

WATERBERG DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY



on the Go for Growth

RECORDS MANAGEMENT POLICY

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WATERBERG DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY: RECORDS MANAGEMENT POLICY

1. PREAMBLE

- 1.1 The advent of democracy in 1994 has resulted with several pieces of legislations aimed at reinforcing democratic principles as laid down in the South African Constitution (Act no.108, 1996). Acts such as the Public Finance Management Act (Act no.1, 1999), Municipal Finance Management Act of 2003, the Promotion of Access to Information Act (Act no.2, 2000) and the Promotion of Administrative Justice Act (Act no.3, 2000) were promulgated to promote noble Constitutional values such as efficiently, transparency and accountability.
- 1.2 It is worth noting that sound records management, as a central tenet of democratic governance feature prominently in all the above mentioned Acts. Good record keeping is the cornerstone of any efficient, transparent and accountable administration. The value of record in public administration cannot be emphasized. Every administrative process or transaction conducted by government official involves or is informed by a record. A single transaction has the potential to generate multiple documents either through creation or receipt.
- 1.3 Conscious of the value of the value of sound record keeping in public administration, the Parliament of the Republic of South Africa passed the National Archives and Records Service Act (Act no. 43, 1996 as amended to regulate records management functions in governmental bodies. In terms of section 13(1) of this Act, the National Archivist shall be charged with the proper management and care of public records in the custody of governmental bodies.
- 1.4 It is worth noting that the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa divides the responsibility for the management of records of public bodies between the National and the Provincial Archives Services. In terms of Schedule 5 of the Constitution, archives other than national archives are designated as functional areas of exclusive provincial competence. Prior to 1996 public records of three levels of government (national, provincial and local) were governed by national legislation. As a constitutional imperative, provinces are therefore expected to promulgate their own archives and record service legislation and to create an archival and records management infrastructure. To this end the Limpopo Provincial Administration (or Northern Province Administration as it was known) passed the Northern Province Archive Act (Act no.5,2001)to regulate records management functions in the province. The provincial archives legislation is however, consistent and concomitant with the national archives legislation.
- 1.5 Public records in the province should therefore be managed in terms of the broad policy guidelines contained in both the National Archives and Records Service Act and the Northern Province Archives Act. However the National Archives and Records Service (NARS) advises each public body to develop and implement its own records management policy to link its own unique processes and procedures to the requirements of the National Archives and Records Service Act.

2. AUTHORITY OF THE POLICY

This policy is issued under the authority of the Municipal Manager in terms of Annexure 4 of the Records Management Policy Manual which is issued in terms of Section 13(4) of the National Archives and Records Service Act (Act no.43 of 1996 as amended), and will be reviewed and amended as required in consultation with management and employees of Waterberg District Municipality.

3. OBJECTIVES

This policy is aimed at:

- a) Encouraging the creation of records as evidence of business transaction
- b) Promoting accurate records classification and proper storage of records
- c) Regulating access to records
- d) Eliminating unnecessary duplication of records
- e) Strengthening measures aimed at ensuring the security and protection of records
- f) Having a well organized filing system that enables easy retrieval of records
- g) Promoting regular inspection of records
- h) Regulating the disposal of records

4. PRINCIPLES

This policy is informed by the following underlying principles:

- a) Easy retrieval of information enables an office to deliver services effectively and efficiently
- b) With complete records, an office is able to take informed decisions to support programmes and policies
- c) Records are essential evidence of business transactions
- d) Records can help to protect legal rights and entitlements of both internal and external clients
- e) Good record keeping is at the centre of anti-corruption strategy
- f) Sound record management also has the potential to improve flow of information and knowledge sharing within an organization

5. SCOPE OF APPLICATION

- 5.1 This policy, except otherwise indicated, is applicable to the whole Municipality, all offices, management, staff as well as directorates within Waterberg District Municipality
- 5.2 In terms of records groups and/or type the policy applies to all records created or received, regardless of form or medium. All records groups generated within the Municipality, including staff personal files, administrative files, accounting files etc, should be managed in accordance with this policy and the National Archives Act.
- 5.3 WDM must give specific considerations for the preservation of electronic records.
- 5.4 The Municipal Manager should establish policies and procedures to ensure that electronic records and their related documentation are retained as long as are needed for official use.
 - 5.4.1 Policies and procedures should make provisions for:
 - a) Approval of the filing system used for electronic correspondence records.
 - b) Obtaining disposal authority on the electronic records system, and on all related documentation and indexes before implementation of the system.
 - c) Procedure for regular recopying, reformatting and other necessary maintenance, to ensure retention and accessibility of electronic records throughout their life cycle.
- 5.5 WDM should notify the National Archivist of its intention to introduce electronic correspondence system and other electronic record system mainly for the following reason.
 - a) The implementation of such system usually leads to the destruction of paper based, which needs to be done terms of proper disposal authority issued by the National Archivist.
 - b) The requirement regarding the medium for the long term storage and the format for the long term accessibility of archival records should be built into the electronic systems in the planning phase.
 - c) The gathering of metadata are needed to ensure that records are reliable and have authority and that can be built in a system at an early stage.
- 5.6 E-Mail messages received in the course of official business are records and should be managed according to the basic principles that apply in any medium, the

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management and retention of e-mail records are subject to the National Archives of South Africa Act (Act no. 43, 1996). And its regulations

- 5.7 Audio-visuals such as tape recordings of selection committees, video tapes of WDM events etc are also part of the scope of this policy
- 5.8 Paper-based other records such as maps, plans, diagrams, registers etc should also be managed in line with this policy

6. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

This policy is informed by the following prescripts

- 1. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act no. 108,1996 as amended)
- 2. The National Archive and Records Service of South Africa Act (Act no. 43,1996 as amended)
- 3. The Northern Province Archive Act (Act no.5,2001)
- 4. The Promotion of Access to Information Act (Act no.2,2000)
- 5. The Promotion of Administrative Justice Act (Act no.3,2000)
- 6. The Public Service Act of 1994
- 7. The Public Service Regulations Act of 2001, which embodies the performance management system for public servants
- 8. The Basic Conditions of Employment Act (Act no. 75,1997)
- 9. Skills Development Act (Act no. 31,2003)
- 10. The Employment Equity Act (Act no.55,1998)
- 11. Municipal Finance Management Act of 2003
- 12. Public Finance Management Act (Act no.1,1999 as amended)
- 13. Municipal Systems Act (Act no.44,2003 as amended)
- 14. Protection of Information Act (Act no.84,1984)
- 15. Electronic Communications and Transaction Act (Act no.25,2005)
- 16. Municipal Structures Act (Act no.33,2000 as amended)
- 17. Labour Relations Act (Act no.42,1995)
- 18. Minimum Information Security Standards

7. ACCOUNTABILITIES

- 7.1 Records management is a collective responsibility. As a result all employees have an obligation to create and ensure that records are managed according to sound practices
- 7.2 Specific Accountabilities are as follows:
- 7.2.1 The Municipal Manager is overall responsible for sound records management within the municipality and should therefore ensure that the municipality's records management practices comply with the provisions of the National Archivist.
- 7.2.2 The Municipal Manager has however delegated to the Division: Corporate Support and Shared Services. The Senior Admin Officer CSSS has the authority and issue standards in relation to records management and to monitor and audit compliance with those standards
- 7.2.3 Records management operations are to be carried out in accordance with centrally approved policy and standards. Each office, division, vertical programmes and any section within the municipality is responsible for effective record-keeping relating to its functions, including the allocation of resources. Heads of division and records management unit are therefore responsible for sound records-keeping within their areas of responsibility. However a uniform integrated records creation, storage and archiving system will be used across the municipality
- 7.2.4 The Records Management Sub-division is responsible for the management of records management programme in the Municipality including development of records classification systems, advising employees about records related issues, training of records personnel and day -to -day management of files. The Senior Records Clerk: Records Management is the corporate records manager for the Municipality
- 7.2.5 All municipality managers should ensure that this policy and its associated standards are implemented within their business units
- 7.2.6 Employees, as public servants should be aware of record-keeping requirements that affect the performance of their duties.

They have an obligation to:

- Create records
- Register records in record-keeping systems
- Transfer records to appropriate record-keeping systems
- Make sure that records are not destroyed without authorization

8. DEFINITIONS

“**Archives**” means records in the custody of archives repository

“**Archives repository**” is the building in which records are preserved permanently

“**Classification system**” is a plan for the systematic identification and arrangement of business activities and/or records into categories according to logically structured conventions methods and procedural rules

“**Correspondence system**” means a set of paper-based and electronic communications and associated documents, sent, received, processed and stored during the conduct of business

“**Custody**” means to the control of records based upon their physical possession.

“**Disposal**” is the action of either destroying/deleting or transferring a record into archival custody.

“**Disposal authority**” is a written authority issued by the National Archivist specifying which records should be transferred into archival custody or specifying which records should be destroyed/deleted or otherwise disposed of.

“**Disposal instruction**” refers to the specific instructions regarding disposal allocated to each record e.g. D. For delete/destroy, A. for transferring into archival custody.

“**Electronic records**” means information that is generated electronically and stored by means of computer technology

“**Electronic records management system**” means electronic system that business rules to manage and to ensure that they are authentic and reliable

“**Electronic records system**” is the collective noun for all components of an electronic information system, namely: electronic media as well as connected items such as source documents, output information, software applications, programmes and metadata and in hardcopy. All these components are defined as records by the Act.

“**File**” is an organised arrangement of records on the same subject accumulated in chronological order within the same cover/folder/container

“**File plan**” is a pre-determined classification plan by which records are filed and/ or electronically indexed to facilitate efficient retrieval and disposal of records

“**Filing system**” means a collective noun for a storage system in which records are stored in a systematic manner according to a file plan.

“**File reference**” is a unique identifier for a file. This can be numerical ‘alphanumeric or alphabetic identifier. It is used to link a record to its specific subject file

“**Other records**” are records that do not form part of correspondence file, or a case file e.g. registers, maps, plans, audio-visual record etc

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“Public record” refers to a record created or received in pursuance of the activities of a public body

“Record” means recorded information regardless of form or medium

“Record keeping” means making and maintaining a complete, accurate and reliable evidence of official business in the form of information

“Record keeping system” is a collection of policies, procedures and systems, which capture information according to a record classification system, manage, store and provide access to records and their context over time

“Records Manager” refers to WDM official appointed by the Municipal Manager to manage municipality’s records

“Records management” means the management of information resources in the manner in which makes information easily accessible, securely stored and disposed of when no longer required for administrative purposes

“Retention period” refers to the period or the number of years a file is retained by the municipality before is either destroyed or transferred to an archive repository

“Schedule of other records” means a control mechanism for records other than correspondence files (other records) which contains description of all other records

“Scheduled” are records in respect of which a written disposal authority has been issued and which are due for disposal on a specific date

9. POLICY PRONOUNCEMENTS

9.1 RECORDS CREATION

9.1.1 All employees are obliged to create records that adequately document the business activities in which they take part and to ensure that information and processing systems that support business activities create appropriate records as part of supporting those activities.

9.1.2 A file should be created or opened according to the actual need when the need arises, and not just on the basis that it is provided for in the file plan.

9.1.3 Only officials in records may create and close files

9.1.4 Files should be updated regularly to ensure that they are complete, accurate and reliable.

9.1.5 Records created in pursuance of the activities of the municipality shall remain the property of the municipality throughout their life cycle (thus until they either officially destroyed or transferred to an archives repository).

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- 9.1.6 All records created by contractors and service providers performing duty on behalf of the municipality are public records and shall remain the property of the municipality throughout their life cycle. Contracts with service providers should state clearly that ownership of such records resides with the municipality

9.2 RECORDS CLASSIFICATION AND STORAGE

- 9.2.1 All records shall be classified and managed in accordance with approved and documented classification systems. Employees are obliged to ensure that no individual/separate files or record keeping system are maintained. Records should be transferred to an appropriate record storage regularly to avoid built-up of piling system in offices.
- 9.2.2 All official documents and communications, including letters, faxes, and e-mails should contain a reference number derived from an approved classification system.
- 9.2.3 All correspondence files shall be classified in line with the approved Functional Subject File Plan.
- 9.2.4 One Registry in an institution should be central main registry where all incoming mail must be received, opened and from where must be distributed internally. The receiving and distributing must be recorded in the relevant registers
- 9.2.5 All records shall be stored in purpose built records storage areas. Employees should minimise the number of files they keep at their workstations. It is advisable that only working files should be maintained by officials
- 9.2.6 Records should be stored in the most efficient manner. Storage costs, office and stack space occupied should be balanced against cost and time taken to retrieve records.
- 9.2.7 Files shall be stored in the active file storage (registry/records) for as long as they are actively utilized for administrative purposes. Files should only be transferred to a semi-active file area when the demand for it declines.
- 9.2.8 Records should be stored in a way that minimizes potential damage. Records including those in boxes should not be stored on the floor.
- 9.2.9 Records should be stored in environmental conditions that are appropriate for their format and retention period.
- 9.2.10 The shelving, equipment and containers for records storage should ensure that records are secured, accessible and protected from deterioration.
- 9.2.11 The location of each file shall be recorded and updated at every movement to ensure that records as assets, can be accounted for in the same way that other municipality assets are.

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9.2.12 Employees should notify Records Management Unit when passing records on to another officer.

9.2.13 Until such time that the municipality implements Integrated Document and Records Management System (IDRMS) approved by the National Archives and Records Service, all electronic PC based documents which are evidence of business transaction should be printed out, and be placed on an appropriate file.

9.2.14 Electronic records created in applications as word and excel should also be printed and filed

9.3 RECORDS ACCESS

9.3.1 Access to records storage areas and registries should be controlled. No unauthorised person must be allowed inside a record storage area.

9.3.2 All records storage areas should be designed and built in a manner that minimizes unauthorized access to records

9.3.3 Officials wishing to access records for their purposes other than official duties shall be subject to the permission of the Municipal Manager

9.3.4 To prevent access of records by any person, requesters are obliged to request form for every item required.

9.3.5 All access to Municipality records by members of the public shall be in accordance with the provision of the Promotion of Access to Information Act.

9.3.6 Records shall be stored in facilities where they can be identified, located and retrieved easily when the need arises.

9.4 RECORDS SECURITY AND PROTECTION

9.4.1 Records must be protected, maintained and useable for their entire retention period as outlined in the relevant disposal authority.

9.4.2 Effective key control should be instituted for any record storage area. The keeping of the necessary key registers custody of duplicate keys and control over such keys must strictly be adhered to. File storage areas must be locked overnight wherever possible to unauthorized access.

9.4.3 Movement of files between service areas within the municipality shall be monitored and controlled to protect records against damage, lost and theft.

9.4.4 Employees are obliged to handle records sensibly and with care to avoid damage to records and prolong their lifespan.

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

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9.4.6 All records storage areas should be fumigated regularly to protect records from possible damage by insects and rodents.

9.4.7 All records should be protected from dirt, dust and light

9.5 INTRA/INTER MUNICIPAL/DEPARTMENTAL TRANSFER OF RECORDS TO OFF-SITE RECORDS STORAGE

9.5.1 Records management unit in all institutions shall keep a register of all files transferred intra/inter departmentally (municipalities). These transfers often occur when occur from one office/institution to another. If records are transferred permanently the National Archivist shall be informed through the office of the Senior Admin officer CSSS.

9.5.2 No records shall be transferred to a private off site data/records storage without prior authorization of the Municipal Manager and the National Archivist

9.5.3 Any transfer of public records to a private off site data/record storage facility shall be informed by an expert advice from National Archives.

9.6 INSPECTION OF RECORDS

9.6.1 In order for the Provincial/National Archives to conduct as inspections as provided by Section 13(2)c of the National Archives and Records Act, all municipality units should, subsequent to consultations with the Municipal Manager, provide access for authorized NARS officials to record in their custody

9.6.2 The Records Management Sub-directorate shall inspect all records due for destruction to validate authorization and appropriateness

9.6.3 Reports of all audits/inspections shall be managed in line with this policy

9.7 RECORDS DISPOSAL

9.7.1 In terms of section 13(2) of the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act, no public records under control of governmental body, may be destroyed, erased, dumped on the corridors or be transferred to archives repository or otherwise disposed of without a written disposal authority issued by National Archivist.

9.7.2 Employees who wish to initiate the disposal of records should seek authorization from the Municipal Manager.

9.7.3 Correspondence files shall be destroyed in accordance with the disposal authority issued by the National Archives and Records Service following the approval of the Municipal Manager.

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9.7.4 Records with archival value shall be transferred to a relevant Archives Repository 20 years after creation with the approval of the Municipal Manager and after prior arrangements have been made with the relevant archives repository.

9.7.5 Destruction of records should only take place once there is assurance that records are no longer required, that no work is outstanding and that no litigation or investigation or request which would involve the record in question in terms of the Promotion of Access to Information Act or the Promotion of Administrative Justice Act is pending.

10. OBLIGATIONS

All employees are accountable to the decision they make. Records plays a pivotal in the what, where, when and why of such decisions and actions. Good record-keeping is therefore a collective responsibility and each employee has an obligation to ensure that records are created and managed according to this policy. All employees (temporary or permanent), consultants, contractors, interns and volunteers must comply with this policy procedures.

11. DEFAULT

Any employee who contravenes the provision of this policy shall be charged with misconduct and the necessary disciplinary measures should be taken against the contravener.

12. PROCEDURES

Standard procedures for record management will be developed under the authority of this policy.

13. INCEPTION DATE

The inception date for this policy will be on signature of approving authority

14. LAPSE/TERMINATION

This policy will remain in force unless withdrawn or amended.

15 ENQUIRIES

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