



Department of Creative Industries,
Tourism and Sport
State Records Office of Western Australia

State Records Office (SRO) Guideline

State Records Storage

Requirements for Temporary Physical Records

1 Purpose

The purpose of this guideline is to provide instruction to State organisations (organisations) in Western Australia on the storage and maintenance of physical State records of temporary value (temporary records).

The retention of temporary records may be short term e.g. one year to very long term e.g. 100 years. These temporary records are eventually destroyed once their business use and retention period has expired.

The proper storage of temporary records before they can be legally destroyed at the end of their retention periods prevents misuse, loss, deterioration and damage.

An organisation's records that are identified as State archives have to be kept permanently. Refer to the Archival Storage Specifications or Directions for keeping State archives awaiting transfer to the State Archives Collection for storage requirements for State archives.

For digital records, refer to the SRO Guideline Management of Digital Records.

This guideline is to be read alongside the relevant SRC Standards and advice issued by the State Records Office (SRO) available on the SRO website.

2 Background

Under section 61 of the *State Records Act 2000* (the Act), the State Records Commission (Commission / SRC) is responsible for establishing principles and standards governing record keeping by organisations.

In accordance with the Act, each organisation operates under an approved record keeping plan (RKP) which provides an accurate reflection of the organisation's record keeping programs and practices in line with the SRC Standards.

SRC Standard 2 – Record Keeping Plans: Principle 4 (Preservation) sets out that records are protected and preserved for as long as required by law and business requirements.

3 Scope

This guideline applies to all State organisations in Western Australia which includes local governments and parliamentary departments.

It is intended to be of use to both records management practitioners, facility managers and any suppliers of physical storage services.

It is important that the matters in this Guideline are considered and addressed, and risk assessments are undertaken to reduce and manage any damage to or loss of temporary records.

Any damage to or loss of temporary records must be reported to the State Records Office (SRO) before destruction.

4 Physical storage conditions for temporary records

Physical records are information created or received by organisations and may be in any format including paper, tapes, videos, compact discs, soil samples, X-rays etc. Storage environments must ensure the security and protection of temporary records in accordance with SRC Standard 2, Principle 2.

4.1 Initial identification and assessment of storage areas for temporary records

- a. Use dedicated areas for the storage of temporary records. Excessive heat, moisture, or fluctuations in climate can cause physical records to deteriorate, warp, or develop mould. Select areas that are:
 - i. well-ventilated (preferably air-conditioned).
 - ii. stable in temperature and humidity.
 - iii. away from windows to avoid heat and sun damage.

Note: Unlined sheds, such as metal storage sheds, garage sheds and unmodified sea containers are unsuitable for storage of temporary records.

- b. Locate storage away from known risks e.g. water pipes, chemicals, hazardous or flammable materials.
- c. Ensure the area has sufficient floor loading capacity for the weight of the stored temporary records.
- d. Conduct a risk assessment of the storage area to identify and mitigate potential threats to temporary records.
- e. Inspect the storage area for security and appropriateness of environment in line with the organisation's record keeping plan.
- f. Include the storage area in your organisation's record keeping plan and Records Disaster Management Plan.
- g. Ensure your organisation's procedures address how to access, retrieve and return temporary records to storage areas.

4.2 Managing storage of temporary records

- a. Keep the physical temporary records secure to prevent damage and unauthorised access. This may mean limiting access to the storage area or using filing cabinets that can be locked.
- b. Use lockable and fire-retardant storage such as filing cabinets or safes for vital records.
- a. Use boxes to store temporary records rather than leaving them loose. Ensure boxes used to store temporary records are:
 - i. sturdy such as corrugated cardboard boxes.
 - ii. of standard sizes such as an archive box or records storage carton.
 - iii. fitted with lids.

- iv. suited to the size of the temporary records. If the temporary records are too big for a box e.g. maps or plans, consider specialised cabinets or shelves.
- v. not packed tightly or overfilled.
- vi. less than 16 kilograms in weight to meet workplace health and safety manual handling requirements.
- vii. put on shelves above the floor, around 15 cm, away from damp and pests.
- b. Store oversized temporary records flat.
- c. Use treated metal shelving to avoid rusting or termite damage.
- d. Place extra protection e.g. plastic sheets over top shelf boxes to protect temporary records from potential water leaks or pest damage from the ceiling.
- e. Allow room to move between shelving, to allow for safe retrieval of items
- f. Label boxes for easy identification, arrangement and retrieval of the boxes.
- g. Maintain an inventory list of stored temporary records in a separate location to where the temporary records are stored. This could be a physical file list, an electronic listing in a spreadsheet or in a record keeping system or business information system. If temporary records storage areas are damaged or destroyed, the list can help to identify the affected temporary records.

4.3 Ongoing monitoring of storage areas of temporary records

- a. Conduct regular inspections, at least annually, of storage areas for possible leaks, pest infestations, mould or other damage, and to check other environmental conditions.
- b. Arrange for storage areas to be cleaned regularly and have a pest management schedule in place.
- c. Review access to storage areas to ensure it is limited and controlled, particularly considering sensitive and confidential information, as well as vital records.
 - i. Permissions to access temporary records at outsourced storage provider venues are to be properly identified, regularly monitored, enforced, and kept current.
 - ii. Permissions to access storage areas at the organisation's premises are to be properly identified, regularly monitored, enforced, and kept current.

5 Transporting physical temporary records

The integrity and security of physical temporary records must be maintained during transportation.

- a. Use covered and locked vehicles to protect temporary records from:
 - i. environmental damage e.g. rain, dust, sunlight.
 - ii. exposure e.g. providing unauthorised access to information.
 - iii. loss e.g. theft, items blown away by wind.

- b. Use air-conditioned vehicles to transport computer tapes, disks, other magnetic media and microfilm.
- c. Pack temporary records in boxes or containers to prevent movement and damage.
- d. Unpack or empty boxes or containers indoors.
- c. Keep a record of which temporary records were moved and where.

6 Handling physical temporary records

- a. Handle physical temporary records with care and clean hands to prevent stains, tears, or other physical damage.
- b. When removing temporary records such as maps or plans from containers:
 - i. unroll or unfold slowly to avoid tearing or creasing.
 - ii. do not force items into or out of tight containers.
- c. Keep temporary records away from food, drinks, and other contaminants.
- d. Protect sensitive information and maintain security of temporary records e.g. by ensuring that confidential temporary records are not left unattended at workstations.

7 Retention and disposal

Before transferring temporary records to an onsite or offsite storage area, organisations should implement a disposal program to optimise records storage. This will ensure that temporary records are not being stored longer than necessary.

Refer to SRO Guideline Records Retention, Disposal and Destruction and Records Management Advice Destruction of Temporary Records for more information.

For more information about government record keeping go to the State Records Office website or contact sro@sro.wa.gov.au