



Information Retention and Disposal Policy

1. Purpose

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

This policy provides a consistent approach for WA health 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 must be read in conjunction with [MP 0152/21 Information Management Governance Policy](#).

2. Applicability

This policy is applicable to WA health entities.

The requirements contained within this policy are applicable to the services purchased from contracted health entities where it is explicitly stated in the contract between the contracted health entity and the State of Western Australia or Health Service Provider. The State of Western Australia or Health Service Provider contract manager is responsible for ensuring that any obligation to comply with this policy by the contracted health entity is accurately reflected in the relevant contract and managed accordingly.

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).

Ensure you have the latest version from the [Policy Frameworks](#) website.

WA health 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 Information and Performance Governance Unit on behalf of the System Manager must ensure WA health entities comply with this policy through [Information Management Maturity Assessments](#) as prescribed in the [Information Management Governance Model](#).

Health Service Providers are required to provide to the System Manager the results of their two yearly self-assessed Information Management Maturity Assessment, and the results are subject to review for assurance purposes. In addition, all related local documentation including policies, processes, procedures and/or protocols are to be provided by Health Service Providers to the System Manager upon request.

The Department of Health Divisions are required to conduct two yearly Information Management Maturity Assessments, and the results are subject to review for assurance purposes.

5. Related Documents

The following documents are mandatory pursuant to this policy:

- [DA 2017-020 Sector Disposal Schedule for Health Services](#)
- [RD2016002 – General Disposal Authority for Source Records](#)
- [DA2023/004 General Retention and Disposal Authority for State Government Information](#)
- [RD2019-008 Patient Information Retention and Disposal Schedule \(PIRDS\)](#)
- [Patient Information Retention and Disposal Schedule Requirements](#)
- [DA 2021-012 Sector Disposal Schedule for Mental Health Services](#)
- [Other State Records Office Retention and Disposal Schedules](#)
- [Standard 8: Managing Digital Information](#)
- [Digitization Specifications](#)
- [Record Keeping Awareness Training](#)

6. Supporting Information

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

- [DOH Resources](#)
- [CAHS Resources](#)
- [EMHS Resources](#)
- [HSS Resources](#)
- [NMHS Resources](#)
- [SMHS Resources](#)
- [WACHS Resources](#)
- [State Records Office](#)

7. Definitions

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

Term	Definition
Biological Record	<p>Biological records are specimens taken from a patient. Examples are:</p> <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	<p>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. The terms 'data' and 'information' are often used interchangeably and should be taken to mean both data and information in this Policy.</p>
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>Defined in the <i>State Records Act 2000</i> 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

	<p>(e) anything from which images, sounds or writings can be reproduced with or without the aid of anything else; and</p> <p>(f) anything on which information has been stored or recorded, either mechanically, magnetically, or electronically.</p>
Retention	Defined in the <i>State Records Act 2000</i> as the period for which the record must be kept before it may be destroyed.
WA health entity	<p>WA health entities include:</p> <p>(i) Health Service Providers as established by an order made under section 32 (1)(b) of the <i>Health Services Act 2016</i>.</p> <p>(ii) Department of Health as an administrative division of the State of Western Australia pursuant to section 35 of the <i>Public Sector Management Act 1994</i>.</p>
WA health system	<p>The WA health system is comprised of:</p> <p>(i) the Department;</p> <p>(ii) health service providers (NMHS, SMHS, CAHS, WACHS, EMHS, PathWest, Quadriplegic Centre and HSS); and</p> <p>(iii) contracted health entities, to the extent they provide health services to the State.</p>

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	Amendment(s)
MP 0144/20	1 December 2020	1 December 2020	December 2023	Original version
MP 0144/20 v.2.0	18 March 2021	18 March 2021	December 2023	Amendments as below.
Updated to include Other State Records Office Retention and Disposal Schedules as a related document.				
MP 0144/20 v.3.0	10 June 2021	10 June 2021	December 2023	Amendments as below:
Replaced as a 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	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. 				
MP 0144/20 v.4.1	16 February 2023	24 June 2022	December 2023	Amendments as below:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amended Digitization Specifications link within related document: <i>Patient Information Retention and Disposal Schedule Requirements</i>. Amended related document link: <i>Digitalization Specifications</i>. 				
MP 0144/20 v.5.0	31 January 2024	31 January 2024	January 2027	Policy review and amendments, listed below.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purpose section amended to align with governance requirements. Applicability section amended to include a standard phrase on contracted health entities. Compliance monitoring section amended to clarify the requirements of WA health entities and the Department of Health. Related documents: inclusion of DA 2021-012 Sector Disposal Schedule for Mental Health Services. All hyperlinks reviewed and updated as required, with the Recordkeeping Resource Schedule (previously Supporting Information) hyperlinks transferred into the policy. 				

10. Approval

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

This document can be made available in alternative formats on request for a person with a disability.

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