

Australian Capital Territory

# **Territory Records (Standard for Records Management Number 7: Physical Storage of Records) Approval 2008 (No 1)**

**Notifiable instrument NI2008—436**

made under the

**Territory Records Act 2002, s 18 (Approved standards and codes for records management)**

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## **1. Name of Instrument**

This instrument is the Territory Records (Standard for Records Management Number 7: Physical Storage of Records) Approval 2008 (No 1).

## **2. Approval**

I approve the Standard for Records Management Number 7: Physical Storage of Records.

## **3. Commencement**

This instrument commences on the day after notification.

David Wardle  
Director of Territory Records  
18 September 2008



## **Standard for Records Management Number 7 – Physical Storage of Records**

### **PURPOSE**

To set principles and minimum standards for the physical storage of records and the control of those records.

### **AUTHORITY**

This Standard is produced in accordance with section 18 of the *Territory Records Act 2002*, which allows the Director of Territory Records to approve Standards or Codes for agency records management.

Under section 17 of the Act, an agency's Principal Officer may only approve a Records Management Program that complies with the Standards and Codes set by the Director of Territory Records.

Section 17(2) allows a Principal Officer to approve a Records Management Program that does not comply with an approved Standard or Code only if the Director of Territory Records agrees in writing that non-compliance is necessary for the operational needs of the agency.

Section 14 of the Act requires agencies to “make and keep full and accurate records” of their activities. Section 15 requires agencies to take steps necessary to ensure that the information in their records continues to be accessible.

This Standard must be reviewed as soon as practicable five years after its commencement.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Government agencies are required to create and manage their records in accordance with Standards and Guidelines issued by the Territory Records Office. This includes the management of records for as long as they are required.

Under the Act, the Territory Records Office does not take into custody records of temporary or archival value. This means Territory agencies are required to find suitable facilities for the storage of both their temporary and archival records. These facilities can be:

- within the creating agency;
- within the currently responsible agency, where functions and/or records have been transferred;
- shared between agencies;
- agency owned or leased; or
- commercial storage facilities.

The physical storage of records is critical to their long-term preservation, security and public access. This Standard provides principles for the physical storage of records. It applies to permanent (archival) and temporary records which have been sentenced under an approved Records Disposal Schedule and to records not yet sentenced under a Disposal Schedule. This Standard focuses particularly on the requirements for the long-term storage of inactive records and records retained as Territory Archives. Inactive records are records that are no longer required for the day-to-day conduct of an agency's business.

The Standard covers all types of storage media (for example: paper, audiovisual material, microforms, and machine-readable formats such as magnetic tapes and optical discs), but excludes digital records residing on networks, hard drives, or portable devices, such as flash drives, MP3 players, smart phones and hand-held computers. Territory Records Office *Standard and Guideline No 6: Digital Records* cover the management and storage of these digital records.

Territory Records Office *Guideline No 7: Physical Storage of Records* covers more detailed aspects related to the siting, design and management of physical storage facilities, and records-related services that will be delivered from those facilities. The objectives of this standard for records storage are that:

- records are protected, secure and accessible for as long as they are required, for both official and public purposes;
- Territory Archives are stored in the best possible conditions; and
- records are stored cost-effectively.

## **BACKGROUND**

The following sections of the *Territory Records Act 2002* contain provisions which require the appropriate physical storage of active, inactive, temporary and archival records.

Section 15: “An agency must take the steps necessary to ensure that the information in its records continues to be accessible in accordance with the FOI Act and this Act.”

Section 16 (2): “The approved records management program must include arrangements ...

(c) for telling the director about any arrangements entered into with an entity that is not an agency to carry out any aspect of its records management ...

(h) for the proper care of records of the agency, particularly records of archival or enduring value...”

Section 22: Protecting records:

- “(1) An agency must ensure the safekeeping and proper preservation of its records.
- (2) An agency must ensure that its records that are in someone else’s possession are held under arrangements that provide for the safekeeping, proper preservation and return of the records.
- (3) If an agency does not have control of a record that it is entitled to control and the record is not held under arrangements mentioned in subsection (2), the agency must take reasonable steps to recover control of the record.”

Section 25: Records of agency that no longer exists etc.

Where the records of an (original) agency are transferred, given or passed to another agency, due to an agency or function being discontinued, or a function being transferred, then the receiving agency has full responsibility for those records, including their ongoing storage and access.

Principle 3 of the Territory Records Office *Standard for Records Management No 1 – Records Management Programs*, states that: “Records must be kept in an environment that protects them from alteration or unauthorised destruction and ensures their useability and accessibility over time”.

A number of standards and guidelines from other jurisdictions complement this Standard. These are listed below under References and Further Reading.

## **PRINCIPLES**

Seven principles define the high-level requirements to be met by agencies when determining and implementing physical storage arrangements for their records and controls for those records.

### **PRINCIPLE 1: RESPONSIBILITY**

All records created or managed by Government agencies are the property of the ACT Government and not of the individuals that generate them or of the external organisations which store them.

Territory records are the responsibility of the agency that currently has responsibility for that function. Following administrative change, responsibility for records moves to the agency that receives the function.

If any agency’s records are held with an outsourced storage facility, the agency remains the controlling agency and retains responsibility and accountability for

ensuring that the outsourced facility provides an appropriate level of storage and services.

Records storage arrangements are to be documented as part of the agency's Records Management Program, including any arrangements for records storage external to the agency. An agency's Records Management Program contains sufficient information to enable any record to be located, and to enable custodians to understand their roles and responsibilities.

A compliant agency can demonstrate that it has full responsibility and accountability for all of its records, regardless of their location.

## **PRINCIPLE 2: STORAGE CHOICES**

Storage choices are determined by an assessment of:

- business needs of the organisation;
- characteristics of the records (see Principle 3);
- appropriateness and condition of storage facilities and availability of services;
- cost; and
- risk.

A compliant agency can demonstrate that it has chosen storage options which are fit for purpose and appropriate for the types of records. It is acceptable to choose various options based on different criteria and level of risk.

## **PRINCIPLE 3: CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RECORDS**

The following characteristics of records affect the storage facility, services and the level of controls required:

- Physical form and composition;
- Volume and growth rate;
- Vital record status;
- Archival status;
- Security and sensitivity;
- Value; and
- Current and potential future use of the records.

Archival records are to remain in original form unless the relevant approved Records Disposal Schedule identifies that this type of record may be archived in other than its original form.

A compliant agency can demonstrate that it has reasonably met the requirements created by the characteristics of its records in determining the storage facilities, services and controls required.

## **PRINCIPLE 4: CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STORAGE FACILITY**

The building environment is to comprise the following characteristics:

- Free of potential external hazards;
- Appropriate location;
- A dedicated building or area within a building;
- Use of appropriate and low maintenance construction materials;
- Space for growth;
- Space for access;
- Security;
- Adequate floor loading;
- Adequate fire protection; and
- No windows or roof penetrations into the storage area.

The internal environment is to comprise the following characteristics:

- Appropriate temperature/humidity levels;
- Appropriate energy management;
- Environmental monitoring;
- Appropriate air quality;
- Appropriate lighting and minimisation of other sources of light and heat;
- Fire protection and safety facilities;
- Security;
- Dirt and vermin control;
- Appropriate power supply; and
- Meeting occupational health and safety provision for staff and visitors.

Shelving, record containers, handling and transport are to be appropriate for the characteristics of the records to be stored.

The life of the storage facility is to be considered, whether in-house or external.

The storage facility is to be covered by a business continuity plan or equivalent, a maintenance plan, an integrated pest management plan and an occupational health and safety plan.

For records stored in a dedicated storage building (whether agency-managed or external), a compliant agency can demonstrate that it has selected or uses a storage facility which meets essential characteristics of:

- the building and site environment
- the internal environmental conditions
- the materials, handling and transportation requirements appropriate to the types of records, and
- facility management planning

For records stored within an agency's office building, a compliant agency can demonstrate that it has implemented building and internal environmental conditions suitable for the types of records being stored. It also has sufficient materials, handling and facility management plans in place.

## **PRINCIPLE 5: CHARACTERISTICS OF SERVICES**

The type and level of services for records will affect storage choices. A primary requirement is the retrieval of stored records, which in turn depends on adequate identification and description of the records.

Retrieval services are to be appropriate to meet an agency's business needs and other responsibilities. The frequency of retrieval will affect the resources required, description and location controls, cost, delivery methods, and location of the storage facility.

Other services required may include:

- Boxing and listing services
- Reading area and copying services
- Destruction services
- Transport services

For records stored in a dedicated storage building (whether agency-managed or external) a compliant agency can demonstrate that it has considered what services are required in the selection of its storage option, and uses those to ensure effective retrieval and ongoing management of the records.

For records stored within an agency's office building, a compliant agency can demonstrate that it has established appropriate facilities and services for its needs.

## **PRINCIPLE 6: CONTROLS**

The following minimum controls are required for managing records in storage and records moved to and from storage:

- Item identification;
- Container listing;
- Security classification;
- Location identification;
- Access rights;
- Access logging;
- Tracking (borrowing, permanent retrievals, relocation, transport);
- Disposal action; and
- Reporting (movements, volumes, destructions, etc).

These controls are to be in place at the points of records transfer and record receipt, for example at the originating agency and at the storage facility.

A compliant agency can demonstrate that it has sufficient controls in place to identify and manage records in storage and records moving to or from storage. A compliant agency ensures that the controls used by an outsourced storage facility are appropriate for the security and business needs of the agency. A compliant agency also ensures that internal controls are documented, understood and implemented.

## **PRINCIPLE 7: ACCESSIBILITY**

Access to records in storage must be provided in accordance with Territory Records Office *Standard for Records Management No 4: Access*.

The storage arrangement must allow agencies to have access to their records, including access under the *Freedom of Information Act 1989* and the *Territory Records Act 2002*. Documentation and location controls must enable records to be quickly and easily identified, retrieved and presented, in response to requests by authorized personnel. Records must be presented clean and dust-free.

Active, vital and archival records and records yet to be sentenced are to be stored within 25 kilometres of the ACT border. Inactive records that have been properly sentenced as temporary may be stored further away.

Preservation and management methods must be in place to ensure that records can be accessed over time, in particular those designated as Territory Archives. This relies on following the principles relating to the storage facility, internal environment, handling and transportation. For digital records it also requires application of Principle 7 in the Territory Records Office *Standard for Records Management No 6: Digital Records*, whereby digital records must be attached to appropriate metadata, and must be self-documenting, self-contained and extensible.

A compliant agency can demonstrate that sufficient controls and techniques are in place to enable the agency to meet its records management responsibilities and accountabilities for provision of access.

## **DEFINITIONS**

### **Active records**

Records that are required for the day-to-day operation of an agency or function.

### **Agency**

The Executive, an ACT Court, the Legislative Assembly Secretariat, an administrative unit, a Board of Inquiry, a Judicial or Royal Commission, any other prescribed authority, or an entity declared under the regulations of the *Territory Records Act 2002* to be an agency.

### **Archival records**

See Territory Archives.

### **Archives**

See Territory Archives

### **Business continuity**

The uninterrupted availability of all key resources supporting essential business functions. In relation to records, business continuity is the uninterrupted availability of records in all formats, recordkeeping systems and data critical to the reconstitution of an agency's vital records.

### **Business continuity planning for records**

A process which seeks to enable business continuity, and contains procedures, information and resource identification that are ready to use in the event of an emergency or disaster affecting an agency's records, records management or recordkeeping systems. It is the process of preparing for, mitigating, responding to and recovering from a disaster.

### **Custody**

The responsibility for the care of records and archives, usually based on their physical possession. Custody does not necessarily include legal ownership.

### **Inactive records**

Records that are no longer required for the conduct of business and which may therefore be transferred to intermediate storage or archival custody, or be destroyed.

### **Outsourcing**

A contractual arrangement whereby services to or on behalf of an agency that would otherwise be carried out internally are provided by an external organisation. The outsourcing or controlling agency remains finally responsible for a function that has been outsourced.

### **Permanent records**

See Territory Archives.

### **Principal Officer**

The Chief Executive of an administrative unit, or its equivalent in other types of agencies.

## **Records**

Information created, received, and maintained as evidence and information by an organisation or person, in pursuance of legal obligations or in the transaction of business. This recorded information must be maintained or managed by the agency to provide evidence of their business activities. Records can be in written, electronic or any other form.

## **Records Disposal Schedule**

A document approved by the Director of Territory Records, which sets out the types of records an agency must make and how long they must be kept.

## **Records management**

The managing of the records of an agency to meet its operational needs and, if appropriate, to allow public access to the records consistent with the *Freedom of Information Act 1989* and for the benefit of future generations. Records management includes but is not limited to the creation, keeping, protection, preservation, storage and disposal of, and access to records of the agency.

## **Records Management Program (RMP)**

A document that complies with section 16 of the *Territory Records Act 2002* by setting out the means by which an agency will manage its records, and is approved by the agency's Principal Officer.

## **Records of an Agency**

Records in written, electronic or any other form, under the control of an agency or to which it is entitled to control, kept as a record of its activities, whether they were created or received by the agency.

## **Sentencing**

The process of applying appraisal decisions to individual records by determining the part of a Records Disposal Schedule which applies to the record and assigning a retention period consistent with that part.

## **Storage**

The function of storing records for future retrieval and use.

## **Storage facilities**

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

## **Temporary records**

Records that have value for a finite period of time.

## **Territory Archives**

Territory records preserved for the benefit of present and future generations.

## **Vital records**

Records without which an organisation could not continue to operate, that is, those containing information needed to re-establish the organisation in the event of a disaster. If destroyed, vital records must be recreated to resume essential business functions, which include the legal and accountability responsibilities of an agency and its customers.

## REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

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