

Records Management Policy

“The records management program should be supported by corporate policy” – Standard on Records Management Programs. S2.

POLICY

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INTRODUCTION

Under state records legislation (State Records Act 1998) public offices such as Holroyd City Council are required to establish and maintain a records management program in conformity with standards and codes of best practice approved by the State Records Authority.

The Australian Standard AS 4390-1996 (redesignated AS ISO 15489) has been adopted as a code of best practice for the NSW Public Sector.

The new policies are applicable to all records media in both physical and electronic formats and require Council to document business transactions fully and accurately in compliant recordkeeping systems.

Holroyd City Council has selected TRIM records management software as the corporate records management system.

The records management policy provides the framework for the Council to effectively fulfil its obligations and statutory requirements under the new legislation and other Government directives.

The policy will enhance effective information management and retrieval in Council and highlights the responsibilities and accountabilities of staff in complying with the Act.

The establishment of an effective and efficient recordkeeping environment ensures standardisation, protection and retrieval of information improving levels of quality customer service.

AUTHORITY OF THIS POLICY

This policy is issued under the authority of the General Manager and will be reviewed and amended as required in consultation with Directors, Managers and Staff of Council.

Ownership of this policy rests with the Director, Corporate and Financial Services and responsibility for its implementation rests with the Corporate Records Manager.

PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to establish a framework for the implementation of a records management program.

Holroyd City Council is committed to maintaining a records management program that meets its business needs and accountability requirements, whilst ensuring records of continuing value form part of the States cultural heritage.

This policy applies to all Council business, including electronic business.

It concerns records, which are created, collected, processed, used, sentenced, stored and disposed of in the conduct of official business.

Electronic messages (E-mail) which are relevant to the information gathering, policy formulation or decision making processes of Council are part of the scope of this policy. (See separate ***E-mail Guidelines & Communication Devices Policy***)

Electronic messages, which document business activity, should be printed, registered and placed on Council files until electronic records management procedures and practices are developed and implemented.

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Not all electronic messages are relevant to information gathering therefore they do not require downloading or printing, these are of short-term value or personal messages.

All procedures and records management systems are to be consistent with this policy.

AUTHORITY OF THE CORPORATE RECORDS MANAGER

Responsibility for Council's records management program is assigned to the **Corporate Records Manager**.

The role of the Corporate Records Manager is to provide a strategic focus for recordkeeping throughout Council and is responsible for: -

- Establishing records management policies for the organisation as a whole.
- Establishing corporate standards for recordkeeping and records management.
- Measuring performance of departments and sections against these standards.
- Providing consulting services to Council staff.
- Developing corporate electronic records management strategies.
- Working with other managers of information resources to develop coherent information architecture across the organisation.
- Working with other accountability stakeholders, including the Manager Corporate Review, FOI officer and executive management, to ensure recordkeeping systems support organisational and public accountability.

PURPOSE OF THE RECORDS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Records Services Corporate Objective -

To ensure that the management of Councils information resources and records management program provide timely and comprehensive information to meet operational business needs, accountability requirements and community expectations.

To ensure the preservation of Council's 'corporate memory' through sound recordkeeping practices and the accurate capture of information to meet legal, evidential and accountability requirements.

Records management is the discipline and organisational function of managing records to meet operational business needs, accountability requirements and community expectations.

The records management program is viewed as an important management issue, equivalent in importance to the management of other activities within Council; it is part of the totality of 'information management'.

Records management proceeds from the assumption that information is a resource which must be managed if it is to be used effectively, good records management is of key importance to good management.

Holroyd City Council operates in an accountable and community orientated environment, Council is committed to maintaining a records management program that meets its business needs and accountability requirements.

Records are a vital ingredient in the support of Council's ongoing business activities.

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The effective management and preservation of Council's corporate memory is intrinsic to both the decision making process and productivity within Council.

As a public agency Council is bound by the requirements and regulations of the State Records Act 1998, these regulations set out specific practices, which Council must comply with, and be audited against.

Council is committed to meeting all statutory and accountability requirements.

There are certain community expectations and cultural obligations associated with recordkeeping practices, Council is committed to managing its records of continuing value and their timely transfer to State Archives.

RESPONSIBILITIES AND ACCOUNTABILITIES

This policy applies to all Holroyd City Council employees.

The State Records Act 1998 requires Council to make and keep full and accurate records as evidence of business activities. Council is required to implement a records management program based on legislation, standards and codes of best practice.

Council is responsible for the protection, safe custody and return of All State records under its control, ensuring accessibility to all equipment or technology dependant records.

General Manager

Under the State Records Act (Part 2 -10) the General Manager is responsible for ensuring that Holroyd City Council complies with the regulations and requirements of the act.

Corporate Records Manager

The Corporate Records Manager is the Manager of Administrative Services.

The Corporate Records Manager has the responsibility and authority to set and issue corporate standards, and to monitor and audit compliance with these standards throughout Council.

Council Staff

As public sector employees, all Council staff needs to be aware of recordkeeping requirements that affect the performance of their duties.

The State Records Act 1998 requires public officials to 'make and keep full and accurate records' of their business activities.

The NSW Public Sector Code of Conduct' requires public officials 'maintain adequate documentation to support any decision made' in the performance of their duties.

The Ombudsman's Good Conduct and Administrative Practice Guidelines for Public Authorities states that public officials must make and create records to support accountability and corporate memory.

Council staff have a number of basic obligations regarding records: -

- Make records to support the conduct of their business activities
- Create records that would not otherwise be created

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- Register records into paper or electronic recordkeeping systems
- Learn how and where records are kept within Council
- Do not destroy Council records without authority from the Records Coordinator
- Do not lose records
- Be aware of records management procedures

Records Section

The Records Coordinator is operationally responsible for the efficient management of Council records (physical and electronic) incorporating sound recordkeeping principles and records management best practice guidelines.

The Records section of Holroyd City Council is responsible for the effective management and system administration of Councils primary Recordkeeping system – TRIM for Windows.

The Records section will assist staff in fulfilling their recordkeeping responsibilities and provide advice and training throughout the implementation of this policy and strategies.

Records staff will monitor and review the implementation process of all records management policies and programs.

MONITOR / PLAN THE RECORDS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Regular monitoring of the records management program is undertaken by the Corporate Records Manager, with results being reported to the Director Corporate and Financial Services.

Council will complete and forward the annual ‘**Records Management Survey**’ conducted by the State Records Authority of NSW as part of the monitoring and reporting arrangements of the State Records Act 1998.

Regular planning for the records management program will be undertaken through specific strategic and operational plans, which will be reviewed on a regular basis.

VALUE OF RECORDS AS A CORPORATE ASSET

The records of council are an exceptionally important information resource, they are a unique and vital asset, and often they cannot be easily reconstructed or replaced.

They show valuable precedents and courses of action, without the knowledge of which Council cannot function.

They exist for a variety of administrative, functional, historical and legal reasons.

Their existence protects Council’s interests, and the interests of the community Council serve.

Records are the major component of the Council’s corporate memory, they provide evidence of actions and decisions and document Councils transactions.

Records support policy formulation and managerial decision making and help deliver Council services in a consistent and equitable manner.

Council creates records as evidence of business activity; they support efficiency and productivity and enable staff to meet their legislative and administrative responsibilities.

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As part of the NSW public sector, records created by Council also form part of the State's records, that is records '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)

LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR RECORDKEEPING

Council's records management and recordkeeping practices comply with relevant Acts and Regulations and standards relating to records management.

Legislation Includes: -

State Records Act 1998 (NSW)

Standard on Full and Accurate Records

Standard on Records Management Programs

Standard on the Physical Storage of State Records

Standard on Recordkeeping in the Electronic Business Environment

Standard on Counter Disaster Strategies for Records / Recordkeeping System

Policy on Electronic Messages as Records and Recordkeeping

Local Government Records General Disposal Authority (GDA 10)

Australian Standard AS 4390-1996 (AS ISO 15489) Records Management

Banking Act

Companion Animal Legislation

Corporations Law 1989

Environment Protection Act

Environmental Planning & Assessment Act

Evidence Act 1995 (NSW)

Financial Institutions Duty Act 1982

Freedom of Information Act 1989 (NSW)

Fringe Benefits & Income Tax Assessment Act

Insurance Act

Local Government Act 1993

Occupational Health & Safety Act 1983 and regulations

Payroll Tax Act

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Pesticides Amendment (Records) Regulation 2002 (pt of Pesticides Act 1999)

Privacy Act 1988

Privacy & Personal Information Act 1998

Protected Disclosures Act 1994 (NSW)

Public Finance & Audit Act 1983 and Treasury Directions

Public Health Act & Regulations

Public Sector Management Act 1988

Roads Act & General Regulation

Roads & Traffic Act

Sales Tax Assessment Act

State Emergency & Rescue Management Act

Statute of Limitations Act 1969 (NSW)

Swimming Pools Act

Trade Practices Act 1974

Workers Compensation Act (Register Injuries & Employees Records)

OBLIGATIONS OF RECORDS USERS

Staff members shall not alienate, relinquish control over, or destroy records of Council without authorisation to do so.

Staff members shall ensure that records in any format, including electronic documents and electronic messages are captured into the Councils recordkeeping systems.

Staff members are required to follow authorised procedures in carrying out records management functions.

Staff members are required to handle records with care and respect in a sensible manner, to avoid damaging records with a view to prolonging their life span.

Staff should not eat, drink or smoke near records or in records storage areas.

POLICY RELATING TO RECORDS MGT FUNCTIONS

File Creation – (Classification)

Files are classified by records staff within the TRIM recordkeeping system by utilising a classification (record) plan.

The record plan is based on consistent naming conventions, which are automatically allocated to the file title at the time of creation depending on the category of file chosen.

Files are created under Property, Subject, Risk (Insurance), Park, and Personal / Position categories.

Legal documents also utilise a classification (record) plan.

Eg. A file dealing with Aboriginal land rights would be classified as: -

Community Services (05) – Aboriginal Issues (06) – Land Rights and the full file reference would be HC-05-06-1

The subject file classification scheme enables records to be consistently named and numbered over time.

The Subject ‘Keyword Classification Index’ was formulated in agreement with the relevant Council Managers of the various functional ‘Keywords’ who approved the terminology in the Classification plan.

Classification allows the allocation of security and disposal authorities (GDA 10) at the time of creation and assists users and records staff to retrieve information relevant to functional activities.

Refer also to Publication - ‘*File and Document Categories*’

Document Registration

Inwards correspondence (letters, faxes, E-mail) is registered into the TRIM recordkeeping system after initial appraisal by records staff based on legal, evidential and accountability requirements.

A unique identifier eg. ID04/201 is assigned to each record and a date and time stamp affixed to all correspondence. Metadata is captured at the point of registration with details such as precis of contents, author, date created and date registered, associated Council file reference, location the document will be sent to and registrars details etc.

This registration process provides evidence that a record has been created in the TRIM recordkeeping system and enables the tracking of the document throughout Council.

Refer also to Publication - ‘*Workflow Procedures*’

Tracking

Records staff conduct regular scans of registered bar coded files throughout the Council chambers and depot areas.

This process enables retrieval of a record when required for correspondence attachment and ensures that the current location of a file can be quickly verified.

Scans are also conducted on a periodical basis of files stored in the active and inactive file storage areas.

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Document (action) tracking can be utilised through the 'workflow' function of TRIM where outstanding actions are monitored over a given time period and a viable audit trail of recordkeeping transactions are provided.

Council staff are required to notify the records section of file movements where the record is not sent via the records section, alternately staff can update the current location of a record using the TRIM recordkeeping system.

Appraisal and Disposal of Records

Records staff appraise records on receipt in accordance with business activities, evidential and legal requirements. Upon determination to capture a record into the TRIM recordkeeping system the document passes through registration, indexing, tracking and eventual sentencing and disposal / archival phases.

Council records must be protected, maintained, findable and useable for their total retention period as outlined by GDA 10 and must be disposed of in accordance with the State Records Act 1998 and Council's disposal procedures.

Files are generally retained in the 'active' file storage area for a period of two years, at the end of this period files are transferred to the 'semi-active' file storage area for a further time period dependent on the individual file classification.

The record is then sentenced and destroyed / archived in accordance with the Local Government Records General Disposal Authority (GDA 10) and concurrence of the relevant manager and Records Coordinator; the Government Records Repository carries out destruction if required.

If files have been classified as State Archives they are transferred to the State Records Authority in accordance with relevant guidelines eg. open or closed access provisions.

Records Security

The security of all Council records is crucial as records provide evidence of business transactions, support management decisions and ensure public accountability requirements are met.

Records in all formats should be stored securely to prevent unauthorised access, destruction, alteration or removal

Council staff are responsible for the safe custody of all files and documents that are marked to them, sensitive or confidential information should be placed in a secure storage area when not in use.

When the action has been completed the file / documents should be returned to the records section for storage.

File storage units should be locked overnight wherever possible to prevent unauthorised access; this reduces the possibility of damage by water or fire in the event of a disaster.

Council's records management system TRIM has a sophisticated multi-level security facility which can be applied to individual files / documents or a whole file series.

In association with security levels based on an individuals log in and organisational status within Council, individual 'caveats' are placed on files which control access to certain types of files such as personal files, 'in confidence', financial, legal, insurance.

Council records are not to be stored at home or left in cars unattended as they could be lost or damaged.

Vital records should be stored in protective or fire resistant conditions with suitable access conditions; confidential records should be stored in locked storage cabinets.

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File Census

Records staff will periodically conduct a file census verifying that files are physically located at the current location recorded by TRIM records management software.

Council staff are to return files / documents to the records section as soon as action on the files / documents is completed.

GLOSSARY

Accountability

The principle that individuals, organisations and the community are required to account to others for their actions.

Organisations and their employees must be able to account to appropriate regulatory authorities, to shareholders or members, and to the public to meet statutory obligations, audit requirements, relevant standards and codes of practice, and community expectations.

Active Records

Records in frequent use required for current business.

These records are usually stored in office space and equipment close to hand.

Administrative Records

These records include all aspects of the Organisation's internal administration, including budget and finance matters, general correspondence, staff matters, Ministerial and Parliamentary papers, accommodation and management information systems, and the Organisation's own agendas, minutes and business papers.

Appraisal

The process of evaluating business activities to determine which records need to be captured and how long the records need to be kept, to meet business needs, the requirements of organisational accountability and community expectations.

Archive

The whole body of records of continuing value of an organisation or individual.

Sometimes called 'corporate memory'.

Archives

Those records that are appraised as having continuing value.

Business Activity

Umbrella term covering all the functions, processes, activities and transactions of an organisation and its employees. (AS 4390 Part 1 – Clause 4.6)

To support the continuing conduct of business, comply with the regulatory environment and provide necessary accountability, organisations should create and maintain authentic, reliable and useable records and protect the integrity of those records for as long as required. – (AS ISO 15489 def 7.1 page 6 Part 1: General)

Records that document business activity are vital for supporting informed decision making, corporate memory and ensuring accountability.

E-mail containing evidence of business transactions such as: -

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- A directive or approval for a particular course of action
- Formal communications between internal officers or external agencies
- Final versions of reports
- Policy documents and Statements
- Formal minutes of Council Committees

Which are not captured in any other form eg. hard copy format or faxes should be captured into the TRIM recordkeeping system.

This material is distinct from: -

- Information only messages
- Duplicates or working copies / memos
- Private messages or personal comments between officers

Which would not provide evidence or be required for accountability purposes.

Classification

The process of devising and applying schemes based on the business activities which generate records, whereby they are categorised in systematic and consistent ways to facilitate the capture, retrieval, maintenance and disposal.

Classification includes determining document or file naming conventions, user permission and security restrictions on records.

Disposal

A range of processes associated with implementing appraisal decisions.

These include the retention, deletion or destruction of records in or from recordkeeping systems.

They may also include the migration or transmission of records between recordkeeping systems, and the transfer of custody or ownership of records.

Documents

Structured units of recorded information, published or unpublished, in hard copy or electronic form, and managed as discrete units in information systems.

Electronic Mail – (E-mail)

E-mail is a computer-based message sent over a communications network to one or more recipients. It may be transmitted with attachments such as electronic files containing text, graphics, images, digitised voice and video or computer programs.

Electronic Messaging

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Electronic Messaging is a generic term encompassing all forms of electronically mediated communication.

This includes electronic mail for text messages, voice mail, electronic document exchange (Electronic FAX), electronic data interchange (EDI), and multi media communications such as tele / video conferencing and videotext.

It involves the electronic transmission of information as discrete electronic messages over computer-based data communication network or voice messages over a telephone network.

Evidence

Information that tends to prove a fact. Not limited to the legal sense of the term.

File

Files are a collection of documents on a specific subject, located within a file cover, which show organisational activities through an identifiable sequence of transactions.

Documents are arranged in chronological order, ie the most recent document is placed on top.

File Census

A report generated by the records management software package on a weekly, monthly or yearly basis detailing the current location of files, and this is verified by physically checking that files are at that location.

Functional Records

Records relating to the functional activities of the Organisation.

Inactive Records

Records that are no longer required for use by the organisation in the conduct of its activities and functions.

Recordkeeping

Making and maintaining complete, accurate and reliable evidence of business transactions in the form of recorded information.

Recordkeeping Systems

Information systems, which capture, maintain and provide access to records over time.

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.

Records

Recorded information, in any form, including data in computer systems, created or received and maintained by an organisation or person in the transaction of business or the conduct of affairs and kept as evidence of such activity.

Records Disposal Authority

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A systematic functional listing of records created by an organisation which plans the life of those records from their creation to their disposal.

Records Management

The discipline and organisational function of managing records to meet operational business needs, accountability requirements and community expectations.

Registration

The act of giving a record a unique identity in a recordkeeping system.

Semi-active Records

Records that are no longer frequently used by the organisation in the conduct of its activities and functions (ie once or twice a year)

State Record

Means 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, whether before or after the commencement of this act.

Storage

The function of storing records for future retrieval and use.

Tracking

Capturing and maintaining information about the movement and uses of records.

Transaction

The smallest unit of business activity, uses of records are themselves transactions.

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Standard on Records Management Programs – Timetable

The Records Management Program shall be: -

Principle 1	IDENTIFIABLE	From	1 January 2001
Principle 2	SUPPORTED by POLICY	From	1 January 2001
Principle 3	PLANNED	From	1 January 2001
Principle 4	ASSIGNED	From	1 January 2000

The requirement is to have assigned formal responsibility for the RMP to an appropriate senior management delegate, operational RM responsibilities are formally assigned at appropriate levels, recordkeeping responsibilities of employees documented and communicated to all staff.

Principle 5	LOCATED	From	1 January 2000
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The requirement is to have appropriately located the RMP in the organisational structure to support the key program objectives and to enable it to perform an organisation wide function effectively, identified relationships with other key information management stakeholders in the organisation.

Principle 6	ORGANISED	From	1 January 2001
Principle 7	STAFFED with SKILLED PEOPLE	from	1 January 2002
Principle 8	IMPLEMENTED	From	1 January 2002
Principle 9	MEASURED	From	1 January 2001

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Standard on Full and Accurate Records – Timetable

Principle 1 Recordkeeping should be **COMPLIANT** From 1 January 2000

The requirement is that Council is aware of its accountability requirements and how these requirements affect recordkeeping. It's expected that employees will know how they are affected.

Principle 2 Recordkeeping should be **RELIABLE** From 1 January 2001

Principle 3 Recordkeeping should be **SYSTEMATIC** From 1 January 2001

Principle 4 Recordkeeping should be **MANAGED** From 1 January 2000

The requirement is that recordkeeping systems must have accurately documented policies, assigned responsibilities and formal methodologies.

Principle 5 Recordkeeping should be **ROUTINE** From 1 January 2002

Principle 6 Recordkeeping should be **MADE** From 1 January 2001

Principle 7 Recordkeeping should be **RETAINED** From 1 January 2000

The requirement is that records are being retained for as long as they are needed and that disposal practices for all record formats should be accountable and in accordance with relevant schedules.

Principle 8 Recordkeeping should be **COMPLETE** From 1 January 2002

Principle 9 Recordkeeping should be **COMPREHENSIVE** 1 January 2002

Principle 10 Recordkeeping should be **ADEQUATE** From 1 January 2000

The requirement is that systems procedures and practices are appropriate to give assurance that Council will identify and document what constitutes evidence.

Principle 11 Recordkeeping should be **ACCURATE** From 1 January 2000

Requires that procedures and practices will give assurance that records will correctly reflect what has occurred.

Principle 12 Recordkeeping should be **AUTHENTIC** From 1 January 2002

Principle 13 Recordkeeping should be **USEABLE** From 1 January 2001

Principle 14 Recordkeeping should be **INVIOLATE** From 1 January 2000

Requires that facilities, materials and methods employed will promote the survival of records for as long as they are needed.

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Standard on The Physical Storage of State Records – Timetable

Principle 1	LOCATION	From	1 January 2001
Principle 2	ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL		
	(Min Compliance requirements: 3 - 6)	From	1 January 2003
	(Min Compliance requirements: 1 - 2)	From	1 January 2006
Principle 3	SHELVING AND PACKAGING	From	1 January 2002
Principle 4	PROTECTION FROM DISASTER	From	1 January 2003
Principle 5	MAINTENANCE AND MONITORING	From	1 January 2003
Principle 6	HANDLING	From	1 January 2001
Principle 7	ACCESSIBILITY	From	1 January 2002

Standard on Recordkeeping in the Electronic Business Environment

Principle 1 – Electronic Mail

Minimum Compliance Requirements:-

- Internal Policies on the management of electronic mail reflect Government-wide policy as enunciated in the *Policy on Electronic Messages as Records*.
- Systems and procedures are in place, and operating routinely, for capturing and managing electronic mail as records of the public office.

Principle 2 – Acquisition of Information Systems

Minimum Compliance Requirements:-

- Requirements for evidence of business to be conducted electronically using new information systems, including systems for electronic service delivery, are identified and documented.
- These requirements are documented as part of the functional requirements for the proposed systems.
- The systems as implemented can be demonstrated to satisfy these requirements.

**STANDARD ON COUNTER DISASTER STRATEGIES
FOR RECORDS AND RECORDKEEPING SYSTEMS**

Principle 1 – Risk Assessment

Minimum Compliance Requirements: -

- A risk assessment of potential disaster events identifying threats to records and recordkeeping systems has been performed and documented. The assessments are documented within the ‘Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity Plan’ and ‘Vital Records Protection Plan’.

Principle 2 – Planning

Minimum Compliance Requirements: -

- A counter disaster plan for records and recordkeeping systems has been developed and documented within the ‘Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity Plan’.

Disaster recovery procedures are documented within the ‘Vital Records Protection Plan’.

- Council’s ‘Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity Plan’ documents the testing of certain aspects of the plan (eg IT recovery etc) and the annual review of the plan to reflect organisational and technological changes.

Principle 3 – Vital Records Protection

Minimum Compliance Requirements: -

- Council’s vital records are identified and documented in the ‘Vital Records Protection Plan’.
- Vital records protection including recovery and restoration procedures are incorporated in Council’s ‘Disaster Recovery & Business Continuity Plan’ and described in detail in the ‘Vital Records Protection Plan’.
- Preventative measures for protecting vital records are documented and implemented within the ‘Vital Records Protection Plan’.

Protective measures include: -

Smoke and heat detectors, zoned sprinkler systems, fire hose reels and extinguishers, fire rated doors and vault, locked storage cabinets and security fittings eg. barred windows, alarms and patrols.

This Policy/Code was adopted in July 2000 and revised March 2004