



**REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**

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**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE**

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NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF NAMIBIA RECORDS MANAGEMENT SECTION

**TO: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO THE PRESIDENT  
SECRETARY TO CABINET  
DEPUTY AUDITOR GENERAL  
DIRECTOR: NAMIBIA SECURITY INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
SECRETARIES: NATIONAL ASSEMBLY/NATIONAL COUNCIL  
DIRECTOR: ELECTIONS  
ALL PERMANENT SECRETARIES: O/M/As  
ALL DEPUTY PERMANENT SECRETARIES (MoEAC)  
ALL DIRECTORS (HEAD OFFICE AND REGIONS)**

**NATIONAL ARCHIVES CIRCULARS OF 2017**

**CIRCULAR 4 OF 2017: GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR RECORDS STORAGE  
FOR O/M/As AND SOEs**

**MARCH 2017**

## **1. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this directive is to ensure that records in O/M/As and SOEs are always stored with all precautions against accidental and wilful damage.

## **2. GENERAL SECURITY**

Records should be kept in locked record rooms, never in generally accessible rooms or even corridors.

Record rooms should never be used for storage of any other materials, such as broken and unused furniture and appliances, supplies, food, or debris.

## **3. ORDERLINESS AND ACCESSIBILITY**

Records should be stored neatly packaged in a visible order. Files should be boxed in labelled small boxes, or in labelled bundles, in the order given by the file plan or any other relevant system.

Records should never be stored in large cardboard boxes, except if they are already destined for destruction. Large boxes do not fit on shelves, are difficult to move, are therefore often stored on floors (danger of water damage), break easily, and require extensive effort to find and retrieve any records.

Lever arch files may seem orderly but are an unsuitable method for most types of records. They require more space, and can cause physical damage.

## **4. FIRE SECURITY**

Any building containing records should be adequately fitted with automatic fire alarms and fire extinguishers, and be within easy reach of fire hydrants.

The storage of vital records requires special fire precaution measures, such as a gas extinguishing system or sprinkler system.

## **5. WATER SECURITY**

Records should never be stored in rooms with water pipes, steam pipes, or sewerage pipes.

Records should never be stored on the floor but always on shelves at least 10 cm high to avoid accidental flooding damage.

Records should never be stored with direct contact to outside walls or walls adjoining potentially wet rooms (such as cooling plants). Generally, direct wall contact should be avoided.

Records should never be stored in rooms/buildings with leaking roofs. There should be ceilings to prevent undetected occasional small-scale leakages.

Except for transport, records should never be stored in freight containers.

Records should never be stored in basements which might be flooded by storm water or broken pipes.

Records should never be stored directly under air conditioning units, because such units tend to leak condensation water.

## **6. PEST CONTROL**

The most acute insect damage danger in Namibia is from termites. Proper shelving allows early detection of termite streets. Stacking on the floor and against walls creates hidden access paths for termites and must be avoided.

Other insect damage occurs mostly in connection with high humidity. See above under “water security”.

## **7. LIGHT PROTECTION**

All archives are sensitive to strong light. Storage areas should have preferably no outside windows, or windows should be arranged/shielded in a way that never allows direct sunlight onto records.

Lighting, especially fluorescent tubes, should never be allowed to bum full-time in storage rooms but only when needed.

Sensitive material – especially colour prints and photos – should always be stored in protective containers or folders.

## **8. ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROLS**

High temperatures and high temperature fluctuations must be avoided.

Good passive temperature control (thick walls, no windows, insulated ceilings) is better and in the long run cheaper than active air conditioning, unless very low temperatures are required (such as for film and for colour photo material).

Air humidity must never be above 60% relative humidity. Active cooling requires close monitoring of humidity levels, which can increase dramatically over the wet season. Free air circulation flow is essential wherever local humidity can develop.

Dust levels must be kept low, especially for all audio visual and electronic media. Well-closing windows (or no windows) and regular vacuuming and/or wet cleaning are essential.

Chemical contaminants and fire hazards should never be stored in the same room with records.

This includes especially cleaning materials, acids, bleach, batteries of all types, any flammable liquids and volatile substances (spray cans, paint, glues, etc.)

**9. ADEQUATE STORAGE OF SPECIAL MATERIALS**

Large paper formats (maps and plans), photographic, audio visual and electronic records require special conditions and treatment. Consult with the Chief Archivist for individual advice.

**10. ELECTRONIC RECORDS**

**10.1 ELECTRONIC PRESERVATION**

Electronic records must be guarded against obsolescence of hardware and software. Data, including textual documents, should be stored in non-proprietary international standards formats to ensure future readability.

In particular, vital information such as plans should be safeguarded by backup copies in non-proprietary formats.

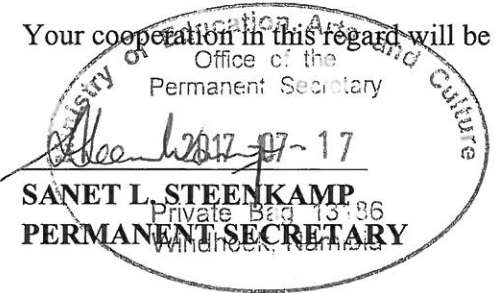
**10.2 ELECTRONIC BACKUPS**

A reasonably recent backup copy of digital records must always be stored offsite in another building. (What is "reasonably recent" is determined by the nature of the records/operations, and could range from daily to monthly).

**11. DISASTER MANAGEMENT**

There should be a disaster management plan in every organization. Contact the National Archives for advice.

Your cooperation in this regard will be highly appreciated.


  
 2017-07-17

**SANET L. STEENKAMP**  
**PERMANENT SECRETARY**

14.7.17.  
**DATE**