be raised off the floor by 85-150mm as a flood/disaster precaution. Risks should also be managed as part of the organisation's risk register, Business Continuity Plan and Counter Disaster Reaction and Recovery Plan. It may also be necessary to remove or relocate records to a safe environment until all the risks have been mitigated.

NSW State Archives and Records staff should be consulted when a repository for State archives is designed or built, or when an existing building is to be refurbished for this purpose.¹

3.2 Dedicated storage

Records storage areas and facilities should be dedicated to the storage of records or library materials. AS/NZS 1015: 2011 *Records management - Physical storage* requires that records storage facilities should be in a 'dedicated building or subsection within, used solely for records storage and processing'.²

Other equipment or supplies, such as furniture and chemicals, should not be stored in records storage areas. The main reasons for creating a dedicated space for records are to:

- avoid additional risks (e.g. if chemicals were stored in the area the risk of contamination would be heightened; if computers were stored in the area the risk of theft would be greater)
- restrict access to the area more rigorously (e.g. if furniture and stationery were stored in the area more people would require keys or access passes).

As suitable storage conditions for library materials and paper-based records are similar, records and library materials may be stored together. However, records requiring additional security should be placed in lockable shelving or equipment. See **Section 8 Security**.

3.3 Buildings and construction

It is important to undertake a thorough building inspection. Buildings chosen for records storage facilities should:

- be suitable and appropriate for the storage of records
- be conveniently located for user needs
- be soundly constructed of appropriate materials so that the records are not in danger of exposure to the elements, including risks of fire or infestation by vermin
- be weatherproof
- have good guttering, drainage and water run-off
- be insulated to assist in controlling temperature and relative humidity in storage areas

¹ See Ted Ling, *Solid, Safe and Secure: Building Archives Repositories in Australia*, National Archives of Australia, 1998; Bettington et al, *Keeping Archives*, 3rd Edition, Australian Society of Archivists, 2008; National Archives of Australia, *Standard for the storage of archival records*, June 2014; relevant Australian and international standards including ISO 11799: 2015 *Information and documentation – Document storage requirements for archive and library materials*, BS 4971(2017): 2017 *Conservation and care of archive and library collections*, and AS/NZS 1015: 2011 *Records management - Physical storage*.

² AS/NZS 1015: 2011 *Records management - Physical storage*, clause 2.3.2

- have sufficient floor loading capacity to safely support the weight of fully loaded shelving and racking for the storage of records and any other equipment required in the storage area
- be secure against intruders
- have controlled access, and
- be 'fit for purpose'.

Wherever possible, within the building, walls should divide storage areas from non-storage areas such as work spaces. Storage areas should not open onto loading docks, as this can expose records to pollutants from engines.

Storage areas and facilities, and equipment should be lockable, monitored and access controlled in accordance with NSW Government and Australian Government security requirements.

New storage facilities built since 2011 to house records, should meet the *Building Code of Australia* that applied at the time of construction and associated codes and standards. Organisations should ensure that they have appropriate documentation or access to certified copies for facilities built since 2011.

AS/NZS 1015:2011 *Records management - Physical storage* recommends that a building used for records storage should be made of steel, reinforced concrete or concrete blocks. These recommendations also apply to the walls that separate the storage areas from office areas.³

The building should have good drainage, including a pitched roof, as flat-roofed buildings tend to collect rainwater and may have issues with leaks from the roof. Guttering should be checked to ensure that there is no deterioration, and box guttering avoided if possible, as it can cause water to leak into the building. Drainage pipes should not pass through storage locations within the building. Door and window frames should be checked to make sure that they properly seal and will not let water into the building.⁴

Environmental conditions should be in accordance with the recommendations in Principle 2 of the *Standard on the physical storage of State records* (see **Section 4 Environmental conditions** for further details).

Records should not be stored in sheds or shipping containers with no insulation and inadequate protection from the external climate or intruders.

3.4 Records storage areas

Wherever possible, fire rated walls should divide records storage areas from non-storage areas such as work spaces. Storage rooms or equipment should be lockable and access controlled. Furnishings and floor coverings should not be made of materials that will attract insects into the storage areas.

If the quantity of records to be stored is very large, then the storage area/facility should be subdivided into smaller units by the use of dividing fire resistant walls. This enables fire protection measures to be introduced more easily and environmental conditions to be maintained at constant levels⁵ (see also **Section 4 Environmental conditions**). These measures will also allow the storage area to be better secured (see **Section 8 Security**).

The arrangement of storage areas and shelving units should allow for ventilation (see **Section 5 Shelving and packaging** for more details). Other factors, such as wheelchair

³ AS/NZS 1015, Clause 2.3.2

⁴ National Archives of Australia, *Storing to the Standard: Guidelines for Implementing the Standard for the Physical Storage of Commonwealth Records*, Canberra, 2002, pages 13-14

⁵ See ISO 11799, Clauses 4.2 – 4.3

access, trolley movement and access for ladders should be considered when deciding the width of aisles.

Any waste should be taken away promptly and any structural obstacles should be removed to ensure that the storage area is safe.

When procuring commercial storage, it is important to visit the storage facility and inspect and evaluate the storage areas against the *Standard on the physical storage of State records* to ensure that the storage areas used for storing your organisation's records meet the requirements of the Standard.

If physical records are located near workgroups, rather than in dedicated rooms, lockable shelving could be used to control access and give protection. Only records should be stored in these shelving units.

Doors

Doors to storage areas should be kept closed and, if possible, be fire resistant. If doors need to be kept open during use, then they should be fitted with magnetic devices designed to automatically close doors upon activation of the building fire alarm/detection system. Doors should be lockable and wide enough to allow for the movement of trolleys.⁶

Ceilings and floors

Ceilings should be high enough to allow a 500mm clearance between the top of shelves and fire sprinkler heads.⁷ This is to ensure that the sprinklers are not accidentally activated.

It is vital to ensure that the load bearing capacity of the floor is adequate to cope with full shelves of records. Organisations should ensure that they seek the advice of a structural engineer to ensure that storage areas and facilities have sufficient floor loading capacity to support records and equipment when at full capacity. Organisations should also ensure that shelving contractors confirm that shelving will not exceed agreed floor loading limits.⁸

Ideally, the materials used for walls, ceilings and doors should be hard-wearing and not likely to shed dust or grit. Internal structures should be in good condition. They should also not emit substances, such as acidic gases, when they decompose or are subject to fire.⁹

Windows

Ideally, buildings or rooms used for records storage should not have windows or skylights. West facing windows should be avoided as they present dual dangers to records from heat and light. If there are windows or skylights, measures should be taken to prevent natural light by fitting windows with:

- heavy curtains, shutters or blinds, preferably of heat reducing fabric, to reduce or eliminate illumination
- screens to prevent ultra violet light from entering, or
- ultra violet filtering film.

3.5 Fire detection and protection

One of the prime dangers to paper records is fire.

⁶ Ling, *Solid Safe, Secure*, p.37

⁷ Ling, *Solid, Safe, Secure*, p.39

⁸ ISO 11799, Clause 4.3

⁹ ISO 11799, Clause 4.2

Storage areas and facilities should have appropriate and comprehensive fire detection and protection systems and equipment. These should be implemented in accordance with the *Building Code of Australia* and Australian standards. A regular fire inspection should be undertaken in a storage area or facility by a qualified fire safety expert to ensure that the area or facility meets the standards and is safe.

Risk assessments should include the likelihood of fire spreading through buildings and storage areas and the risks from adjacent premises and activities. Hazards like smoking, old wiring and the unnecessary storage of flammable materials should be eliminated. Make sure you advise the fire brigade that the building is a records storage facility and holds paper-based records.

Records storage areas and facilities should be fitted with heat/smoke detectors, fire alarms and fire suppressant systems. Sprinklers provide the highest level of protection and should be installed with approximately 500mm clearance between the top shelf and the sprinkler head. Automatic chemical fire suppressant systems are generally used for areas storing magnetic media and are also recommended for archival storage and storage spaces which can be made airtight.¹⁰ Generally these types of suppressant systems pose less risk of damage to records than water-based systems.

It is important that your organisation holds regular 'practice' fire evacuations so that staff working in the records storage area or facility can practice evacuating the building in an emergency. Regular inspections of the building and storage area should also include inspections of the fire detection and suppressant systems, check that fire exits are free of obstacles, and that storage areas do not contain any combustible materials such as nitrate film or chemicals.

3.6 Counter disaster reaction and recovery plans

All records storage areas and facilities, including storage facility and services provided under a commercial contractual arrangement, should have current counter disaster reaction and recovery plans¹¹. These plans should be linked to the public office's business continuity plans. Staff responsible for the management of records in storage areas and facilities should be trained in the counter disaster reaction and recovery plan and procedures for salvaging records.

The public office should have appropriate insurance coverage for the recovery and restoration of records in the event of a disaster.

Further information on [counter disaster reaction and recovery plans](#) is available from the NSW State Archives and Records' website.

Notify NSW State Archives and Records

The Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) for the public office should notify NSW State Archives and Records if there is damage or loss to records as a result of a natural disaster, storm, flooding, fire, contamination or technology disruption. This official notification should be made as soon as practically possible after the event has occurred.

Contact Government Recordkeeping on tel. 02 8257 2986 or govrec@records.nsw.gov.au.

NSW State Archives and Records will also be able to provide advice and guidance on salvaging the records (contact our Senior Conservator on telephone 02 9673 1788)

Further information on counter disaster reaction and recovery plans is available from the NSW State Archives and Records' [website](#).

¹⁰ ISO 11799, Clause 5.4

¹¹ AS/NZS 1015, Clause 2.3.7 and ISO 11799, Clause 8

3.7 'Active' records

Increasingly NSW Government is creating records in digital format, not paper.

If the public office is creating paper records, we recommend that the organisation establish business rules for the creation, management and storage of 'active records'.

3.8 Authorising records storage

The Senior Responsible Officer for records management (SRO) or delegate, should ensure that all records storage areas and facilities used by the public office, including arrangements with commercial providers, have been inspected to ensure that they are appropriate for the storage of records and approved for use by the public office.

The records management policy should identify that the Senior Responsible Officer or delegate has the authority to inspect and approve all records storage areas and facilities to be used by the public office, including commercial storage arrangements. The records management policy should also identify that records should only be stored in approved and appropriate storage areas and facilities.

The Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) is also responsible for the organisation's records storage plan. The storage plan for the organisation will include

- details of all storage areas and facilities used by the organisation for the storage of records
- measures and safeguards implemented to protect records from fire and water influx (from above, below or through walls or openings)
- quantities of records in each storage location, and
- whether the records have been sentenced for disposal.

Making decisions about and authorising where records are stored should involve a detailed assessment of each potential or existing records storage area and facility using the *Standard on the physical storage of State records* to ensure that State records are stored in appropriate conditions. This should also include any commercial storage facilities being used by your organisation. Records of assessments and inspections reports should be maintained in order to demonstrate compliance with the Standard.

Inspections and assessments of potential storage areas and facilities should also involve your organisation's Records Manager or senior staff with responsibility for and expertise in records management. It is important that records storage services and activities are undertaken by appropriate staff with relevant skills and knowledge.

In some cases, organisations located near or adjacent to State borders will be using commercial storage providers outside of New South Wales as there are no suitable options located nearby. Authorisation processes must ensure that an organisation is meeting the requirements of [General authority for transferring records out of NSW for storage with or maintenance by service providers based outside of the State \(GA35\)](#) and that any facilities for storing records located outside of New South Wales meet the requirements set out in the [State Records Act 1998](#) and the [Standard on the physical storage of State records](#).

Remember, records more than 25 years old and identified as State archives in a current approved retention and disposal authority may not be transferred and stored outside of New South Wales unless authorisation has been provided by NSW State Archives and Records.

Further information on storing records outside of New South Wales is available from [Storage of State records with service providers outside of NSW](#).

Organisations should also ensure that all storage areas and facilities are regularly inspected and assessed for ongoing compliance with the *Standard on the physical storage of State records*.

Under section 15 of the *State Records Act*, NSW State Archives and Records has the authority to inspect storage areas and facilities being used by the public office for the storage of State records.

3.9 Keeping records about storage locations and buildings

It is important to keep records of your organisation's assessment and authorisation of each storage area and facility.

Your organisation should document the authorisation and approval of appropriate records storage area and facilities. This documentation will assist your organisation in demonstrating compliance with the Standard. Types of documentation to keep include:

- the assessment and/or inspection report on establishing and maintaining dedicated area/facility for storing records
- reports to senior management on records storage
- records management policy statement authorising the Senior Responsible Officer or delegate to inspect and approve records storage areas and facilities for use
- risk assessment and mitigation documentation, including reports that demonstrate that the facility (if built since 2011) meets the Building Code requirements, including relevant fire-resistance levels
- risk register identifying risks and the mitigation strategies undertaken to minimise risks
- assessment/inspections records of storage areas/facilities used by the public office
- risk assessment reports of commercial storage facility identifying conformity with requirements of the *Standard on physical storage of State records*
- storage plan which details design measures and safeguards implemented in storage areas and facilities which protect records from fire and water influx (from above, below or through walls or openings)
- structural engineer's report identifying that storage area/facility has sufficient floor loading capacity to support records and equipment when at full capacity
- shelving contractor's report that installed shelving does not exceed agreed floor loading limits
- certificates of occupancy
- fire safety logs or inspection reports showing that smoke detectors meet requirements of AS 1670 and fire extinguishers, hose reels and hydrants meet the requirements of the Building Code of Australia
- documented and up-to-date disaster reaction and recovery plan along with records of tests, results and evidence that it is reviewed
- procedures for responding to disasters affecting records.
- documentation of insurance coverage for the recovery and restoration of records in the event of a disaster.

4. Environmental conditions

Records are stored in environmental conditions appropriate to their format and retention period. (Principle 2)

Environmental conditions within storage areas and facilities have a major impact on the preservation or deterioration of physical records and particular formats (e.g. magnetic tape and photographic media). Poor storage and environmental conditions will result in the deterioration of records and their potential loss, or the necessity of undertaking conservation work at considerable cost to the public office.

All records should be sentenced for disposal using the appropriate retention and disposal authorities before the records are transferred to a storage area or facility. Understanding how long a record is required to be kept before it can be disposed of or transferred to NSW State Archives and Records will ensure that records are stored in the correct type of storage with appropriate environmental storage conditions.

NSW State Archives and Records recognises that many public offices have difficulties in implementing and maintaining appropriate storage environment conditions. We recommend that public offices implement the storage environment conditions and housing requirements as practically and sustainably as possible, and prioritise/implement the best storage environment conditions possible for those long term records and State archives in their control.

Short and medium term records, i.e. records that are only to be retained for **30 years or less**, should be stored in good storage conditions until they are authorised for destruction. Conditions for short term records are not as exacting as the conditions for long term records/archival storage. See [Table A - Storage environment conditions and housing requirements for short and medium term temporary records](#).*

Long term records, i.e. records that are retained for **30 years or longer** or those records required to be transferred as State archives, should be stored in the best environmental conditions possible. See [Table B - Storage environment conditions and housing requirements for long term temporary records and State archives](#).*

** These requirements are based on temperature and humidity controls defined in international or Australian standards. These tables are also available in the Standard on the physical storage of State records.*

4.1 Temperature and humidity

Temperature and humidity are two of the most vital components in a records storage program. Temperature helps to determine the rate of chemical change in materials and is also an important factor in biological and physical deterioration. Increases in temperature lead to increased rates of change and deterioration.

Relative Humidity (RH) affects the rate of deterioration. Moisture is a requirement in many deterioration reactions and is crucial to the germination and growth of mould.

When major fluctuations in temperature and humidity levels occur, moisture is absorbed and released frequently, causing deterioration to records. **Temperature and humidity levels should remain as stable as possible.**

There should be regular monitoring of temperature and humidity levels in storage areas and facilities. Action and mitigation strategies should be taken to address any fluctuations in temperature or humidity levels.

A stable storage environment can be achieved through building design and construction, insulation from the external climate, and a suitable location for the storage area/facility, rather than dependence on air conditioning.

Where possible the storage environment should be based on the requirements of the records being stored. **High sensitivity items** (e.g. photographic media, magnetic

media, optical media and mixed media items) require more stringent environmental controls and should be separated from the other records so that their special requirements can be met in an isolated storage facility, e.g. photographic media (black and white, or colour), magnetic media, optical media and mixed media items, should be stored separate to paper-based records and require more rigorous temperature and humidity controls.

Records identified as long term temporary or as *State archives* should be removed from short term temporary records storage and placed in environmentally controlled storage and maintained at temperature and humidity levels as described in the *Standard on physical storage of State records* (see [Table B - Storage environment conditions and housing requirements for long term temporary records and State archives](#)).

Records subject to 'still in use' determinations that are of archival value and should be stored according to [Table B](#) (see [Table B - Storage environment conditions and housing requirements for long term temporary records and State archives](#)).

How to achieve stable temperature and humidity levels in storage areas?

Public offices can achieve stable temperature and humidity levels in a number of ways:

1. Choose the location of the storage area/facility carefully. Is the location prone to major changes in temperature or humidity?
2. Choose the location of the storage area within the building carefully. For example, is the storage area located on the western side of building and likely to bake in the hot summer afternoon sun? Is the room well insulated?
3. Choose a building with a high thermal mass, that is, a building which is made of materials which respond slowly to the external climate.
4. Insulate the external walls, roof and floor of the storage area or facility from the external climate, for example put insulation batts into the ceiling and walls.
5. Use portable dehumidifiers, silica gel or moisture absorbing crystals, and ceiling fans to regulate humidity and provide good ventilation.¹²

Monitoring stability of temperature and humidity

Monitoring the temperature and humidity within the storage area or facility is critical. Public offices should create temperature and humidity logs for storage areas, or obtain regular reports from the commercial storage provider. Information from monitoring allows you to know:

- what is happening in the storage area or facility, so that you can take the appropriate action
- when your storage area or facility is undergoing major fluctuations. The change to summer or winter, or a period of wet weather after dry weather, are particularly important times
- if air-conditioning is working appropriately in the storage areas, and
- which storage areas function well and are stable and which ones are not (this will allow you to determine which storage areas to use for records of archival value).¹³

4.2 Light

All forms of light can damage records. Protecting records from direct sunlight and minimising light in storage areas will minimise damage to records.

¹² ISO 11799, section 4.2 Indoor climate stability; Elizabeth Hadlow, "Preservation" in *Keeping Archives*, 3rd Edition, ed. Jackie Bettington, Kim Eberhard, Rowena Loo and Clive Smith, Australian Society of Archivists, 2008, p. 103

¹³ Hadlow, "Preservation", p. 104

ISO 11799 notes that storage areas should “not be illuminated more than is necessary for retrieval and replacement of documents, room inspection and cleaning.”¹⁴ Ideally storage areas should not have external windows or skylights (see **3.4 Windows**).

To protect records:

- prevent sunlight entering storage area, by covering windows and skylights
- use movement-activated or time-limited lighting in storage areas, so there is lighting only when required
- store records in boxes to reduce their exposure to light
- use soft and diffused lighting, and
- use low ultra-violet emitting bulbs or place filters over the lights.¹⁵

At the minimum, lighting should be ambient (soft and diffused) for short term records. UV filtered fluorescent lighting and timer controlled switches should be installed for records that are either *long term temporary records* or *State archives*.

4.3 Air quality

Good ventilation within storage areas and facilities is important. Air must be able to freely circulate within the storage space to prevent ‘pockets’ of stagnant air. Good air circulation also assists in maintaining constant temperature and humidity. There should also be intake of fresh air. Good ventilation in the storage area can be achieved by using fans or air conditioning.

It is important that the air entering and circulating through the storage area or facility is ‘clean air’ and does not contain dust, pollen or pollutants which will cause deterioration to records. A ‘clean air environment’ can be achieved through:

- careful selection of the location of the storage area or facility so that it’s not near heavy industrial locations (see **Section 3 Location of storage areas and facilities**)
- use of filtration systems to exclude dust, sulphur dioxide, carbon monoxide, and pollutants¹⁶, and
- placing inflow ducts so that they do not draw in air from car parks or busy roads.

Air quality should be periodically monitored to check for dust and, acidic and oxidising gases.¹⁷

4.4 Pest management

Records, particularly paper records, are an attractive food source for a range of pests and vermin including termites, cockroaches, spiders, silverfish, paper lice, rats and mice. The biggest threats are rats and mice, cockroaches and silverfish.

The presence of rats or mice and cockroaches is very obvious. Records will be chewed, there will be droppings and there will be evidence that the paper records are used for nesting sites for rats and mice. Silverfish infestations are only apparent when the habitat is disturbed or items are removed from boxes and examined. Silverfish eat the starch in coated papers (i.e. glossy papers) and ink. Evidence of silverfish includes holes in paper and missing letters on documents (i.e. the ink has been eaten).

¹⁴ ISO 11799, clause 5.5.1 Illumination

¹⁵ Hadlow, “Preservation”, p.104; National Archives of Australia, *Storing to the Standard*, pp. 20-21

¹⁶ Ted Ling, “Buildings & Storage” in *Keeping Archives 3rd Edition*, ed. Jackie Bettington, Kim Eberhard, Rowena Loo and Clive Smith, Australian Society of Archivists, 2008, p. 70

¹⁷ ISO 11799, section 5.5.3 Ventilation and air quality



Silverfish

source: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/bettaman/3302148003/>



Severe insect damage, source: NSW State Archives and Records

An integrated pest management approach is based on a range of preventative measures. It is a low-toxicity means to control pests and mould, and includes:

- a risk assessment of the storage area/facility to identify possible food sources or environmental conditions which would encourage pests and rodents and any current pest activity
- good housekeeping practices
- implementing preventative measures to control pests and rodents (see below)
- isolating and treating affected records, and
- as a last resort, active intervention measures.¹⁸

Preventative measures include:

- maintaining a cool, dry, ventilated, and clean environment
- perimeter spraying of the building to discourage pests and vermin
- preventing the accumulation of rubbish or food in the storage area (this will remove food sources from the storage area)
- carefully selecting furnishing materials and floor coverings to exclude those that attract insects
- configuring the shelving so that the bottom shelf is 100-150cm from the floor to enable cleaning and air circulation
- designing the storage operation/processes so that records are inspected for infestation before they come into contact with records already in storage
- regularly inspecting the site for rats, mice, silverfish and cockroaches (see also **Section 6 Maintenance**), and
- using pest control traps and baits.

Fumigation of the facility/storage area and records should be a last resort. If it is necessary to spray to control an infestation, you should ensure that the pest control agency does not spray the records. It may be necessary to supervise the work. All staff and visitors should be notified if fumigants are to be used to ensure that they do not go into unsafe areas or come into contact with contaminated surfaces. All affected air conditioning systems and very early smoke detection devices (VESDA) should be shut down while fumigation takes place.

4.5 Magnetic fields

Magnetic fields can distort the data contained in some record formats, such as computer tapes and disks, video tapes, audio tapes and mini disks.

Storage areas should be protected from magnetic fields. Magnetic media should be stored on non-magnetisable shelving and stored in non-magnetisable sealed contains, cassette cases or sleeves. See Table A and Table B.

Magnetic fields include:

- high intensity electro-magnetic fields, e.g. high voltage power lines
- lightning conductor systems
- electric generators and motors, and

¹⁸ National Archives of Australia, *Integrated Pest Management*, see <http://www.naa.gov.au/information-management/managing-information-and-records/preserving/physical-records-pres/integrated-pest-management.aspx>; Hadlow, "Preservation", pp. 116-118

- electrical wiring.

4.6 Keeping records about environmental conditions

It is important to keep records of the management of environmental conditions in each storage area and facility. Examples of the types of documentation include:

- reports which identify the types of records to be stored in each area/facility, the appropriate storage conditions for their retention periods, assessments of the respective storage area/facility and its capacity to provide appropriate storage
- documentation of temperature and humidity levels within each storage area / facility (thermo-hygrographic logs etc.)
- reports of monitoring of temperature and humidity in each storage area / facility
- risk assessment reports on how the impact of sunlight and UV light on records has been minimised
- documentation of maintenance for any air circulation system in use
- risk assessment reports on how magnetic storage media has been protected from the effects of magnetic fields
- information about the integrated pest management system in the organisation's storage plan, and
- reports/documentation of pest inspections and monitoring.

5. Shelving and packaging

Shelving, equipment and containers used for storing records are secure, accessible and protected from deterioration. (Principle 3)

Using appropriate shelving and equipment ensures that records are accessible, secure and protected. Containers for records, including boxes or envelopes, play a vital role in protecting records from deterioration, for example slowing down the rate of temperature and humidity changes and protecting items from light, dust and pollutants.

Records storage areas, facilities, shelving, containers and equipment should comply with workplace health and safety requirements.

5.1 Shelving and equipment

Shelving, racking, cabinets, other storage devices, and handling equipment should facilitate access to and ensure the survival of records for as long as they are required.

Suitable for the type of record stored

Containers of records should be stored on powder-coated metal shelving. Wooden shelves should be avoided.

Storing records on wooden pallets ('palletising') should be used as a temporary measure and only for short term records. As the pallets are made of wood, this is a food source for pests and vermin and creates issues in managing pests/vermin in storage areas. The pests and vermin are attracted to the wood and then move onto eating the boxes (and records). The other concern with 'palletising' records, is the weight of the load. The boxes stored on the lower levels of the pallet bear a heavy load and can be damaged as a result.

Shelving should be raised off the floor by 85-150mm as a flood/disaster precaution and be lockable if it is to hold security classified records or records containing sensitive information. Shelving should also be configured with the storage area to ensure that ventilation is not restricted.

In determining shelving or cabinets for a storage area or facility, it is important to consider the types of records which will be stored in order to ensure that suitable and appropriate shelving and cabinets are procured:

- magnetic media should only be stored on non-magnetised shelving
- bulky or large paper-based records, such as large volumes or registers, should be stored on shelving the same width as the record, to prevent records jutting out into aisles. Wider shelves provide support for larger sized records
- maps, plans and charts should be stored flat in cabinets designed for this type of format
- paper based records should be stored on powder-coated metal shelves or in powder-coated or enamel metal cabinets
- glass plates and gramophone discs should be stored vertically on static shelving (do not store on mobile shelving, as they can be dislodged by the movement of the compactus).¹⁹

See the National Archives of Australia's [Format-specific preservation advice](#) for more information on shelving requirements for different formats.

For further information on storing and protecting security classified records or records with sensitive information, see the [NSW Government Information Classification, Labelling](#)

¹⁹ National Archives of Australia, *Storing to the Standard*, pp. 26 - 27

[and Handling guidelines](#) and the Australian Government [Protective Security Policy Framework](#).

Clean and in a good state of repair

All shelving, racking and cabinets should be clean and well maintained. See **Section 6 Maintenance**.

Strong enough to support potential weight of records

Storage areas and facilities must have sufficient floor loading capacity to safely support the weight of fully loaded shelving and racking and any other furnishings or equipment. If your organisation is setting up a storage facility, you should consult with a structural engineer who will be able to advise if the floor loading capacity is sufficient.

Additionally, the shelving itself must be strong enough to support potential weight of records and not breakage causing accidents that might damage people or the records. If an excessively heavy load is being borne, a second shelf immediately below that on which the records rest may assist in bearing the load. Shelves should be easily adjustable and held firmly in place by clips recommended by the manufacturer.

Arrangement

If the organisation is planning a storage area and requires additional guidance on its arrangement, the following should be considered:

- shelving should be 85-150mm off the floor
- extra shelves should be provided for sorting newly received records and returned retrievals so that aisles and corridors are free of material awaiting placement on or return to shelves
- 500mm between the top shelf and fire sprinkler heads to reduce the likelihood of staff accidentally activating sprinklers ²⁰
- 50mm between the top of the container on the shelf and the base of the shelf above to promote air circulation and ease of removal
- 450mm between walls and rows of shelving to allow air circulation
- records should not be stored against external walls, where the risk of dampness is greater
- there should be no 'dead end' aisles between the shelves so that people are not trapped in aisles, and
- very long rows of shelving should be avoided, e.g. 15 metre runs should be divided by a central aisle to enable easier access to the records and allow staff to exit quickly in an emergency. ²¹

Aisle space should be calculated to allow for shelving or access equipment and for staff who may be working in the area.

Equipment

Equipment such as ladders, stools, trolleys, fork lifts, or hydraulic lifts, should be provided in the records storage area or facility to promote the safe handling of records. Equipment which does not promote access, or which causes damage to the records should not be used. All pieces of mechanical apparatus, such as compactus, should have emergency stopping devices.

²⁰ Ling, *Solid, Safe, Secure*, p.39

²¹ ISO 11799, Clause 5.6

5.2 Record formats and containers

Containers (i.e. boxes and other types of housings) play a critical role in protecting records from light, dust, fluctuations in temperature and humidity, and unauthorised access.

Containers used for records should be:

- appropriate for the record format and retention
- appropriate for the weight and size of the record
- appropriate for the record's security classification
- made from durable material capable of sustaining expected use
- in good condition, and
- the correct size and shape for the shelving configuration in use.

Containers include wrappings, envelopes, boxes or other enclosures.

Appropriate for the record's format and retention

Identifying the retention period of the record assists in determining the appropriate:

- format on which to create the record, and
- item containers, including wrappings, envelopes, boxes or other enclosures to promote survival of the record for as long as it is required.

For example, strong clean containers and file covers are adequate for short term temporary paper records, but long term records should be stored in archival or permanent quality acid free file covers, folders or envelopes and/or acid free boxes. See *General Retention and Disposal Authorities* and the public office's *Functional Retention and Disposal Authority* for retention periods of records.

If the wrong containers are used for records of long term value, they can detrimentally affect the records. For example, over time acidic wrappings will transmit acidity to the records causing them to break down. Packaging materials made from poly vinyl chloride (PVC) contains plasticisers which affect the resin binders in photocopier and laser printer toners and cause the toners to transfer from one surface to another.²² Polypropylene, uncoated polyester (mylar) and polyethylene, therefore, are better choices for long term records as they will not cause this to happen.

More information on suitable item containers for formats is available from the National Archives of Australia's [Format-specific preservation advice](#).

In good condition

All containers should be of durable material, capable of sustaining expected use and the correct size and shape for the shelving on which they are stored.

One of the main ways records are stored is in boxes. Boxes should have well-fitting lids so that they can fully protect the contents.

Ready made boxes in a variety of sizes can be obtained from a range of suppliers. Adequate stocks of containers should be available for foreseeable needs.

Appropriate for the weight, size and format of the records they contain

Records should be boxed according to their size. If the container is too large the records may be damaged when being moved or in transit, and the records storage space may be used inefficiently. Records should not be forced into containers that are too small or too full.

²² Ling, *Solid, Safe, Secure*, p.120

5.3 Workplace health and safety

The NSW public sector is covered by the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* which sets requirements for providing a safe and health workplace. These requirements are applicable to records storage areas and buildings.

Risk assessments should be undertaken to identify risks in records storage areas and facilities, and action taken to eliminate or minimise the risks to ensure that records storage areas and facilities comply with health and safety requirements.

Buildings and storage areas

In order to provide a safe and efficient workplace, buildings used to store records or storage areas within buildings should be kept free from obstacles which may cause injury or impede operations. Any structural obstacle that may cause inconvenience or accident should receive attention. For example, uneven floor, pillars, shelving that juts out, or other equipment and low light fittings need to be eliminated.

The design of the facility should provide an area for sorting new records received and returned retrievals so that aisles and corridors are not blocked by this or any other material.

Rules for records storage areas should include:

- taking immediate action to remove an obstacle when it is observed
- placing records immediately on shelves or other storage equipment so that piles of boxes do not obstruct passageways, and
- removing waste.

Regular cleaning and maintenance of storage facilities should reduce many of the health and safety problems in the workplace. See **Section 6 Maintenance**.

Shelving and equipment

Suitable shelving arrangements and sufficient equipment should be provided to ensure that staff can accomplish their work efficiently without taking safety risks or suffering from undue fatigue.

Staff should be shown the correct way to operate shelving and equipment, without compromising themselves or the safety of their colleagues. New staff should be fully briefed on safe practices and the use of equipment. In addition, warning notices should be displayed where necessary in storage areas.

Containers

Records storage containers should be small enough so that the weight each contains is minimised. Boxes recommended by NSW State Archives and Records and the National Archives of Australia are designed to minimise weight problems.

The burden of lifting should be considered when designing the configuration of the shelving and other storage equipment:

- materials handling equipment and/ or team lifting should be employed when heavier weights cannot be avoided, or when a high volume of records of any weight has to be moved
- the heaviest and most often moved objects should be around waist level for the average person
- records used less frequently should be placed at a height that is between the knees and shoulders of the average person
- light weight and rarely accessed material should be placed above shoulder height or below knee height of the average person
- containers should facilitate easy gripping

- staff should be trained in correct lifting procedures, and
- materials and equipment should be arranged so that awkward movements such as twisting of the back are not required.

Protective clothing

The recommended records storage environment is clean, cool and pest free. However there may be occasions when staff are required to move or treat dusty or mould affected records. Individuals who suffer from upper respiratory allergies should not be requested to handle excessively dusty or mould-affected records. Staff should be provided with protective clothing that complies with health and safety regulations relevant to the task. Protective clothing may include:

- protective outer garments such as dustcoats or aprons
- gloves
- masks, and/or
- boots.

Only trained staff should undertake conservation treatments on records. Repairs to records should only be carried out under the supervision of a Conservator and in consultation with NSW State Archives and Records.

5.4 Keeping records about the shelving and packaging of records

It is important to keep records about the shelving and packaging of records. Examples of the types of documentation the organisation may have are:

- storage plan which contains information on appropriate item container and storage and handling equipment, for records of different types of formats, retention periods, and security requirements.
- records of inspections of shelving and handling equipment to ensure that they are being used appropriately
- records of monitoring that appropriate shelving and handling equipment is being used, clean and in good condition.
- certificates of occupancy specifying floor loading capacity
- structural engineer's report confirming storage areas and facilities have sufficient floor loading capacity to support records and equipment when at full capacity
- shelving contractor's report confirming that installed shelving does not exceed agreed floor loading limits
- WH&S risk assessment reports and safe working practice assessments
- records storage procedures cover the selection and appropriate use of containers
- records of monitoring that appropriate containers are being used to house records, and that damaged or dirty containers are being replaced
- assessment reports that appropriate containers are being used to store security classified records.

6. Maintenance

A regular maintenance and monitoring program for records storage areas has been implemented. (Principle 4)

Records storage areas and facilities should be regularly monitored and well maintained to ensure that they continue to provide a stable and suitable environment for records. Planned maintenance programs can prevent many storage problems.

A maintenance and monitoring program for records storage areas and facilities should be part of the organisation's building maintenance program. Additionally, records and containers in storage should also be monitored for signs of pest infestation, mould or other deterioration. If mould or pest infestation is identified, it should be treated promptly and appropriately. Conservation treatments should be undertaken as required and only if they are not likely to damage the records further.

The building, equipment and services should always be maintained to approved standards, legislation and building codes. If contractors are used for building maintenance the contract should include provision for the factors listed below and the contractor's performance assessed regularly.

6.1 Maintenance and monitoring programs

Maintenance and monitoring programs for records storage involve inspecting and mitigating any issues identified with:

- changes in environmental conditions, including light and pollution levels, temperature and humidity
- potential disaster incidents, e.g. following storm events
- presence of mould and/or pest infestation
- building surrounds and fabric
- physical security of buildings, storage areas, and security zones within storage areas
- internal factors, including electrical equipment and pipes, and structures like shelving, to ensure that they are safe and in good condition
- cleanliness of storage areas
- fire detection mechanisms such as alarms, smoke detectors, sprinkler systems and extinguishers to ensure they are working correctly
- other identified risks that need to be managed, and
- any new risks that may arise.

If the public office uses a commercial facility, arrangements should be made with the storage provider for reports to be provided on inspections of the storage areas and facility housing State records, and advice on any mitigation actions that have been undertaken to address any issues or risks.

6.2 Building maintenance and pest inspections

Building maintenance and pest inspections should be undertaken on a regular basis. Depending on the organisation, this may be undertaken in association with workplace health and safety inspections. Reports of inspections should be captured into the recordkeeping system as evidence of compliance with this requirement of the standard.

Any risks found should be either removed or minimised to reduce their severity.

Inspections should include the following:

- buildings and storage areas

- security
- environmental conditions
- shelving equipment and containers
- pests
- fire suppression and prevention, and
- cleanliness.

Each of these is discussed in more detail below.

Buildings and storage areas

Monitoring the building's exterior includes regularly inspecting the building and its surrounds. Things to particularly look out for are:

- cracks or dampness in walls
- flaky paint/plaster
- signs of water leaks, spillages, blockages in drains, roofs or gutters
- corrosion
- signs of pest infestation
- mould
- signs of damage or unlawful entry, such as vandalism or broken windows, and
- signs of new risks.

Regular inspections should also be made of the building's interior and storage areas to ensure that there are none of the above. All risks or problems should be fixed or managed to reduce their severity.

Security

Monitoring and maintenance of security measures may involve checking and assessing alarms, motion detectors, cameras, surveillance equipment, locks and other access controls, and checking for new security risks. Measures may need to be taken if there are problems. For example, if an alarm is temporarily disabled, the organisation may wish to employ a guard or a regular patrol until the alarm is repaired.

If security firms are used, their performance should be monitored and, if unsatisfactory, a plan for improvement or the replacement of the firm be considered.

Environmental conditions

The storage area should be inspected **regularly** to identify perceptible changes in the environment, such as temperature and humidity fluctuations. The frequency of monitoring and inspections should increase if an irregularity is discovered or if there has been bad weather, severe storms, high temperatures or humidity, or high winds. Temperature and humidity levels must be maintained and you may need to implement additional measures to ensure that the storage areas continue to meet the acceptable levels outlined in **Section 4 Environmental conditions**.

Measures to combat temperature and humidity fluctuations include installing insulation, improving the building so it is sealed, or using fans or heaters. Areas can be dehumidified by using portable dehumidifiers or moisture absorbing crystals.²³ If the problem persists it may be necessary to remove the records.

²³ Ling, *Solid, Safe, Secure*, p.115

The following should be used to monitor conditions in the storage area/facility, and particularly if you are storing long term temporary records, State archives, computer disks and tapes or large quantities of audio visual material:

- *whirling hygrometers*, also known as *psychrometers*, which may be used for regular monitoring programs and more intensively when there is concern about environmental conditions. The advantages of these devices are that they are accurate, easily portable and less expensive than thermohygrographs.
- *thermohygrographs*, sometimes known as *hygrothermographs*. The main advantage of these machines is that they record temperature and humidity levels **continuously**, allowing the stability of the environment to be assessed. They indicate patterns of the environmental control. They also produce charts which can be retained as a permanent record of performance, and they provide the basis of diagnosing problems with air conditioning equipment. They are delicate scientific instruments which need to be treated carefully and require recalibrating occasionally. These machines are expensive to purchase although they may be sometimes obtained by hire from larger archives and museums.
- *building management systems* (BMS). These electronic programs are a feature of modern buildings and monitor vital elements such as temperature and humidity, security, fire protection, lighting and air quality. If needed, conditions may be monitored from remote locations. Purpose-built repositories, especially those which are intended for a large proportion of records of long term and continuing value, should investigate building management systems.
- *data loggers*. These are compact temperature and humidity monitors which print readings out onto graphs. Information can be downloaded to a PC. These tend to be cheaper than thermohygrographs.
- hand held probes and recorders.²⁴

Air conditioning systems must also be regularly monitored and maintained, and filters changed.

Maintenance of lights should involve checking light globes to ensure they are working correctly. The light level may be measured by a luxmetre or by a building management system (see above).

Shelving equipment and containers

Staff should also examine the components of storage areas. Manual shelving may require some maintenance work, for example, the replacement of operating handles. If shelving is electrically operated, the motors will need to be maintained regularly.²⁵

Equipment, such as trolleys and ladders, will also require monitoring and maintenance to ensure they are maintained in good condition. Any faulty shelving or equipment that cannot be adequately maintained should be replaced.

Damaged or dirty containers should be replaced promptly. The records will then remain protected.

Pests and vermin

Inspections should look for the presence of pests and vermin within the storage area and facility. Darker and warmer sections of the storage area in particular should be inspected regularly. Evidence of pests and vermin will be obvious: there will be droppings and regurgitated food, and evidence of nesting (rats and mice use paper records for nesting sites).

²⁴ Ling, *Solid, Safe, Secure*, p.115

²⁵ Ling, *Solid, Safe, Secure*, p.94

If baits, traps, powders and/or sprays have been used, their effectiveness should be monitored.

Fire prevention and suppression

Part of the inspection process for buildings and storage areas should be to check fire prevention and suppression mechanisms. Inspections should include:

- emergency exits to ensure they are free of obstacles
- fire extinguishers to ensure they are in position, labelled and fully operational
- storage areas to ensure that combustible materials, such as chemicals or cellulose nitrate film, are not present
- sprinklers to ensure they are fully operational, and
- electrical wiring for signs of deterioration.

Part of the maintenance and monitoring process should also be ensuring that staff skills in fire prevention and suppression are up to date.

Cleanliness

Inspections should monitor the effectiveness of cleaning operations. Buildings, storage areas and shelving should be cleaned on a regular basis. Storage areas should be cleaned regularly with a vacuum cleaner fitted with a HEPA filter (high efficiency particulate air filter) to remove dust particles.

Cleaning agents should not harm the materials stored. Agents containing ammonia and bleaches should be avoided as the vapours they give off can cause paper to oxidate, leaving brown marks. Some environmentally friendly cleaners may be used if they are not too strong. Alternatively water, or water and vinegar solutions can be used.

6.3 Records inspections

Regular inspections should also be made of the records themselves. Records can be monitored for signs of:

- infestation by insects or vermin
- mould
- dust
- corrosion
- damage, such as rips and tears, or
- other forms of deterioration.

It is important when monitoring records within storage areas and facilities, that a range of boxes, containers and storage equipment (such as plan drawers) are sampled across the storage area / facility to identify environmental issues which may be occurring in 'pockets' of the storage area / facility.

It is very important that boxes, containers etc are opened and the physical condition of the records checked. This is the only way to check what might be occurring in the box, e.g. mould or pest infestations.

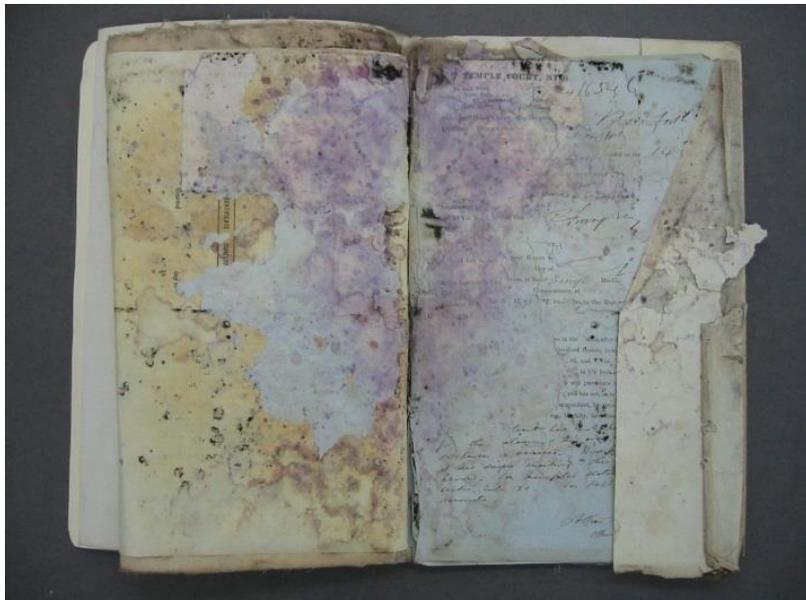
Staff who regularly work in storage areas or facilities should receive training in identifying potential risks to records and records which may require conservation treatments. Staff and users should also be encouraged to report the existence of signs of deterioration in records or record containers.

6.4 Identifying and responding to mould infestations

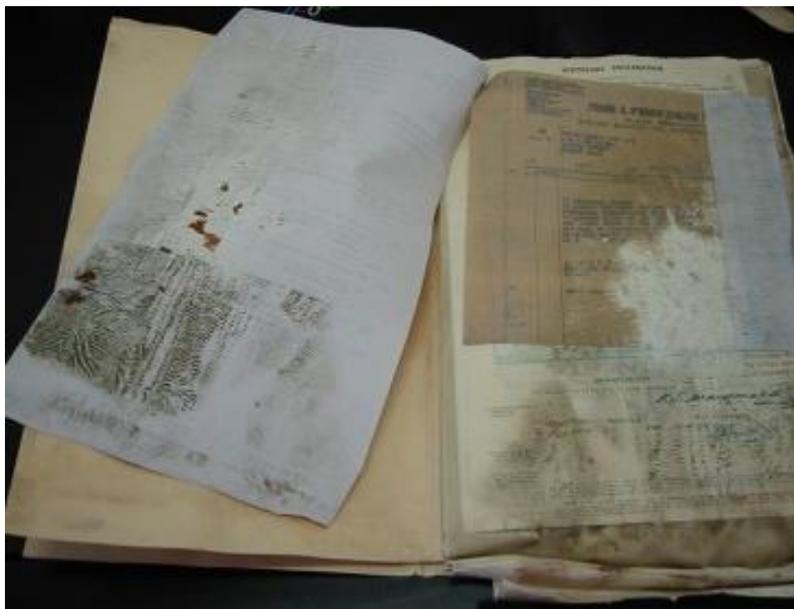
Mould is a type of fungus and is perhaps the most serious pest which can affect records collections because it spreads rapidly and can destroy the records it attacks. Signs of

mould include brown marks, furry stains, a dusty substance, mildew-like growth on paper, white fluffy substance, and a musty odour. Mould "will cause staining, weakening of paper, and in the worst cases will completely devour it."²⁶ See Conservation Tip 5 for examples of mould on records and how to manage mould outbreaks

(<https://www.records.nsw.gov.au/archives/collections-and-research/guides-and-indexes/conservation-tip-05-removing-mould>)

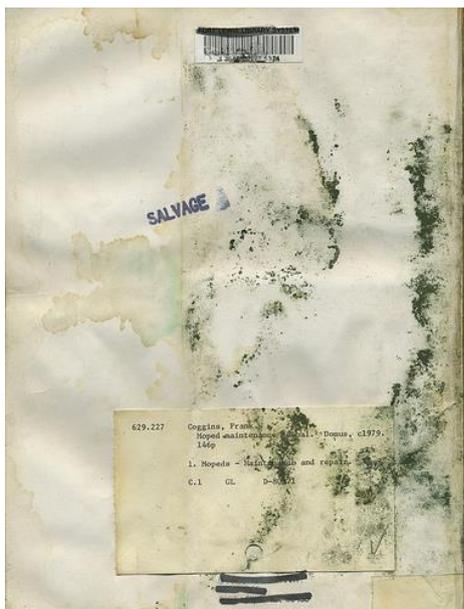


Mould on records source: NSW State Archives and Records



Mould on records source: NSW State Archives and Records

²⁶ Hadlow, "Preservation", pp.117 - 118



Mould on records source: http://www.flickr.com/photos/mr_carl/2348573021/

There is high potential for mould growth once the relative humidity exceeds 60%. Thus, every attempt must be made to keep humidity below 60%, minimise fluctuations in humidity, and ensure that storage areas have good ventilation.

If you find mould on records, you will need to **QUICKLY** determine the extent of the problem in order to best identify how to deal with the problem and to determine if it is possible to isolate affected records from the rest of the records in storage.

If mould or pest infestation is identified, NSW State Archives and Records must be notified and the problem must be treated promptly. Repairs to records should be undertaken where necessary and, if they are not likely to damage the records further. Repairs to records should only be carried out under the supervision of a Conservator and in consultation with NSW State Archives and Records.

Remember, there are health and safety issues with dealing with mould. Personal protective equipment (PPE), including dust masks, plastic gloves, and eye goggles should be worn.

If you have a small quantity of records affected by mould (just several items):

- place records into plastic bags or air-tight plastic tubs and remove them to a dry, well-ventilated space where they can be cleaned. **Do not transport them to another location unless they are in air-tight plastic bags or plastic tubs.**
- follow instructions from NSW State Archives and Records for cleaning records and seek professional conservation/recovery assistance
- check that storage environment conditions are not conducive to mould growth (i.e. the humidity should be below 60% RH)

- ensure that Personal Protective Equipment is worn and that any cleaning occurs in a well ventilated space and using a fume hood.²⁷

If you have a larger quantity of records affected by mould:

- check that storage environment conditions are not conducive to mould growth (i.e. the humidity is below 60%)
- assess whether it's possible to isolate the affected records (this may be possible if the quantity is not too great),
- follow instructions from NSW State Archives and Records for cleaning records and seek professional conservation/recovery assistance

In addition to cleaning the records, you will also need to clean the storage shelves:

- vacuum the shelves
- wipe them with a 70% solution of Methylated Spirit or Ethanol, and
- let the shelves dry.

Before returning records to the storage area, you must make sure that the environmental conditions are appropriate in the storage space and that humidity levels are below 60%.

6.5 Identifying and responding to pest infestations

If you do find evidence of pest activity such as silverfish, termites, cockroaches etc., you will need to identify:

- the source of the problem and the severity of the activity
- if records have been affected by pest activity, and
- if affected records are short/medium temporary records, long term temporary records or State archives.

If mould or pest infestation is identified, NSW State Archives and Records must be notified and the problem must be treated promptly. Repairs to records should be undertaken where necessary and, if they are not likely to damage the records further. Repairs to records should only be carried out under the supervision of a Conservator and in consultation with NSW State Archives and Records.

Remember, there are health and safety issues with records infested by insects/insect eggs/faecal matter. Personal protective equipment (PPE), including masks with either a P1 or P2 filter, plastic gloves, apron, and eye goggles should be worn when handling pest infested records.

6.6 Repairs to records

Repairs to records should be undertaken where necessary and only if they are not likely to damage the records further. Repairs to records should only be carried out under the supervision of a Conservator and in consultation with NSW State Archives and Records.

6.7 Keeping records about maintenance and monitoring

It is important to keep records about the maintenance and monitoring of records storage. Examples of the types of documentation the organisation may have are:

- building maintenance and pest inspections of storage areas/facilities used by the public office, include commercial storage facilities

²⁷ NSW State Archives and Records, *Conservation Tip No. 5 Removing mould from records and archives*, available at <https://www.records.nsw.gov.au/archives/collections-and-research/guides-and-indexes/conservation-tip-05-removing-mould>

- integrated pest management program documentation, including information on treatments undertaken to remove pest infestation
- maintenance undertaken to mitigate risks to records
- inspections of records, and reports identifying any records or containers which have signs of pest infestation, mould, or other deterioration
- corrective and preventative work undertaken to ensure that the storage areas and facilities are compliant with Standard
- procedures for responding to mould or pest infestation affecting records
- documentation of notification to NSW State Archives and Records of mould or pest infestations affecting records and agreement on the proposed treatments/repairs to records
- registers of any repair or conservation work undertaken, and
- conservation reports.

If maintenance is part of a contract, contractors should report on surveys and work undertaken for maintenance. These records should reside with the organisation to show that the contractor is meeting their obligations and that the organisation is meeting its requirements.

7. Identification and control

Records are controlled in a system so that they can be identified, located and retrieved.
(Principle 5)

Records need to be sufficiently identified and described so that they can be easily and promptly retrieved from storage when required. Records may be required for business purposes, legal proceedings, official enquiries or public access.

Mechanisms for improving accessibility to records in storage facilities should be balanced with the need to safeguard and protect records against unauthorised access or theft.

7.1 Controls

All possible steps should be taken to ensure that records within a storage area or facility can be easily located, and accessed by authorised clients. Decisions regarding the location of the facility, its design and location controls adopted should all be made with accessibility in mind. Documentation should also be of sufficient quality to facilitate quick retrieval.

Physical location

The frequency and urgency of retrievals should be considered when choosing the site of a records storage area or records facility. See **Section 4 Location of storage areas and facilities** for other considerations.

In semi-active storage environments, large quantities of boxed records are stored in large shelving and compactus configurations. Due to the size of such facilities, planning the location of high usage records is very important to ensure that there is quick and easy access to those records with the highest retrieval rates (i.e. retrieved frequently or with a quick turnaround time required).

Sometimes semi-active records are stored on pallets and wrapped in plastic as part of the process of re-locating records from one storage area to another. It is not acceptable for records to be stored for lengthy periods of time in a 'palletised' way as it can have detrimental effects on the containers used to store the records (boxes on the lower levels can collapse and be damaged under the weight of the boxes of records stored on top of them). It also restricts the accessibility to the records. In some instances, it may also be considered a workplace health and safety issue.

Storage location controls

All records need to be registered and controlled in a system which allows the records to be identified and linked to a physical location in a storage area or facility. This information assists the organisation in identifying and retrieving records easily, and identifying where records should be returned to after use. Standards for documentation and location control should be implemented. Each records storage area should have a system of location control that includes the following components:

- each container has a unique identifier and is labelled
- all shelving and other storage equipment (e.g. plan cabinets) should be clearly and uniquely identified and labelled
- the shelf location of all boxes of records should be identified in the organisation recordkeeping system and on consignment documentation for the transfer of records to storage
- a separate location index (what records [container number] are stored in which location [shelf/bay number] in the storage area) should be maintained, and
- all location documentation should be kept up to date.

This information will facilitate the rapid location of records and their retrieval. If records cannot be located in the storage area, every effort made to locate them.

Individual record items and containers of records should be registered into the public office's recordkeeping systems, and the public office should be able to track the movement and location of all its records, regardless of location, and identify for how long they need to be stored prior to destruction or transfer as archives.

If the public office uses a commercial facility, then the public office should ensure that the storage provider is capturing appropriate metadata about the records and containers in its care.

If the storage provider digitises records for transmission/return to the public office (e.g. a 'digitisation on demand' service), the public office should ensure that it has established arrangements with the storage provider about the:

- capture of accurate metadata into the service provider's systems, and
- the retention and disposal of the metadata concerning records and containers once the records are no longer in the care or storage of the provider.

Machinery of government changes, or other business transformation models such as outsourcing or privatisation, may result in changes to which public office has control of records located in a storage facility (see sections 6 and 7 of the *State Records Act 1998*). If a function of public office is no longer undertaken by the public office, then it is important that control and access of these records in storage is addressed as part of the transfer of functions to the public office that now controls the records. Storage providers should also be informed of any changes to the control of records, so that storage costs, decisions about records and access to records can be correctly administered.

7.2 Handling records

Records of all formats will be damaged if they are not handled correctly. The retrieval of records from storage areas or facilities should be subject to controls in order to prevent damage, deterioration, or dissociation.

Organisations should promote to all staff and users the correct handling and use of records to minimise damage and ensure their preservation for as long as they are required.

Policy and procedures for handling records should include the following:

- basic rules such as no food or beverages to be stored or consumed near records and no smoking in storage areas or facilities.
- ensuring that records in transit are transported in enclosed and lockable vehicles, and loaded/unloaded in covered areas under supervision. Records should be secured and protected at all times against weather, light, pollution, unauthorised access, theft and other dangers.
- procedures for handling particular formats of records. For example, when handling large volumes such as registers, the spine of the volume must be supported. (See [Handle with care](#) for more information).
- procedures for handling records with security classifications or containing sensitive information in accordance with NSW Government requirements and the Australian Government *Protective Security Policy Framework*.

If records are transferred to the custody of another public office or organisation for temporary access, (e.g. records may need to be presented in court, or used on building sites by construction engineers), then the public office should inform the temporary custodian of their responsibilities for records protection and security (Section 11 of the *State Records Act* requires this). For example, organisations can send an information sheet, similar to that reproduced at **Appendix A**, with the records.

If any damage is done to the records while they are with the temporary custodian, the public office should be informed and take appropriate action. When the records are

delivered back to the public office they should always be inspected before being returned to the storage area.

7.3 Handling long term temporary records or State archives

Records of long term value, including those records identified as State archives in retention and disposal authorities, need to be handled with great care to ensure that they survive for as long as they are needed. Precautions that should be taken include:

- organisational policy for the access and use of long term or archival value records which requires such records to be used in an area designated for research, supervised by staff, and correct handling techniques enforced
- organisational policy that a copy is issued for reference purposes rather than the original
- procedures for all users on the handling of long term records and archives, and
- requiring all users to provide written agreement to the handling and preservation requirements for long term and archival value records.

Handling and preservation requirements for users of long term temporary records and those records identified as State archives should include:

- only pencils can be used around long term or archival value records
- pages should not be bend or folded
- pages should be turned carefully to avoid tears
- pages should not be written on, leaned on, or traced from
- misfiled documents should not be rearranged by clients (misfiled pages should be brought to the attention of records staff)
- damaged documents should not be repaired by clients (damaged pages should be brought to the attention of records staff)
- copies of long term or archival value records should only be made by records staff, and
- staff retain the right to refuse to issue or photocopy fragile documents.

When retrieving records that have been stored in cooler environments, they must be acclimatised before use. For example, photographs taken from a storage environment of <5°C should be slowly accustomed, over a number of hours, to the temperature of the research area to prevent condensation and stress to the record.

See **Appendix B** for an example of access rules.

In developing the storage plan, the organisation will have identified records which are of long term or archival value in order to store these records appropriately. It is also advisable for the organisation to review the usage of these records and if necessary, take steps to ensure that the records are not being damaged by high rates of usage.

7.4 Conversion of long term temporary records or State archives

The public office should review the use long term temporary records or those identified as State archives, and if necessary, take steps to ensure that the records are not damaged by heavy usage.

It may be appropriate, after consultation with NSW State Archives and Records, that long term or records identified as State archives are converted to other formats, i.e. digitised. When digitising or converting long term temporary records or State archives, public offices must ensure that the processes undertaken do not damage the original records:

- records are handled carefully in the conversion process (e.g. if volumes are to be scanned, the original should not be damaged by poor handling or pressure exerted on the spine)
- records are transported carefully to and from service providers undertaking the conversion work, and
- not damaged in the conversion process or returned to storage in the incorrect order, as this may create problems and compromise their ability to function as evidence, especially for records of high risk or high value that are being retained after digitisation

Records should be digitised or converted in accordance with the requirements of the [General retention and disposal authority: Original or source records that have been copied \(GA 45\)](#).

Remember, originals identified as State archives that were created or received prior to January 1, 1980 are not eligible for destruction after copying under *General Retention and Disposal Authority: original or source records that have been copied (GA 45)*.

If a public office digitises records required as State archives, then once these records have been digitised, arrangements should be made to transfer the original records to the State Archives Collection. Please note that NSW State Archives and Records requires a set of the digital copies of any State archives that have been digitised by a public office.

7.5 Keeping records about records identification and control

It is important to keep records about records identification and control. Examples of the types of documentation the organisation may have are:

- a storage plan which includes information on the physical and intellectual control of records in storage
- documentation on the systems, standards, and metadata used for the physical and intellectual control of records in storage area/facilities
- information in the recordkeeping system on where records are located and tracks movement of records
- documentation of records stored with commercial service providers including information on the location and movement of records, and appropriate metadata about the records and containers
- procedures which include information on the identification, retrieval, tracking of movement, handling, safe transport of records, and return of records to storage
- inspections logs/ documentation that records and State archives are being retrieved from storage and handled correctly
- documentation on digitisation processes, and
- documentation of notification to NSW State Archives and Records and agreement of proposed digitisation of long term temporary records or State archives.

8. Security

Records are protected against theft, misuse, unauthorised access or modification.
(Principle 6)

All records require a basic level of security to ensure their authenticity and integrity, to prevent misuse and unauthorised access. Records with security classifications (e.g. protected, secret, top secret), or containing sensitive information, should be handled, protected, stored and disposed of according to NSW Government requirements and the Australian Government *Protective Security Policy Framework*.

Access to buildings and storage areas must be controlled in order to prevent unauthorised access, which may result in the alteration, destruction, damage or theft of records. Only authorised users should be able to access records.

All staff and contractors working in storage areas/facilities used by the public office and including commercial storage facilities, should be aware of their responsibilities regarding security and have appropriate security clearances.

8.1 Building security

Every building poses its own problems for security, as requirements will differ for each building, depending on the nature of the organisation, resources, and the records being stored.

Building security risk assessment should be undertaken to identify and mitigate security risks and to develop a security plan for the storage facility and storage areas. Public offices may be able to request site visits from the local fire brigade and police to assist in security audits and risk assessments. At a minimum, records storage areas and facilities should be intruder resistant, monitored with perimeter alarms and 'back to base' systems, CCTV, and access controls. This can be achieved by using entry controls, perimeter and intruder detection alarms, and security guards.

It is important that security monitoring of storage areas and facilities is audited or monitored, to ensure that security measures are working correctly.

Breaches of security should be documented and captured into the organisation's recordkeeping system, and the mitigation of risks addressed through the risk register. Shortcomings of the building, staff, records storage procedures and the security equipment should be highlighted in the report and addressed by the organisation.

Entry controls

The exterior doors and windows of the storage area and facility should be lockable, and unnecessary or redundant doors and windows should be blocked. Vulnerable windows can be secured with roll down shutters, bars, grills or intruder resistant glass. The suitability of these measures should be discussed with a crime prevention officer or risk management people within the organisation.

Entry to the storage building or facility should be controlled through either electronic access systems or locks. Passes or keys should only be issued to approved personnel, security personnel, building managers and emergency services. A register of access passes or keys should be maintained and policies should be in place regarding duplication of keys, reporting losses and changing the keys or codes when a staff member or contractor moves to another position. Provision should be made for emergency situations and a master set of keys, pass holders' code numbers or other necessary details should be kept in a secure place away from the records facility.

Intruder detection alarms

Intruder detection alarms should be installed at all storage facilities. Procedures and details of security systems should be subject to rigorous security.

A 'back-to-base' alarm system which sounds at the organisation's security room or the offices of the security firm responsible for the premises is recommended.

The organisation needs to adopt rules for responding to the storage facility's alarm, including the minimum response time. The security firm should be furnished with the names and after hours telephone numbers of designated records staff members who should be alerted if the alarm activates, and will be expected to attend the premises in the case of an emergency. The organisation is responsible for seeing that this list is kept up-to-date.

Security guards/patrols

Organisational policy and the types of records being stored will determine whether to employ security staff and after hours patrols. If security classified records or records with sensitive information are being stored, then the organisation will need to increase the level of security measures. For further information see the NSW Government requirements and the Australian Government Protective Security Policy Framework.

Security staff may be required for records storage facilities unoccupied by staff. This need may be determined by considering:

- the nature and importance of the materials held in the storage facility
- the location of the facility and surrounding risks (See **Section 3 Location of storage areas and facilities**)
- recent incidences of burglary or arson in the area, and/or
- the adequacy of alarm systems.

Security patrols might replace malfunctioning alarm systems for a short time.

Good perimeter surveillance and lighting may deter potential intruders.

8.2 Records storage area security

Only authorised staff should have access to the records storage areas within buildings or to locked storage equipment or secure storage zones (e.g. sections of the compactus that contain more sensitive or confidential records, or zones within the storage area which contain security classified records).

The Senior Responsible Officer for records management should authorise which personnel have access to records in the records storage areas. Staff working in storage areas containing security classified or sensitive information will need to have appropriate security clearances.

Entry to storage areas should be controlled through electronic access systems, locks or other access controls. These access controls should be monitored and audited.

The retrieval and return of material should only be undertaken by staff members who are authorised to be in the storage areas.

External clients or visitors to the storage facility should always be registered and supervised. Security measures should be in place to protect the records and to detect breaches. Any routine maintenance work in records storage areas, such as cleaning or repairs, should not be permitted unless there is an authorised staff member to supervise the contractor.

8.3 Records with security classification

Records requiring additional security or protection include records with security classifications or containing sensitive information. These types of records must be handled, protected and stored appropriately. The NSW Government requirements and the Australian Government Protective Security Policy Framework should be implemented.

It is usual to store security classified or sensitive information in separate areas or zones segregated from the main records storage. This segregation of records allows for added protections and risk mitigation to be implemented including:

- lockable storage such as strongrooms for large quantities of records, safes and vaults
- security approved containers and cabinets, and
- alarms and CCTV monitoring of the storage area to detect unauthorised access.

Only authorised staff with appropriate security clearances should have access to secure storage zones.

Ensure that records with security classifications or containing sensitive information are transported in appropriate containers and encryption is used if transporting digital records on physical carriers (i.e. portable hard drives, USB sticks etc.).

For further information see the Australian Government *Protective Security Policy Framework*, particularly [16 Entity facilities](#).

8.4 Staff responsibilities

All staff and contractors working in storage areas/facilities used by the public office and including commercial storage facilities, should be aware of their responsibilities regarding security and have appropriate security clearances.

Policy and procedures should cover the:

- importance of security within storage areas and facilities
- responsibilities of staff and contractors, including the confidentiality agreements that all staff should sign
- requirements for only authorised staff, with appropriate security clearances, to access secure storage zones
- handling of security classified records or sensitive records
- safe transport of records and secure transport arrangements, and
- processes for providing access to records.

All staff should be encouraged to report any unauthorised access, damage or security breaches observed. Serious breaches of security should be reported to the Senior Responsible Officer and to the public office's Chief Information Officer. All breaches should be assessed and rectification action taken.

8.5 Policies and procedures for access to records

Public offices routinely provide access to records, under legislation such as the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* or the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998*, and other legislation and administrative arrangements. Under the State Records Act, public offices also become 'access providers' for records over thirty years old that are in their custody.

Staff involved in providing access to the organisation's records should understand the organisation's role as an access provider and any policies and procedures that exist to governing access. Other policies and procedures governing access may include:

- obtaining client names and addresses and viewing their identification to ensure that clients are who they claim to be
- asking clients to acknowledge the rules for the protection of the records
- asking clients to record their name and signature in a register so there is a record of who was accessing the organisation's records on a given day

- asking clients to fill in a request form for items so that there is documentation of who was issued with particular items on a given day. These forms should include the signature of the client and a copy should be available both for the organisation and for the client, and/or
- checking returned documents and returning them promptly to the records storage area.

See **Appendix B** for an example of access rules.

8.6 Keeping records about security

It is important to keep records about security for records in storage areas and facilities. Examples of the types of documentation the organisation may have are:

- storage plans and assessment reports which include details of security measures implemented to protect records storage areas and facilities, and records in transit
- access monitoring and reporting
- access logs which record all entry to the storage areas and facilities
- documentation of staff security clearances
- incident reports regarding any unauthorised access to any storage areas or facilities
- incident reports regarding any theft of records in transit
- storage plans and assessment reports include details of appropriate handling and storage of security classified reports
- contracts with storage providers include specific security, confidentiality, and authorised access requirements
- procedures which detail how to store information with different security classifications.

9. Definitions

For the purpose of this guideline, the following definitions apply. Terms that have not been referenced are taken from NSW State Archives and Record's sources. All other sources are provided in brackets after the definition.

Integrated pest management

A program of good housekeeping and cleaning, regular inspections and monitoring for pests. (ed. Jackie Bettington, Kim Eberhard, Rowena Loo, and Clive Smith, *Keeping Archives*, 3rd edition, Australian Society of Archivists, 2008, p. 86)

Integrated pest management also includes response strategies such as spraying and appropriate measures.

Records

Record means any document or other source of information compiled, recorded or stored in written form or on film, or by electronic process, or in any other manner or by any other means (*State Records Act 1998*, Part 1, *Preliminary*, Section 3(1), *Definitions*).

Semi active records

Records required infrequently in the conduct of current business and stored in a secondary storage area or facility.

Senior Responsible Officer (SRO)

The Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) is the individual within the public office who has been delegated strategic and corporate responsibility for records and information management. The SRO is responsible for ensuring that records and information management is in place and operating effectively to support business operations and is usually a senior manager reporting to the Chief Executive or to the Chief Information Officer. The role of the SRO is established under the [Standard on records management](#), minimum compliance requirement 1.3.

State record

Any record, made and kept, or received and kept, by any person in the course of the exercise of official functions in a public office, or for any purpose of a public office, or for the use of a public office (*State Records Act 1998*, s.3(1), *Definitions*).

Storage area

A room, compactus or space within a storage facility or building whose primary purpose is to store records.

Storage facilities

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

10. Further references

Australian Government, *Protective Security Policy Framework*, 2018, at <https://www.protectivesecurity.gov.au/Pages/default.aspx>

- 15 *Physical security for entity resources* at <https://www.protectivesecurity.gov.au/physical/physical-security-entity-resources/Documents/pspf-physec-15-physical-security-entity-resources.pdf>
- 16 *Entity facilities* at <https://www.protectivesecurity.gov.au/physical/entity-facilities/Documents/pspf-physec-16-entity-facilities.pdf>

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Department of Finance, Services and Innovation, *NSW Government Information Classification, Labelling and Handling Guidelines*, July 2015, at https://www.digital.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/NSW%20Government%20Information%20Classification%20Labelling%20and%20Handling%20Guidelines%20V.2.2_0.pdf

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International Standard, ISO 11799 – 2015, *Information and documentation – Document storage requirements for archive and library materials*.

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National Archives of Australia, *Standard for the storage of archival records (excluding digital records)*, Canberra, 2014 at http://www.naa.gov.au/Images/NAA-standard-for-the-storage-of-archival-records-exc-digital-records_tcm16-88806.pdf

National Archives of Australia, *Format-specific preservation advice* , at <http://www.naa.gov.au/information-management/managing-information-and-records/preserving/physical-records-pres/index.aspx>

NSW State Archives and Records, *Conservation Tip No. 5 Removing mould from records and archives*, at <https://www.records.nsw.gov.au/archives/collections-and-research/guides-and-indexes/conservation-tip-05-removing-mould>

NSW State Archives and Records, *Handle with care*, revised 2019, at <https://www.records.nsw.gov.au/recordkeeping/advice/storage-and-preservation/handle-with-care>

NSW State Archives and Records, *General retention and disposal authority: Original or source records that have been copied (GA 45)*, at

<https://www.records.nsw.gov.au/recordkeeping/original-or-source-records-have-been-copied-ga45>

NSW State Archives and Records, *General Authority: Transferring records out of NSW for storage with or maintenance by services providers based outside of the State, (GA35)*, at <https://www.records.nsw.gov.au/node/649>

NSW State Archives and Records, *Storage of State records with service providers outside of NSW*, revised 2015, at

<https://www.records.nsw.gov.au/recordkeeping/advice/storage-and-preservation/service-providers-outside-nsw>

NSW State Archives and Records, *Outsourcing records storage*, revised 2013, at

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Table A - Storage environment conditions and housing requirements for short and medium term temporary records (records that are only required to be retained for up to 30 years)*

Record format type	Environmental conditions			Protection	
	Temperature/ Relative Humidity (RH)	Air quality	Lighting	Housing/Shelving	Containers/Packaging
Paper: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Files Cards Volumes Computer print-outs and other papers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15 – 27°C 30 – 60% RH Avoid fluctuations	Well ventilated	Ambient light	Coated metal shelving	Robust, clean containers Clean file covers, folders or envelopes
Paper: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maps Plans Charts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15 – 27°C 30 – 60% RH Avoid fluctuations	Well ventilated	Ambient light	Coated metal shelving or plan cabinets Rolled or vertical storage	Robust, clean containers Individual enclosures not required
Photographic media Black & White or colour <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sheet file Cine film X-rays Microforms Prints 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20°C ± 2°C 50% RH ± 5% 	Well ventilated <i>Vinegar syndrome contaminated files and nitrate films must be isolated from other materials</i>	Ambient light	Coated metal shelving	Robust, clean containers Clean folders or enclosures
Magnetic media <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Computer tapes and disks Video tapes Audio tapes Magneto-optical disks (Mini discs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20°C ± 2°C 50% RH ± 5% 	Well ventilated	Ambient light	Non-magnetisable shelving	Non-magnetisable sealed containers, cassettes cases or sleeves
Optical media <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CDs, DVDs Laser discs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20°C ± 2°C 50% RH ± 5% 	Well ventilated	Ambient light	Coated metal shelving	Robust clean containers Clean envelopes or enclosures

Source: National Archives of Australia, *Standard for the Physical Storage of Commonwealth Records, Table B – Guidelines for storage of records up to 30 years in non-tropical environments*, December 2002. Ted Ling, *Solid, Safe, Secure: Building Archives Repositories in Australia*, 1998.

* This table is also included in the *Standard on the physical storage of State records*, available at <https://www.records.nsw.gov.au/recordkeeping/standard-the-physical-storage-state-records>

Table B - Storage environment conditions and housing requirements for long term temporary records & State archives*

Record format type	Environmental conditions				Protection		
	Temperature / Relative Humidity (RH)	Fluctuations	Air quality	Lighting	Housing	Containers	Packaging
Paper records: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Files Cards Computer print-out Maps Plans Charts Posters 	16 – 25°C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> tolerable daily change of 3°C there is no 'set point', any reading within this range is acceptable continuous control required 	Well ventilated and filtered to exclude dust and other particles, acidic and oxidising gases	UV filtered fluorescent lighting Timer controlled switches	Powder coated or baked enamel metal shelving or plan cabinets. Maps, plans and charts to be stored flat, otherwise rolled storage.	Archival quality acid-free boxes, folders or containers	Archival quality acid-free file covers, folders or envelopes, sleeves, enclosures. Sturdy plan folders of archival quality board. Fragile items should be interleaved with archival quality paper. Items that cannot be stored flat due to size should be rolled around a core and stored within a larger tube
	30 – 60% RH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> tolerable daily change of 10% there is no 'set point', any reading within this range is acceptable continuous control required 					
Composite and sensitive materials: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bound volumes Parchment documents 	17 – 23°C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> tolerable daily change of 3°C there is no 'set point', any reading within this range is acceptable continuous control required 	Well ventilated and filtered to exclude dust and other particles, acidic and oxidising gases	UV filtered fluorescent lighting Timer controlled switches	Powder coated or baked enamel metal shelving	Archival quality acid-free boxes, containers	Archival quality acid-free file covers, folders or envelopes. Small volumes can be stored vertically. Large volumes should be stored horizontally, no more than 2 high. If volumes are damaged, they should be stored in tailor-made boxes or slipcases of archival quality board.
	40 – 50% RH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> tolerable daily change of 5% there is no 'set point', any reading within 					

		<p>this range is acceptable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> continuous control required 					
<p>Black & White (silver gelatine) photographic prints</p>	17 – 23°C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> tolerable daily change of 3°C there is no 'set point', any reading within this range is acceptable continuous control required 	<p>Well ventilated and filtered to exclude dust and other particles, acidic and oxidising gases</p>	<p>UV filtered fluorescent lighting Timer controlled switches</p>	<p>Powder coated or baked enamel metal shelving</p>	<p>Archival non-buffered containers that have passed the Photographic Activity Test (PAT)</p>	<p>Archival non-buffered enclosures that have passed the Photographic Activity Test (PAT)</p>
	40 – 50% RH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> tolerable daily change of 5% there is no 'set point', any reading within this range is acceptable continuous control required 					
<p>Photographic media:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sheet film Cine film Colour print material Historic photographic prints X-rays Microforms Glass plate negatives Lantern slides Photographic media with vinegar syndrome (requires isolation from 	3 – 5°C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> tolerable daily change of 1°C there is no 'set point', any reading within this range is acceptable continuous control required records must be acclimatised when being moved in and out of storage space 	<p>Well ventilated and filtered to exclude dust and other particles, acidic and oxidising gases</p> <p><i>Vinegar syndrome and nitrate films must be isolated from other materials</i></p>	<p>UV filtered fluorescent lighting Timer controlled switches</p>	<p>Powder coated or baked enamel metal shelving. Glass plates/lantern slides must be on stationery shelving. Require vertical storage.</p>	<p>Boxes of inert polypropylene which has passed the Photographic Activity Test (PAT) or archival quality cardboard boxes Glass plates/lantern slides require additional shock protection. All products used for this purpose should have passed the Photographic Activity Test (PAT)</p>	<p>Archival non-buffered containers, wallets, folders or envelopes that have passed the Photographic Activity Test (PAT)</p> <p>Films should be stored horizontally, stacked no more than 6 cans high for 16mm film and no more than 3 high for 35mm film.</p>
	35 – 45% RH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> tolerable daily change of 5% there is no 'set point', any reading within this range is 					

other materials)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> acceptable continuous control required 				Cine film should be stored on polypropylene cores and in film canes that have passed the Photographic Activity Test (PAT).	
Magnetic media <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Computer tapes and disks Video tapes Audio tapes Magneto-optical disks (Mini discs) 	7 – 9°C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> tolerable daily change of 1°C there is no 'set point', any reading within this range is acceptable continuous control required records must be acclimatised when being moved in and out of storage space 	Well ventilated and filtered to exclude dust and other particles, acidic and oxidising gases	UV filtered fluorescent lighting Timer controlled switches	Non-magnetisable shelving	Non-magnetisable, archival quality containers, cassette cases or sleeves Boxes of inert polypropylene which has passed the Photographic Activity Test (PAT) or archival quality cardboard boxes	Archival non-buffered containers, wallets, folders or envelopes that have passed the Photographic Activity Test (PAT)
	35 – 45% RH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> tolerable daily change of 5% there is no 'set point', any reading within this range is acceptable continuous control required records must be acclimatised when being moved in and out of storage space 					
Optical media: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CDs, DVDs Laser discs 	3 – 5°C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> tolerable daily change of 1°C there is no 'set point', any reading within 	Well ventilated and filtered to exclude dust and other particles, acidic	UV filtered fluorescent lighting Timer controlled	Powder coated or baked enamel metal shelving or plan cabinets.	Boxes of inert polypropylene which has passed the Photographic	Archival non-buffered containers, wallets, folders or envelopes that have passed the Photographic Activity

		<p>this range is acceptable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continuous control required • records must be acclimatised when being moved in and out of storage space 	and oxidising gases	switches		Activity Test (PAT) or archival quality cardboard boxes	Test (PAT)
	35 – 45% RH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tolerable daily change of 5% • there is no 'set point', any reading within this range is acceptable • continuous control required 					
Gramophone discs	3 – 5°C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tolerable daily change of 1°C • there is no 'set point', any reading within this range is acceptable • continuous control required • records must be acclimatised when being moved in and out of storage space 	Well ventilated and filtered to exclude dust and other particles, acidic and oxidising gases	UV filtered fluorescent lighting Timer controlled switches	Powder coated or baked enamel metal shelving Stationary shelving Gramophone disks require vertical storage	Boxes of inert polypropylene which has passed the Photographic Activity Test (PAT) or archival quality cardboard boxes	Archival non-buffered containers, wallets, folders or envelopes that have passed the Photographic Activity Test (PAT)
	35 – 45% RH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tolerable daily change of 5% • there is no 'set point', any reading within this range is acceptable • continuous control required 					
Miscellaneous:	17 – 23°C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tolerable daily 	Well ventilated	UV filtered	Powder coated or	Archival quality	Archival quality acid-

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Models Objects Mixed media items 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> change of 3°C there is no 'set point', any reading within this range is acceptable continuous control required 	and filtered to exclude dust and other particles, acidic and oxidising gases	fluorescent lighting Timer controlled switches	baked enamel metal shelving Stationary shelving	acid-free containers or boxes	free enclosures or wrapping All packaging and wrapping materials should have passed the Photographic Activity Test (PAT). Large/heavy items may be in wooden crates. The wood should be varnished to seal it and the varnish well-aired before the crate is put into use.
	40 – 50% RH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> tolerable daily change of 5% there is no 'set point', any reading within this range is acceptable continuous control required 					
Preservation master film material: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sheet film Cine film 	-20°C - 10°C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> tolerable daily change of 3°C there is no 'set point', any reading within this range is acceptable continuous control required records must be acclimatised when being moved in and out of storage space 	Well ventilated and filtered to exclude dust and other particles, acidic and oxidising gases Vinegar syndrome and nitrate films must be isolated from other materials	UV filtered fluorescent lighting Timer controlled switches	Powder coated or baked enamel metal shelving or plan cabinets.	Cine film should be stored on polypropylene cores and in film canes that have passed the Photographic Activity Test (PAT).	Archival non-buffered enclosures that have passed the Photographic Activity Test (PAT) Films should be stored horizontally, stacked no more than 6 cans high for 16mm film and no more than 3 high for 35mm film.
	35 – 45% RH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> tolerable daily change of 5% there is no 'set point', any reading within this range is acceptable continuous control required records must be acclimatised 					

		when being moved in and out of storage space					
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Source: National Archives of Australia, *Standard for the Physical Storage of Commonwealth Records, Table C – Guidelines for storage of records 30 years of age or over in all climatic regions*, December 2002. Ted Ling, *Solid, Safe, Secure: Building Archives Repositories in Australia*, 1998. National Archives of Australia, *Standard for the storage of archival records*, June 2014.

* This table is also included in the *Standard on the physical storage of State records*, available at <https://www.records.nsw.gov.au/recordkeeping/standard-the-physical-storage-state-records>

Appendix A Information sheet to accompany records out of custody

This is a sample form that can be used to accompany any record which temporarily leaves the custody of a public office.

Description and record number.....

This record is a State record, as defined by the *State Records Act 1998* (NSW). Under s.11 of the Act,(*name of public office*) is responsible for the 'safe custody and proper preservation' of this record. As a result, while it is temporarily out of our custody we request that all people storing and handling this record conform to the following instructions.

Storage

Please ensure that records are stored in appropriate conditions when they are not in use. The records should be:

- kept in a temperature and humidity controlled environment that is protected from the weather
- protected from sunlight
- secured against theft and unauthorised access
- shelved and packaged in a way that protects the records, and
- kept clean and in a good state of repair.

Handle with care

The records should be handled in accordance with the *Handle with Care* leaflet enclosed. The records should only be handled by the person/s with full authorisation from (*name of public office*).

Damage to the record

Records should not be damaged in your care. If any damage occurs, you must contact the person listed below immediately.

Return of the record

These records are only available to you on a TEMPORARY basis. You must know the location of the records at all times while these records are in your care. The records are to be returned as soon as possible.

Please return to:.....

Penalties

Under Part 3 of the *State Records Act*, neglect of State records is considered a form of unauthorised disposal. There are fines for each instance of such disposal.

Appendix B Example of access rules

This appendix has been designed so that records managers can distribute it to public users where direct access to original hardcopy record is given. It may require some customisation to suit your organisation's policies and practices. You will also need to download a copy of the [Handle with Care](#) advice.

The records of this organisation are **State records**, as defined by the *State Records Act 1998*. These records are required by the Act to be kept in safe custody and properly preserved. As a result, we ask that you read, sign and abide by the access rules listed below and the handling procedures outlined in the *Handle with Care* leaflet.

Access rules

- No food, drink or smoking is allowed.
- No bags will be taken into the research area.
- Except when completing certain designated forms, researchers must use pencils for all writing or note taking in the research area.
- Records will be issued on receipt of a completed request form. Only one document/bundle or reel will be issued at one time.
- Original records that are so fragile or old that handling will damage them, will not be issued. Copies may be issued in their place if copying does not damage the original.
- In cases where a record has been published or copied, the published item or copy will be issued in place of the original.
- No records will be removed from the research area and material issued may not be transferred to another researcher. All records are to be returned to the designated access officer after use.
- Records must be handled with care at all times in accordance with the *Handle with Care* leaflet.
- If the researcher is authorised to obtain copies of material, copying will be done by the designated access officer.
- A separate written application must be made for permission to display or publish information contained in these records.
- This organisation retains the right to refuse access to records for legitimate reasons such as confidentiality and copyright.

Declaration

Please fill out this declaration in block letters.

I.....(*name*) of(*address*)

agree to abide by the access rules printed on this sheet. I understand that any infringement of these rules may result in my right to direct access to original records being withdrawn.

Signed.....Date.....

Signature of parent or guardian if under 18 years.

Signed.....Date.....

Appendix C Commercial storage facilities

1. In house storage or a commercial provider?

Public offices who do not wish to store their own semi-active records may choose to store with commercial storage providers.

Decisions to store with commercial providers should be based upon a sound analysis of the requirements, costs, and benefits to the public office.

2. Selecting the right provider

Factors which may influence the selection of a records storage facility include:

- whether it meets the requirements of the *Standard on the physical storage of State records*
- the type and level of services offered, for example, the immediacy and frequency of retrievals
- systems and procedures, for example methods of delivery
- building maintenance and security
- integrated pest management for the facility
- location
- fire protection measures
- counter disaster planning for the facility
- secure destruction services
- cost, and
- adaptability to the organisation's needs.

The process of selecting an external storage provider should commence with the formation of a team which may include:

- the Senior Responsible Officer for records management or delegate who will be responsible for inspecting and authorising the records storage facility
- Records Manager
- a representative from the organisation who is experienced in negotiating contracts
- a representative of records users, and
- a financial representative.

The tender documentation should identify all of the services which the contractor will supply and the service standards. Particular decisions which will need to be made at the outset are whether the contractor will assist with:

- identifying materials required for retrieval at the document or file level
- boxing, listing or indexing services
- box/container supply
- transport and delivery of records
- digitisation on demand
- sentencing
- processing/inspection facilities onsite
- destruction, and

- the type and frequency of reporting.

These services may substantially add to the costs.

The outcome of the selection process should be based on:

- written submission
- presentation by the facility
- inspection of the provider's premises
- references from other clients, and
- due diligence check.

Simply accepting the lowest quote or price can often be disastrous. Every attempt should be made to identify hidden costs which may include:

- 'palletising': a charge for removing items from the shelves in preparation for destruction
- changes in storage fees after a "honeymoon period". This is where the first one or two years fees may be at an advantageous rate but a higher fee structure applies for successive years of a contract.
- early withdrawal: Some storage firms commit their clients to retaining records for the full period decided when the records are deposited. Therefore, if the disposal period is reduced or the organisation recalls them to the office permanently the original storage rate will be charged
- collection charges: the cost for collection of record transfers
- urgent retrieval surcharges, and
- termination charges: charges for terminating the contract.

3. The contract

Service contracts must state the obligations and responsibilities of the owners and the commercial storage provider. Appendix C of AS/NZS 1015:2011, *Records management – physical storage*, includes a list of *Common Components of Records Storage Services Contract*.

There should be a mechanism for continual monitoring of the service and for periodic complete review.