

— OFFICE OF THE —
SCOTTISH ROAD WORKS COMMISSIONER

RECORDS MANAGEMENT POLICY

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Introduction

Records management (RM) is the professional practice or discipline of controlling and governing what are considered to be the most important records of an organisation throughout the records life cycle, which includes from the time such records are conceived through to their eventual disposal. This work includes identifying, classifying, prioritising, storing, securing, archiving, preserving, retrieving, tracking and destroying of records.

Records management is part of an organisation's broader activities that are associated with the discipline known as governance, risk, and compliance and is primarily concerned with the evidence of an organisation's activities as well as the reduction or mitigation of risk that may be associated with such evidence.

The Scottish Road Works Commissioner (SRWC) recognises that the effective management of its records is essential in order to support our core functions, to comply with legal, statutory and regulatory obligations, and to demonstrate transparency and accountability to all its stakeholders. Records are a vital information asset and a valuable resource for the organisation's decision-making processes, policy creation and operations, and must be managed effectively from the point of their creation until their ultimate disposal.

Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate the importance of managing records effectively within the organisation, to outline key aims and objectives for SRWC in relation to its record-keeping, and to act as a mandate for the support and delivery of records management policies, procedures and initiatives across the organisation.

This policy relates to all staff of the SRWC and all records created or acquired in the course of its business. It relates to the management of records as an internal, facilitative function of the organisation.

The policy is to be read in conjunction with the Records Management Plan for the SRWC, which details the current record-keeping practices in place within the organisation.

The aims of this policy include:

- The improvement of business efficiency through less time spent searching for information
- Increased joined up working and improved communications across the organisation as a whole.
- The demonstration of compliance with statutory and regulatory record-keeping obligations including the Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011, the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, Environmental Information Regulations 2004 and the UK General Data Protection Regulations and the Data Protection Act 2018.
- The promotion of openness, transparency, accountability and improved corporate governance, commensurate with the organisation's role.

The Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011 places an obligation on named authorities in Scotland to produce a records management plan which sets out their arrangements for the effective management of all records. The SRWC is a named authority as defined in the act. The creation of a records management policy statement is a mandatory element of the plan, and is necessary in order to identify the procedures to be followed in managing the organisation's public records.

What is a record?

In records management it is important to be clear about the difference between a document and a record.

A document is any piece of information in any form, produced or received by an organisation or person. It can include databases, websites, email messages, word and excel files, letters, memos, social media posts, MS Chat messages and audio and video recordings. Some of these documents will be ephemeral or of very short-term value and should never end up in a records management system.

Some documents will need to be kept as evidence of business transactions, routine activities or as a result of legal obligations, such as policy documents. These should be placed into an official filing system and at this point, they become official records. In other words, all records start off as documents, but not all documents will ultimately become records.

Records are an important constituent of the corporate memory of an organisation. The principles of good records management

The principles of good records management

The guiding principle of records management is to ensure that information is available when and where it is needed, in an organised and efficient manner, and in a well maintained environment.

[National Records of Scotland guidance](#) states that, “Organisations must ensure that their records are:

Authentic

It must be possible to prove that records are what they purport to be and who created them, by keeping a record of their management through time. Where information is later added to an existing document within a record, the added information must be signed and dated. With electronic records, changes and additions must be identifiable through audit trails.

Accurate

Records must accurately reflect the transactions that they document.

Accessible

Records must be readily available when needed.

Complete

Records must be sufficient in content, context and structure to reconstruct the relevant activities and transactions that they document.

Comprehensive

Records must document the complete range of an organisation's business.”

Our records management system

Paper records

The oSRWC does not retain paper records. Paper records are only generated to assist with work in progress and are securely destroyed on the completion of tasks. Any records generated in paper format must be converted to a digital format and stored electronically.

Electronic Records and Document Management (eRDM) System

The SRWC has use of the Scottish Government's eRDM system. It is the corporate repository for the majority of information created and received by the oSRWC in the course of their duties, this includes e-mails that must be retained for business purposes as evidence of a decision or transaction carried out by or on behalf of the SRWC. eRDM can hold information up to Official level (including Official Sensitive), any information marked as Top Secret or Secret must be retained in a paper file which is registered on eRDM.

The Use of Local Drives

It is not technically feasible to store databases in eRDM. These are permitted to be stored on local drives, provided a snapshot is taken for the corporate record and stored on eRDM at intermittent periods during the life of the database. All other information which may form a record of business should be stored and managed in eRDM and not on network drives or other ungoverned repositories. Any information held in such repositories which is identified as a record of business should be transferred to eRDM and deleted from the original store. This includes emails.

Microsoft Teams, Office 365, SharePoint and Viva Engage

Any information created or managed in Microsoft Teams, Office 365, SharePoint and Viva Engage that is a record or documents which are in development and will become a record must be transferred to eRDM. This ensures the corporate record is maintained and any transient content which is not part of the record is managed in line with Scottish Government Microsoft Teams, Office 365, SharePoint and Viva Engage retention policies (e.g. Teams Chats deleted after 5 days, Teams Channel chats deleted after 3 years, One Drive documents deleted 2 years after the last update date).

Employees must also ensure that the Commissioner is aware that they are using a mobile messaging app for business purposes and the Commissioner will provide guidance on good practice as required.

Retention and Disposal

Information and records shall be retained only as long as they are required to support the SRWC in its business requirements and legal obligations. At the end of that time, the records will either be destroyed or transferred to the National Records of Scotland for permanent preservation.

The SRWC’s retention schedules are the key to effective management of our records, they set out the periods for which particular classes of records are retained in accordance with legal, audit and operational requirements. They provide a formalised, accountable system for the retention and disposal of records, and can help to save time, money and space by ensuring that information is not kept unnecessarily.

Training

All SRWC staff receive training so they are aware of their responsibilities as individuals with respect to record keeping and management and to ensure they are competent to carry out their designated duties. This includes online training in the use of the eRDM system which is then complemented by organisational policies and procedures and guidance documentation.

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