

Introduction

This Guideline supports the Responsible Record-Keeping Directive. The Responsible Record-Keeping Directive sets out responsibility and accountability for managing records and documenting decisions. The Directive is the over-arching document. The Guideline is intended to provide guidance to divisions to assist in implementing the Directive. Read the Directive first to understand its purpose, the requirements for responsible record-keeping and your responsibility and accountability to ensure compliance.

Background

The City Clerk's Office has lead responsibility for corporate information management policy and to coordinate how City staff manage records in compliance with legislative requirements.

The February 2010 Ombudsman's report to City Council challenged the Toronto Public Service to set better record-keeping standards.

[Ombudsman's Annual Report from 2010](#)

Managing records responsibly is not something new. Division Heads should be managing their records to support good customer service and program delivery, financial accountability and open and transparent government.

Purpose

This Guideline supports the *Responsible Record-Keeping Directive* and introduces some basic practices that Division Heads can implement immediately to improve record-keeping processes.

Guideline

[definitions for 'record' and 'record-keeping' provided at the back]

- Division Heads should require that management meeting decisions are documented, retained and accessible to authorized staff in the business unit or division. Division Heads are accountable for determining:

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- What decisions need to be documented
 - Who is responsible for documenting and retaining the decisions
 - Ensuring staff understand their responsibilities, and that
 - The documentation of decisions reflects the program needs of their Division
- Division Heads should require that key senior management, management and staff take Access and Privacy training to understand their roles and responsibilities under the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, and the *Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004*.
 - Division Heads should require that procedures and standards be documented and practiced by staff so that information in business systems and databases is accurate, complete and current. Timely business systems' records supports more efficient, transparent and accountable customer service.
 - Division Heads should require staff to adhere to the City's Clean Desk Policy and password guidelines to secure and protect records.
 - Clean Desk Policy:
[http://wi.toronto.ca/intra/clerks/cco_policies.nsf/277D5F5D4CD3D328852578A000478D7C/\\$file/Clean%20Desk%20Policy%20and%20Guidelines.pdf](http://wi.toronto.ca/intra/clerks/cco_policies.nsf/277D5F5D4CD3D328852578A000478D7C/$file/Clean%20Desk%20Policy%20and%20Guidelines.pdf)
 - Guidelines for the Selection and Security of Passwords:
[http://wi.toronto.ca/intra/clerks/cco_policies.nsf/57C51D13FDFC2108852578A000484681/\\$file/Guidelines%20for%20Selection%20and%20Security%20of%20Passwords.pdf](http://wi.toronto.ca/intra/clerks/cco_policies.nsf/57C51D13FDFC2108852578A000484681/$file/Guidelines%20for%20Selection%20and%20Security%20of%20Passwords.pdf)
 - Division Heads should assign senior staff to be responsible to
 - update the Division's Proactive Disclosure Plans and Routine Disclosure Plans: http://www.toronto.ca/cap/routine_disclosure_plan.htm
 - review and authorize the disposition of divisional records, in accordance with the City's Records Retention Schedule: http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/municode/1184_217_1.pdf
 - review the Division's record retention rules in the Retention Schedule so that the rules are appropriate and up to date

- communicate record-keeping best practices within the Division and to represent divisional needs in the development of corporate information management policy.
- Division Heads should provide prompt access to records required by an access request pursuant to the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, and the *Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004*.

Why Responsible Record-keeping?

- *The public relies on City records and expects them to be easily and quickly accessed.* The public also expects the City to be accountable, open and transparent.
- *This Guideline introduces some basic practices that Division Heads can implement immediately to manage records responsibly.*
Read the Guideline together with the *Responsible Record-Keeping Directive* to understand the purpose, the requirements for responsible record-keeping and your responsibility and accountability.
- *Records are information assets that belong to the City.*
Divisions have responsibility and accountability to manage and maintain records throughout the life-cycle like other corporate assets such as finances, facilities and equipment.
- *Responsible record-keeping is good customer service.*
Records – paper or electronic - are evidence of actions that you take as employees of the City of Toronto in the course of carrying out your day to day business. As City employees we are required to keep records and to document the decisions we make and the business transactions we carry out. Good record-keeping practices support timely and accurate access to, and information about, City services and programs.

Definitions

Record

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A record means information however recorded or stored, whether in printed form, on film, by electronic means or otherwise, and includes documents, financial statements, minutes, accounts, correspondence, memoranda, plans, maps, drawings, photographs and films; . – S. 3 of *City of Toronto Act, 2006*

Record-keeping

A set of procedures by which the records of an organization are created, captured, maintained, and disposed of in accordance with approved records policies, standards and retention schedules. Such a system ensures records can be

- updated accurately and effectively
- available in a timely manner
- accessed only by authorized personnel, where required
- preserved and produced as evidence of business activity

Contact

For assistance to assess your Divisional record-keeping processes please contact:

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