

SESLHD PROCEDURE COVER SHEET



Health
South Eastern Sydney
Local Health District

NAME OF DOCUMENT	Records Management – Storage and Protection
TYPE OF DOCUMENT	Procedure
DOCUMENT NUMBER	SESLHDPR/218
DATE OF PUBLICATION	July 2025
RISK RATING	Low
LEVEL OF EVIDENCE	National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards: Standard 1 – Clinical Governance NSW Legislation – <i>State Records Act 1998</i> (NSW)
REVIEW DATE	July 2030
FORMER REFERENCE(S)	Former Illawarra Corporate Governance Procedure CGOV-20 Area PD025 – issued September 2005 Area P-CGOV-20 issued October 2004
EXECUTIVE SPONSOR	Head, Office of the Chief Executive as nominated Senior Responsible Officer for Corporate Records
AUTHOR	Jocelyn Bullard Executive Services Corporate Records Coordinator Jocelyn.bullard@health.nsw.gov.au
POSITION RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DOCUMENT	Head, Office of the Chief Executive
FUNCTIONAL GROUP(S)	Records Management – Corporate
KEY TERMS	Records Management; Storage
SUMMARY	Health Managers are to ensure the six principles for storage of records contained in State Records NSW Standard on the Physical Storage of State records are implemented in their area of responsibility and that, at a minimum, requirements included in the checklist at Appendix A of this procedure are achieved.

COMPLIANCE WITH THIS DOCUMENT IS MANDATORY

**This Procedure is intellectual property of South Eastern Sydney Local Health District.
Procedure content cannot be duplicated.**

Feedback about this document can be sent to SESLHD-Policy@health.nsw.gov.au

1. POLICY STATEMENT

Health Managers are to ensure the six principles for storage of records [State Records NSW Standard on the Physical Storage of State records](#) are implemented in their area of responsibility and that, at a minimum, requirements included in the checklist at Appendix A of this procedure are achieved. Implementation of these principles will ensure that:

- Records are stored in the most cost effective manner possible;
- Record storage facilities, shelving, containers and equipment comply with Occupational Health and Safety requirements and the [National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards](#).
- Records are protected, secure and accessible for as long as they are required to meet business and accountability needs, and
- Records of continuing value that will be transferred to Museums of History NSW and Records control and/or custody as State Archives are stored in the best possible conditions.

Note: This procedure does not cover the storage and handling requirements for officially classified materials, storage of records on network servers, in data centres, or in cloud; storage of records in active use.

2. BACKGROUND

This procedure sets out the minimum compliance requirements for the storage of records which have a physical format, including:

- Paper files and documents including maps, plans charts, drawings, photographic medical, audio cassettes, videos, CD and DVDs
- Active and semi active records in the custody of Local Health District or commercial storage providers, or outsourced records.
- Archives and inactive records.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

- Chief Executive has ultimate responsibility with delegated responsibility to Tier 2 Directors and General Managers to ensure the six principles of this procedure are implemented.
- Head, Office of the Chief Executive is SESLHD Senior Responsible Officer for records management.
- Director, Internal Audit may audit compliance with this procedure.
- SESLHD is required to formally notify State Records NSW if records are damaged or lost.

4. DEFINITIONS

Active records - Those records required for the day-to-day functioning of an agency or person, also referred to as current records.

Semi Active Records – Those records which are only accessed infrequently in the conduct of current business and are usually stored in a storage area of facility.

Inactive records - Those records no longer required for the conduct of business, and which may be transferred to intermediate storage, archival custody or destroyed.

Manual Handling - Any activity requiring the use of force exerted by a person to lift, lower, push, pull, carry or otherwise move, hold or restrain any animate or inanimate object.

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*, S.3 (1) Definitions)

Relative humidity - The ratio, expressed as a percentage, of the amount of water vapour present in the atmosphere to the amount required to saturate it at the same temperature. Relative humidity varies with temperature.

Retention period - The period of time, usually based on an estimate of the frequency of current and future use, and taking into account statutory provisions, that records need to be retained before their final disposal.

Semi active records - Those records that are required so infrequently in the conduct of current business that they can be transferred from offices to separate storage areas.

State Archives – State archive means a State record that Museums of History NSW has control of under *State Records Act*, (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, equipment, or system that houses records, including commercial storage facilities, in-house storage facilities and archival storage facilities.

5. PROCEDURE

Introduction

The owner / department of the records should identify the likely retention periods of records at or before their creation. This will allow the creation of records on suitable media, and to store the media in environmental conditions suitable for that format and for the retention period of the records. It will also enable timely and cost efficient culling and destruction of records in line with relevant disposal schedules.

Departments may store records that they need “on hand” in their work area. All files that are not immediately required, but are current, should be stored appropriately in dedicated secondary storage or offsite, to avoid inefficient use of office space, and to ensure optimal conditions for archival preservation.

5.1 Six Principles of Document Storage

There are six (6) principles that should be taken into account when storing records

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

Records are stored only in authorised areas and facilities that are not located near known natural or man-made hazards. Decisions on where records should be stored should involve risk assessment of the records storage areas and facilities against [State Records NSW Standard on the Physical Storage of State Records](#) and be authorised by the Senior Responsible Officer, Tier 2 Director or General Manager.

5.1.2 Principle 2 - Environmental controls

Records should be stored in environmental conditions that are appropriate to their format and retention period and integrated pest management controls are implemented to ensure that records are not damaged by pest activity.

Records that require long term retention (30 years or more) or are required as State Archives should be stored in the best possible environmental conditions from the time of creation. Records identified as State Archives should be transferred to the Museums of History NSW as soon as practicable.

Temperature and relative humidity should be monitored. Requirements for records storage areas:

- within a range of 15° to 25° Celsius and 40% to 60% relative humidity
- direct sunlight should not enter the records storage area
- air must circulate freely and there should be intake of fresh air
- computer disks and tapes should be protected from magnetic fields.

Short term record – semi-active records (i.e. no longer required for current business) that have minimum retention periods of 30 years or less and can be disposed of, should be stored according to the requirements in [Table A](#).

Long terms records – semi-active records that have a minimum retention period of 30 years or longer, or have been identified as State archives and are awaiting transfer to Museums of History, should be stored according to the requirements in [Table B](#).

State Records NSW must be notified if physical records are damaged, impaired, or destroyed due to floor, fire or disaster or have been deemed officially lost. The notification should be made as soon as practically possible after the event has occurred.

5.1.3 Principle 3 - Shelving and Packaging

Using appropriate shelving, equipment and containers ensures that records are secure, accessible and protected from deterioration.

Shelving, racking, cabinets, other storage devices and handling equipment should be suitable for the type of record stored, clean, in good state of repair, and strong enough to carry potential loads. Shelving should be raised off the floor by 85-150mm as a disaster precaution, and lockable if it is to hold sensitive records. The floor of the building must be capable of holding the weight of fully loaded shelving and racking. Containers used for records should be appropriate to the record format and retention, in good condition and the correct size for the records they contain.

Long-term records should be stored in archival or permanent acid-free file covers, folders and envelopes and acid free boxes.

Records storage facilities, shelving, containers and equipment should comply with Work Health and Safety requirements, including provision of sufficient working space and elimination of risks from manual handling.

5.1.4 Principle 4 – Regular Maintenance and monitoring

Programs for the maintenance and regular inspections of records and storage areas should be implemented to ensure ongoing safety, security and stability of storage areas and any new risks are identified and mitigated.

Programs may involve checking and treating factors such as:

- environmental conditions including light and pollution levels, temperature and humidity
- building surrounds and fabric
- physical security of buildings and storage areas
- electrical equipment and pipes, and structures like shelving
- cleanliness of storage areas
- fire detection mechanisms
- presence of mould or pest infestation

Appropriate conservation action is undertaken as required and repairs to records do not damage the records further.

5.1.5 Principle 5 – Identification and control

Records are controlled so that they can be identified, located and retrieved. Mechanisms for improving accessibility should be balanced with the need to safeguard records against unauthorised access or theft.

Handling Records

Only authorised users should be able to access and retrieve records. Individual record items and containers of records should be registered in the approved recordkeeping system (Content Manager) to enable tracking the movement and location of records.

The retrieval of records from storage areas or facilities should be subject to controls in order to prevent damage or deterioration and adequate steps must be taken to promote the correct handling and use of records to minimise damage and ensure their

preservation for as long as they are required. See [State Records NSW Handle with Care guidelines](#)

Where staff are involved in storage operations and in the moving of records, it is appropriate that they receive manual handling training or instruction.

If records are transferred to the custody of another organisation for short periods of time (for example, court) the organisations should inform the temporary custodian of their responsibilities for records protection and security.

Records of long-term or archival value need to be handled with great care to ensure that they survive for as long as they are needed, and arrangements should be made for the transfer of records required as State archives.

If long term records or records required as State archives are to be digitised, then record owners / departments should contact District Executive Services Records management team SESLHD-Mail@health.nsw.gov.au to confirm the digitisation process to be undertaken.

5.1.6 Principle 6 – Security and protection from theft, misuse, unauthorised access or modification

Security measures, including entry controls, should be applied to records storage areas and facilities, including when records are stored by service providers to prevent intruders. Serious breaches should be reported to General Manager, Tier 2 Director, Senior Responsible Officer and Chief Executive and rectification action is taken where appropriate.

Records should be classified according to their value, legal requirements, sensitivity and criticality to SESLHD. Refer to [NSW Government's Information Classification, labelling and Handling Guidelines](#).

These classifications will influence security requirements for records and determine how they should be managed, accessed and stored. Records identified as containing critical, sensitive or in-confidence material should be handled, stored and protected according to these security classifications. For example, instituting a clean desk policy which requires all such records and loose documents to be stored in a lockable cupboard at the end of each work day.

Records in transit should be appropriately handled, secured and protected to prevent unauthorised access or theft.

5.2 Annual Compliance Audit

The Department Manager should ensure that an annual compliance audit is conducted and take corrective action to rectify any areas of non-compliance. **Appendix A – Compliance Checklist**

The Manager is responsible for ensuring that recommendations from the Compliance audit are retained for 6 years after completion of actions as per GA 28 (12.4.1) Administrative Records.

SESLHD PROCEDURE

Records Management – Storage and Protection

SESLHDPR/218

6. REFERENCES

6.1 External

- [National Safety and Quality Health Service Standard – Standard 1 – Clinical Governance](#)
- [State Records Act 1998 \(NSW\)](#)
- [State Records NSW General Disposal Authorities](#)
- [NSW Health Corporate Governance and Accountability Compendium Section 4.1.5 State Records Act](#)
- [NSW Health Policy Directive PD2012_069 - Health Care Records - Documentation and Management](#)
- [State Records NSW Standard on the physical storage of State records No. 14](#)
- [NSW Government's Information Classification, labelling and Handling Guidelines](#)

6.2 Internal

- [SESLHDPD/196 – Records Management](#)
- [SESLHDPD/192 – Health Records \(Paper Based\) Disaster Management](#)
- [SESLHDPR/219 – Records Management - Disaster Management](#)

7. VERSION AND APPROVAL HISTORY

Date	Version	Version and approval notes
October 2002	0	Geraldine Silveri and approved by the Area Finance and Administration Committee
October 2004	1	Re-formatted with minor changes approved by Area Records Officer and re-issued by Systems Integration & Improvement Manager
September 2005	2	Minor changes made by Records Manager, Executive Support Unit following feedback from consultation with stakeholders. Approved by the Area Executive Committee 27 Sept 2005
February 2011	3	Minor changes made by CHN Clinical Information and Admin Services Manager in conjunction and consultation with the Area Corporate Records Committee
September 2012	4	Rebadged into LHD template
October 2012	5	Approved by District Executive Team
November 2012	6	Minor changes made by Manager Executive Services in consultation with Chief Executive.
November 2012	7	Minor change. Appendix A with link to State Records site added
July 2016	8	Minor changes by Records Coordinator to align with revised NSW State Records Standard on the Physical Storage of Records Addition Appendix A – Compliance checklist
July 2016	8	Updates endorsed by Executive Sponsor

Date	Version	Version and approval notes
May 2020	9	Review undertaken - minor changes made by Records Coordinator, District Executive Services.
May 2020	9	Minor review – updated hyperlinks Endorsed by Executive Sponsor Processed by Executive Services prior to publishing.
18 December 2023	9.1	Minor review - change of Senior Responsible Officer to Director, Digital Health (CIO) and update broken hyperlinks.
1 July 2025	10.0	Major review – change of Senior Responsible officer Changes to align with State Records NSW. Updated standard on the Physical storage of State records – Standard No. 14 Issued 14/02/2025. Approved at SESLHD Executive Meeting.

Appendix A – Consolidated list of compliance requirements

Principle 1: Records are stored in appropriate storage areas and facilities and located away from known and unacceptable risk			
		YES	NO
1.1	The location of each records storage area and facility has been subject to risk assessment to identify and mitigate possible risks to records.		
1.2	The Senior Responsible Officer or delegated representative has approved all records storage areas and facilities		
1.3	The storage facilities have been assessed as being suitable for the storage of records.		
1.4	Storage areas and facilities are weatherproof and have good drainage.		
1.5	Storage areas and facilities are primarily used for records or records / library materials storage and are not used to store hazardous materials and do not pose a risk to records.		
1.6	Storage areas and facilities have appropriate and comprehensive fire detection and protection systems and equipment.		
1.7	Each storage area and facility has a current disaster reaction and recovery plan which is regularly revised and equipment / supplies to assist in the recovery of records after a disaster.		
1.8	Insurance for the recovery and restoration of records in the event of a disaster.		
1.9	State Records NSW is notified if physical records are damaged, impaired, or destroyed due to flood, fire or disaster, or have been deemed officially lost by the public office. This official notification should be made as soon as practically possible after the event has occurred.		
Principle 2: Records are stored in environmental conditions appropriate to their format and retention period.			
		YES	NO
2.1	Short term records (semi-active records retained for up to 30 years) are stored in conditions which ensure preservation until they are no longer required. Refer Table A		
2.2	Medium term records (to be retained for 10-30 years) are stored in conditions which ensure preservation until they are no longer required		
2.3	Long term records (semi-active records to be retained for 30 years or longer and those required as State archives) are stored in conditions which will ensure their preservation. Refer Table B		

Records Management – Storage and Protection

SESLHDPR/218

2.4	Temperature and humidity levels within storage areas and facilities are monitored for stability and action taken to minimise any significant fluctuations.		
2.5	Records are stored away from direct light, including sunlight.		
2.6	The air in records storage areas circulates freely and there is an intake of fresh air		
2.7	Magnetic media is protected from magnetic fields		
2.8	Records storage areas and facilities have an integrated pest management system.		
Principle 3: Shelving, equipment and containers used for storing records are secure, accessible and protected from deterioration			
		YES	NO
3.1	Shelving and handling equipment is clean, in good condition and appropriate to the format and security requirements of the records.		
3.2	Containers are clean, in good condition, and appropriate for the format, retention and security requirements of the records they hold.		
3.3	Records storage facilities, shelving, equipment, and containers meet workplace health and safety requirements.		
Principle 4: A regular maintenance and monitoring program for records storage areas has been implemented.			
		YES	NO
4.1	Records storage areas and facilities are clean and maintained.		
4.2	Regular checks of records and containers in the storage facility to identify any signs of pest infestation, mould, or other deterioration.		
4.3	Mould or pest infestation is treated promptly and appropriately.		
4.4	Appropriate conservation action is undertaken as required but repairs to records do not damage the records further.		
Principle 5: Records are controlled in a system so that they can be identified, located and retrieved.			
		YES	NO
5.1	Records are controlled in a system which allows them to be identified, located, retrieved, and returned to storage after use.		
5.2	Policies and procedures are implemented for the appropriate handling and use of records, including those records that are long term or required as State archives.		
5.3	Policies and procedures are implemented to ensure that records of long term value and archives are handled with care.		
5.4	If a public office chooses to convert or digitise records, then records are converted or digitised according to recognised standards.		

Principle 6: Records are protected against theft, misuse, unauthorised access or modification.			
		YES	NO
6.1	Storage areas and facilities are secure, access controlled, restricted to authorised staff, intruder resistant, and monitored.		
6.2	Security classified records are stored in appropriate containers and storage zones within the storage area.		
6.3	Records in transit are protected.		