



Information Storage Policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of the *Information Storage Policy* is to facilitate storage of information practices across the WA health system which are consistent/compliant with relevant applicable legislative and policy requirements.

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*.

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

WA health entities must:

- have local policies and procedures in place that ensure compliance with this policy.
- ensure staff members adhere with the relevant legislation, policies, guidelines, standards and procedures pertaining to the storage of information. The extent of these responsibilities will vary according to individual roles.
- ensure physical and technical security controls for physical, electronic, and biological information systems guarantee the integrity of the information.
- ensure staff member compliance with the Record Keeping Awareness Training.

3.1 Physical records storage

WA health entities must:

- ensure storage conditions for physical records are designed to protect the information not only from unauthorised access and theft, but from damage caused by vermin, fire, water, mould, and natural disasters.

- ensure physical records that have been transferred to a secondary storage facility are made available for retrieval if requested. Complete documentation of all records sent off-site, including barcoding records and storage boxes, will enable records to be easily located when required.
- ensure that the secondary storage facility is accountable for maintaining the required storage conditions in accordance with the applicable information storage contract and relevant WA health system policies, guidelines and procedures.
- ensure that physical records storage processes are carried out according to the
 - [State Records Commission Standard 6: Outsourcing](#),
 - [State Records Commission Standard 7: State Archives Retained by Government Organizations](#) and;
 - associated [Archival Storage Specification](#).

3.2. Digital records storage

WA health entities must:

- ensure storage conditions of digital records provide adequate protection while also allowing for easy accessibility of the record.
- ensure information is stored on external cloud services with agreements for the management of the information in accordance with WA health policies, including the [MP 0140/20 Cloud Policy](#) and legislative requirements such as the *Freedom of Information Act 1992* and *State Records Act 2000*.
- ensure that record digitisation processes are carried out according to the *State Records Commission Standard 8 Managing Digital Information* and the State Records Office of Western Australia [Specifications for Digitisation of State Records](#) requirements.

3.3. Biological record storage

WA health entities must:

- ensure storage conditions of biological records provide adequate protection while also allowing for easy accessibility of the biological records.
- ensure biological records are stored in accordance with the [Therapeutic Goods Administration: Biological standards](#).

4. Compliance Monitoring

The Information and System Performance Directorate 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, Health Service Providers must provide all related local documentation including policies, processes, procedures and/or protocols 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:

- [State Records Commission Standard 6: Outsourcing](#)
- [State Records Commission Standard 7: State Archives Retained by Government Organizations](#)
- [State Records Office of Western Australia Archival Storage Specification](#)
- [State Records Commission Standard 8 Managing Digital Information](#)
- [Specifications for Digitisation of State Records](#)
- [Australian Government, Department of Health and Aged Care: Therapeutic Goods Administration: Biological standards.](#)

6. Supporting Information

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

- [Information Storage Policy Resource Compendium](#)

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.
Cloud services	Cloud services are defined as the delivery of on-demand data management services, including software applications, storage and processing power, typically via the public internet. There are three main types of cloud services available for purchase 'as a service'.
Digital record	Digital records are records that are either born digital or have been digitised from a physical format. Examples are: <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).
Digitisation	Refers to the creation of digital images from paper documents by such means as scanning.
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. The terms 'data' and 'information' are often used interchangeably and should be taken to mean both data and information in this policy.
Physical record	Physical records are records that can be touched and take up physical space, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • paper based records including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
WA health entity	WA health entities include: <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	The WA health system is comprised of: <p>(i) the Department;</p> <p>(ii) Health Service Providers (North Metropolitan Health Service, South Metropolitan Health Service, Child and Adolescent Health Service, WA Country Health Service, East Metropolitan Health Service, PathWest Laboratory Medicine WA, Quadriplegic Centre and Health Support Services); 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:

Title: Director, Information and Performance Governance

Directorate: Information and System Performance Directorate

Email: RoyalSt.PSPInfoManagement@health.wa.gov.au

9. Document Control

Version	Published date	Review date	Amendment(s)
MP 0145/20	4 December 2020	December 2023	Original version
MP 0145/20	9 September 2024	September 2027	Policy review and amendments as listed below.

- Purpose section refined.
- Applicability section: WA health entity and contracted health entities statement updated.
- Policy requirements: section condensed and terminology updated to “staff members”
- Compliance Monitoring section updated for consistency and to reflect other Information and System Performance Directorate owned policies.
- Inclusion of the following related documents:
 - [State Records Commission Standard 6: Outsourcing](#)
 - [State Records Commission Standard 7: State Archives Retained by Government Organizations](#)
 - [State Records Office of Western Australia Archival Storage Specification](#)
 - [State Records Commission Standard 8 Managing Digital Information](#)
 - [Specifications for Digitisation of State Records](#)
 - [Australian Government, Department of Health and Aged Care: Therapeutic Goods Administration: Biological standards.](#)
- Supporting Information ‘Information Storage Policy Resource Compendium’ updated.
- Definitions ‘WA health entity’, ‘Digital record’ and ‘Information’ updated.
- Policy contact updated to Director level to reflect policy ownership.

Note: Mandatory policies that exceed the scheduled review date will continue to remain in effect.

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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