



Information Retention and Disposal Policy

1. Purpose

The *Information Retention and Disposal Policy* mandates retention and disposal requirements for information held within the WA health system.

This Policy provides direction for WA health system entities in the management of the:

- retention and disposal of records to ensure compliance with the relevant requirements of the *State Records Act 2000*
- prevention of premature destruction of records that need to be retained for a specific period to satisfy legal, financial and other requirements
- authorisation of the destruction of records not required for permanent retention
- identification of records to be preserved permanently as State archives, and to be transferred to the State Records Office of Western Australia for permanent storage.

This Policy is a mandatory requirement for Health Service Providers under the *Information Management Policy Framework* pursuant to section 26(2)(k) of the *Health Services Act 2016*.

This Policy is a mandatory requirement for the Department of Health pursuant to section 29 of the *Public Sector Management Act 1994*.

This Policy supersedes MP 0002/16 *Patient Information Retention and Disposal Schedule Policy* and OD 0583/15 *Digitisation and Disposal of Patient Records Policy*.

2. Applicability

This Policy is applicable to the WA health system, as defined in this policy.

3. Policy Requirements

The *Information Retention and Disposal Policy* applies to all records regardless of format. The format can be physical (i.e. paper based), digital or biological (i.e. blood and tissue samples).

WA health system entities must:

- Maintain appropriate local plans, policies and/or procedures to ensure compliance with State Records Commission endorsed Retention and Disposal Schedules.
- Maintain appropriate local plans, policies and/or procedures to ensure compliance with State Records Commission endorsed Digitisation Standard and Specifications.

- Ensure staff member compliance with the Record Keeping Awareness Training.

4. Compliance Monitoring

The WA health system is responsible for complying with this Policy.

The System Manager, through the Purchasing and System Performance Division, Department of Health, may carry out compliance audits to ascertain the level of WA health system entity compliance with this Policy and may provide updates to Information Stewards, Chief Executives of Health Service Providers, the Director General and other relevant persons regarding the findings of compliance monitoring activities.

The Department of Health (Information and Performance Governance Unit), as a Department in the WA public service, is responsible for monitoring and reporting WA health system entity compliance with this Policy to Executive.

5. Related Documents

The following documents are mandatory pursuant to this Policy:

- [DA 2017-020 Sector Disposal Schedule for Health Services](#)
- [RD 2016002 – General Disposal Authority for Source Records](#)
- [RD 2013017/1 – General Disposal Authority for State Government Information](#)
- [DA 2019-008 – Patient Information Retention and Disposal Schedule \(PIRDS\)](#)
- [Patient Information Retention and Disposal Schedule Requirements](#)
- [Other State Records Office Retention and Disposal Schedules](#)
- [Standard 8: Managing Digital Information](#)
- [Digitization Specifications](#)

6. Supporting Information

The following information is not mandatory but informs and/or supports the implementation of this policy:

- [Recordkeeping Resource Schedule](#)
- [State Records Office](#)

7. Definitions

The following definition(s) are relevant to this Policy.

Term	Definition
Biological Record	Biological records are specimens taken from a patient. Examples are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cell and tissues samples • blood samples • genetic samples.

Digital Record	<p>Digital records are records that are either born digital or have been digitised from a physical format. Examples are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • born digital records such as photographs, videos, audios, information contained within databases. • patient records that have been scanned into a digital format such as the various medical information contained in the paper-based record. • source records that have been scanned into a digital format and captured to an Electronic Document and Records Management System (eDRMS).
Disposal	Disposal is the action taken to destroy a record.
Information	The term 'information' generally refers to data that has been processed in such a way as to be meaningful to the person who receives it. Information can be personal or non-personal in nature.
Physical Record	<p>Physical records are records that can be touched and take up physical space, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • paper based records including: • medical records • HR hard copy files • Hard copy corporate files • Non-digital photographs, videotapes, films and audiotapes • Microforms (microfilm and microfiche) • Non-digital diagnostics information.
Record	<p>Has the meaning as defined in the State Records Act 2000 as any record of information however recorded and includes -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) anything on which there is writing or Braille; and (b) a map, plan, diagram or graph; and (c) a drawing, pictorial or graphic work, or photograph; and (d) anything on which there are figures, marks, perforations, or symbols, having a meaning for persons qualified to interpret them; and (e) anything from which images, sounds or writings can be reproduced with or without the aid of anything else; and

	(f) anything on which information has been stored or recorded, either mechanically, magnetically, or electronically.
Retention	Has the meaning as defined in the State Records Act 2000 as the period for which the record must be kept before it may be destroyed.
WA health system	The WA health system is comprised of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) the Department; (ii) health service providers (NMHS, SMHS, CAHS, WACHS, EMHS, PathWest, Quadriplegic Centre and HSS); and (iii) contracted health entities, to the extent they provide health services to the State.

8. Policy Contact

Enquiries relating to this Policy may be directed to:

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9. Document Control

Version	Published date	Effective from	Review date	Effective to	Amendment (s)
MP 0144/20	1 December 2020	1 December 2020	December 2023	18 March 2021	Original version
MP 0144/20 v.2.0	18 March 2021	18 March 2021	December 2023	10 June 2021	Amendments as below:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Included <i>Other State Records Office Retention and Disposal Schedules</i> as a related document. 					
MP 0144/20 v.3.0	10 June 2021	10 June 2021	December 2023	24 June 2022	Amendments as below:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replaced the related document <i>RD2005001 – Department of Health – Disposal Authority for Health Services</i> with <i>DA 2017-020 Sector Disposal Authority for Health Services</i>. 					
MP 0144/20 v.4.0	24 June 2022	24 June 2022	December 2023	Current	Amendments as below:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replaced the related document <i>RD2014001 Patient Information Retention and Disposal Schedule PIRDS</i> with <i>RD2019-008 Patient Information Retention and Disposal Schedule</i>. • Included <i>Patient Information Retention and Disposal Schedule Requirements</i> as a related document. 					

10. Approval

Approval by	Nicole O'Keefe, Assistant Director General, Strategy and Governance Division, Department of Health
Approval date	21 November 2020

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