Information Management Advice 54 Records Management Toolkit for Local Government

FACT SHEET 6 - Basic Records Management - Quality Management

Introduction

This Fact Sheet is part of a sub-set of Advice 54, and focuses on the operational procedures of a records management program. Some templates are provided to assist agencies to establish and implement recordkeeping controls and procedures. Agencies with very small records operations, those who do not have dedicated RM resources, and those who have not yet implemented specialised EDRMS software, may find these Fact Sheets particularly beneficial.

Records program operations

Daily operations are the basis for the development of a procedure manual for the records team. This promotes consistency of process, and information sharing, in the event of new staff, volunteers or contractors. Procedure manuals should be regularly reviewed and updated as required to allow for organisational and procedural change. Whether paper or electronic recordkeeping systems are in place, key functions include:

- Record identification
- Record capture
- Registration
- Indexing
- Classification
- File creation and closure
- Distribution & tracking
- Search & retrieval
- Access
- Security
- Storage
- Scheduling, retention & disposal
- Records transfer
- e-discovery & Disposal Freezes
- Vital Records
- Disaster Management
- QA & Auditing
- Monitoring (program, processes and people) & reporting on activities, performance and compliance
- Resourcing

Tools you will need

- Appropriate permissions for production & distribution of system reports (where EDRMS systems implemented)
- Reporting capability
- KPIs/performance standards
- Performance measurement/assessment tools
- Policies and procedures
- Position description clause

QA, Controls & Audits

Quality Assurance Certification is a formal process of evaluation by an independent party which audits the quality management practices of a company, including functions, services and processes. The ISO 9000 group of standards relate to quality management systems designed to help organisations ensure they meet the needs of customers and other stakeholders while meeting statutory and regulatory requirements. Quality systems and performance is regularly audited and evaluated for conformance and effectiveness, and certification requires ongoing renewal at regular intervals to be retained. Whilst formal certification may be undertaken by some agencies, it is not required to implement good practices.

QA in records management ensures that the program is supported by authorised policies, procedures and practices to ensure that official records will be capable of supporting and defending the actions of the agency, and for ongoing management of those records until such time as they are no longer required. It regularly reviews performance through internal audits and feedback, to determine what is working well, and where improvements can be made. It ensures records policy and procedure is understood and followed by all employees, at all levels of the agency, that there are documented procedures for undertaking internal audits, and also for dealing with problems and complaints, including staff non-conformance via performance management tools.

Quality control is about systematic activities to ensure that processes or outputs conform to established standards. A simple example might be the implementation of a workflow for the electronic capture of incoming mail. An appropriate standard for the scanned image is established and documented, including the steps undertaken. One officer may then be responsible for scanning the items, against the accepted standard. The officer can double check all pages were scanned successfully (no misfeeds), image quality is acceptable (not too light, or too dark), information is able to be obtained from the scanned image (if colour is used on the source document in graphs/maps for example, the scan should also be in colour), and images are in the correct order and alignment when compared to the original source document. Good scanning software assists this process by allowing for rotation, re-ordering, and replacement of bad images or insertion/appending of additional pages. A second officer can double-check the quality of the output during the registration to the EDRMS (it is preferable to have two separate checks rather than both checks being performed by the same individual). The implementation of quality controls not only impact on improved service delivery to the end user (whether an internal or external customer), but help to develop trust in the integrity and accuracy of the system. It can also significantly streamline disposal activities of source documents in the future, without having to review the electronic capture against the original before destruction.

Audits can be undertaken informally as a form of self-assessment, or by other internal staff (Risk management staff would be ideal). More formally, Records programs and procedures should be included as part of the

agency's annual internal/external audit program undertaken. All of these methods provide opportunities to identify and resolve problem areas, or suggestions for improved performance and business efficiency.

Monitoring (program, processes and people) & reporting on activities, performance and compliance

The regular monitoring of records, recordkeeping, and an organisational records management program, is beneficial for all Local Government agencies. Monitoring ensures that records are managed according to best practice, and in efficient and effective ways that meet the business needs of the organization. Monitoring should go beyond a mere assessment of conformity with requirements, and actively assist organisations to embed good recordkeeping practices and processes that support management of information as a business asset.

Organisations undertake two main types of monitoring activities to understand how the organisation is performing and to identify areas for improvement. These monitoring types are compliance monitoring and performance monitoring.

Compliance monitoring aims to establish whether a process or procedure is carried out in a way that conforms with relevant external requirements, whether set through legislation, regulations or directions. It involves examining, at a fairly straightforward level, how organisations 'do something' and confirming 'compliance' with criteria.

Agencies can monitor compliance by:

- benchmarking against previous records management self assessment surveys or audit results to assess improvements or to identify issues of non compliance
- undertaking a compliance audit using internal auditors or an external party to provide an independent assessment of the organisation's records management program, practices and systems, and
- using tools like NAA's Check Up to undertake a 'health check' and self-assessment of levels of compliance with requirements.
- assessing records management programs, records management systems and business systems that create and capture records

Performance monitoring involves an in-depth analysis of a process, to determine whether it is efficient and effective. It involves developing criteria, conducting interviews and examining documentation to determine how the process is conducted.

An agency's Information/Records Management strategy/framework (where one exists), or defined objectives will assist when establishing benchmarks, and assessment criteria. Performance measures are the yardsticks by which you assess whether you have met, or have gone some way towards meeting, your objectives. They can be a mixture of quantitative and qualitative measures but should be scoped to fit your objectives and resources for monitoring. It is no use having 25 measures requiring daily data collection if you don't have the time to collect the data or to analyse and make use of the results. Don't waste resources collecting elaborate statistics that are never used.

If you are measuring…	Some examples of relevant measures could be…
Economy	• Cost per record retrieval • Cost per file created • Cost per record managed • Demonstrating value for money
Efficiency	• Speed of retrieval and delivery of records from storage • Enquiries completed within x hours • Number of complaints • Service level agreements in place for information and records management service provision and measures identified • Existence of records management policy, procedures, disposal authority, Register of Records destroyed, etc.
Effectiveness	• Satisfied customers • Proportion of business units using the records management service • Proportion of new users • Whether staff use records management tools, follow procedures, save emails into the EDRMS etc • Audit queries that relate to recordkeeping able to be satisfied • Recordkeeping system/s and business systems meeting recordkeeping requirements • Ability to meet external enquiries for records (Right to Information requests, subpoenas etc) • General staff attendance at internal RM training and reporting of attendance statistics • Specialist RM staff attendance at training/professional development activities

Activities may include:

- Regular barcode audits of physical file locations
- Introducing regular statistical reporting, eg number of new files created, number of documents registered, etc
- Introducing reporting mechanisms for senior executive on staff activity. Where an EDRMS has been implemented, this may include number of workflow tasks routed each month, and task types; number of successful completions; number of outstanding tasks unresolved; document registration statistics, etc
- Where storage of records in alternative locations is available (eg email, network drives), capacity reporting of increasing storage that may indicate usage outside of corporate system
- Routine audit of work practices within business units
- Implementation of routine disposal and archiving programs, reporting on volumes of records destroyed, and savings to agency
- Development of Service Level Agreements (SLAs) between the Records area and internal customers
- Annual customer satisfaction surveys with Records services (internal customers, external customers, RtI requests, etc).

On a broader scale, an agency can improve overall performance by instituting the following:

- Developing and adopting a formal IM/RM policy
- Including IM/RM clauses in agency position descriptions (statement of duties) outlining responsibility for records management
- Developing IM/RM related KPI's and incorporating criteria in performance management/assessment tools
- Developing and maintaining information asset registers
- Assessing RM and business systems for recordkeeping compliance
- Developing RM tools to ensure consistency of practice across the agency
- Including Records Management programs and procedures in formal annual internal/external audit programs
- Incorporation of records management training in induction programs
- Implementation of training programs for all staff (eg mandatory annual refresher training)

Agencies are required to submit an extract from their Register of Records Destroyed to TAHO upon request, for audit and compliance monitoring. This is to ensure that records are being destroyed in accordance with the DA2200 Disposal Schedule authorized by the State Archivist, and other relevant disposal authorities.

Recommended Reading

Standard on Records Management AS ISO 15489

TAHO Advice 50 Developing an Information Management Policy

TAHO Template – Sample Information Management Policy

Appendices

Sample clauses for PDs (Appendix 1)

Template – Records procedure – Opening and Sorting Mail (Appendix 2)

Sample Records procedure manual index (Appendix 3)

Further Advice

For more detailed advice, please contact:

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Acknowledgements

- National Archives of Australia Check Up[1]
- Australian Standard AS ISO 15489.1 & Guidelines 15489.2
- NSW State Records Framework for Records Management , *Assessing recordkeeping performance of workgroups and business units* [2]
- State Records of South Australia *EDRMS FAQ*[3]

Information Security Classification

This document has been security classified using the Tasmanian Government Information Security classification standard as PUBLIC and will be managed according to the requirements of the Tasmanian Government Information Security Policy.

Document Development History
Build Status

Version	Date	Author	Reason	Sections
2.0	May 2015	Christine Woods	Template	All
1.0	March 2014	Sam Foster-Davies	Initial Release	All

Amendments in this Release

Section Title	Section Number	Amendment Summary
All	All	Document imported into new template

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Ross Latham
State Archivist

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[1] http://naa.gov.au/Images/Check-UpQuestions_tcm16-64667.pdf
[2] http://www.records.nsw.gov.au/recordkeeping/advice/monitoring/monitoring-recordkeeping-performance
[3] http://archives.sa.gov.au/content/edrms-faq

Appendix 1 – Example clauses for PDs

Sample A

Maintain confidential, accurate and up to date records in accordance with award, legislative and organisational policies and procedures.

Sample B

All employees are responsible and accountable to:

- Create records according to the business needs and business processes of their business unit that adequately document the business activities in which they take part.
- Register documents in an approved Business Information Management System.
- Access information for legitimate work purposes only.

All employees must not:

- Destroy delete or alter records without proper authority; or
- Remove information, documents or records from the Department without permission.

Sample C

Employees of [Agency name] are responsible and accountable for making proper records. Confidentiality must be maintained at all times and information must not be accessed or destroyed without proper authority.

Sample D

Responsible and accountable for creating, keeping and maintaining authentic, accurate and reliable records documenting the business decisions, actions and practices undertaken or performed by the position. These records must be saved within approved organisational recordkeeping systems, and in accordance with documented corporate direction, policy & procedure. Responsible for ensuring awareness of current practices, and taking advantage of available training and support.

Sample E

Key Responsibilities:

This position is responsible and accountable for creating, keeping and maintaining authentic, accurate and reliable records documenting the business performed by the position, within approved organisational recordkeeping systems, and in accordance with documented corporate direction, policy & procedure.

Sample F

The incumbent is to undertake responsible and accountable practices for keeping full and accurate records and information for all corporate activities and decisions, prioritise and complete allocated Recordkeeping activities.

Appendix 2 Template – Records procedure

<u>**Title:**</u> **OPENING & SORTING MAIL**

<u>**Purpose:**</u> The opening of mail is required daily in order for all incoming correspondence to be electronically processed and distributed to the relevant action officers via [EDRMS] prior to [time] each day. Correspondence, cheques, invoices, and Direct Debit application forms must be sorted for sentencing and registration (and/or hard copy distribution) to [applicable business units] by [time].

<u>**Equipment & resources**</u>:

- Electronic Letter Opener
- Date Stamp
- Staff

<u>**Process:**</u>   Mail is opened and sorted into groups, eg:

- Letters/correspondence (includes hard copy Section 132 & Section 337 certificate requests and permit/registration applications, etc)
- Invoices/accounts
- Direct Debit applications
- Cheques/remittances

<u>**Procedure**</u>:

- The mail is initially sorted into those mail types that require opening and those that do not. A current list of the mail types that should *not* be opened is displayed near the electronic letter opener and include mail marked 'Private & Confidential'. Plastic covered items are referred to Library basket for later distribution.
- The mail that does *not* require opening is placed directly into the relevant departmental basket for delivery. The mail that *does* require opening is then opened using the electronic letter opener, or (if too large) opened manually.
- Contents are then removed from the envelopes and sorted into piles of correspondence, invoices and cheques. Direct debit applications, and correspondence with cheques attached, are set aside for photocopying.
- Each group of mail is then stamped with the current date using the [Agency] date stamp.
- The relevant property files for any hard copy Section 337 requests received with cheques are retrieved and booked out to the [position]. Ensure the red "closed file" slips are placed on the file and they can then be placed into Building basket.
- Items accompanied by a cheque, such as Section 132 & 337 certificate requests, Food Permit Applications, Development Applications, etc must have the front page photocopied, and the cheque attached to the photocopy for sending to Customer Service for receipting. A note is to be made on the original document that the cheque has been forwarded. The originals are then placed in the "letter" pile for sentencing, scanning & registration.
- All **Cheques** and **Accounts** are date stamped and placed in their respective plastic zip lock folders (at front counter). **Direct Debit requests** are also date stamped and placed in a plastic zip lock folder. These are now ready to be delivered down to [applicable business units] with the morning's hard copy Property file requests for Planning and Building sections.
- The remaining correspondence can be prepared for sentencing and registration to [EDRMS] (see 'Sentencing the mail' **procedure 3**). Items identified as "junk mail" (not for registration) should be given to the Senior Records Officer for checking so as to ensure no legitimate correspondence is inadvertently overlooked.
- All received envelopes are to be split so they may be laid flat, to ensure no mail has been missed. Once this has been completed, envelopes may be rolled up and secured with an elastic band, and disposed of appropriately.

Appendix 3 – Sample Records Section Procedure manual index

No	Procedure	Last Updated	Next Review
1	Collection of Mail	30-Mar-12	30-Jun-13
2	Opening & sorting Mail	30-Mar-12	30-Jun-13
3	Sentencing the Mail for [EDRMS]	30-Mar-12	30-Jun-13
4	Scanning Documents	30-Mar-12	30-Jun-13
5	Creating batches for registration in [EDRMS]	30-Mar-12	30-Jun-13
6	Registering Mail batches into [EDRMS]	30-Mar-12	30-Jun-13
7	Scanning large plans	30-Mar-12	30-Jun-13
8	Merging multiple PDF documents in Adobe	30-Mar-12	30-Jun-13
9	Booking Files in - [EDRMS]	30-Mar-12	30-Jun-13
10	Booking Files out - [EDRMS]	30-Mar-12	30-Jun-13
11	Virtual Batch Box Creation in [EDRMS]	30-Mar-12	30-Jun-13
12	Building & Plumbing Mail	30-Mar-12	30-Jun-13
13	Faxes/Corporate Email	30-Mar-12	30-Jun-13
14	Library Item management	30-Mar-12	30-Jun-13
15	IM CD/DVD Register	30-Mar-12	30-Jun-13
16	Processing Mayoral Mail & Mayoral Responses	30-Mar-12	30-Jun-13
17	Document search in [EDRMS]	30-Mar-12	30-Jun-13
18	File Search in [EDRMS]	30-Mar-12	30-Jun-13
19	File Creation - [file type eg Personnel, Contract, Claims, etc] within [EDRMS]	30-Mar-12	30-Jun-13
20	Adding Templates in [EDRMS]	30-Mar-12	30-Jun-13
21	Processing Right to Information requests	30-Mar-12	30-Jun-13
22	Processing Records Transfers to [Secondary Storage Provider]	30-Mar-12	30-Jun-13
23	Retrieval and Return of items - [Secondary Storage Provider]	30-Mar-12	30-Jun-13
24	Updating file locations in [EDRMS] (reflecting transfer of items to secondary storage/Archives/Destroyed records)	30-Mar-12	30-Jun-13
25	Updating Historic file sentencing data in [EDRMS]	30-Mar-12	30-Jun-13
26	Adding cross referencing information to a Historic file's description field in [EDRMS]	30-Mar-12	30-Jun-13
27	Archiving of records (Historic Paper Files)	30-Mar-12	30-Jun-13
28	Destruction of records (Historic Paper Files)	30-Mar-12	30-Jun-13
29	Contracts & Tenders - Tender Openings & Issuing of Contract numbers	30-Mar-12	30-Jun-13
30	Contracts - Scanning & Storage of legal documents	30-Mar-12	30-Jun-13
31	Processing Minutes & Agendas	30-Mar-12	30-Jun-13
32	Bulk Scanning Service to internal departments	30-Mar-12	30-Jun-13
33	Development Applications register	14-Jul-10	30-Jun-13
34	Certificates of Title - Storage & Retrieval	30-Mar-12	30-Jun-13
35	Deeds Leases Licences & Agreements - Storage & Retrieval	30-Mar-12	30-Jun-13