



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE

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 5 OF 2017: CONCEPT OF A RECORDS CENTRE

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1. WHAT IS A RECORDS CENTRE

- It is the responsibility of the government to control all records created by the organisation and ensure that they are put to use to the best advantage throughout their life.
- The term 'records' includes all information materials produced in the course of administrative work. Most records are on paper, but other formats also exist (for example, audio or videotape, photographs, maps, electronic records). The care of both paper and non-paper records are covered by the procedures outlined below.
- Good recordkeeping begins with establishing policies, procedures and priorities before records are even created.
- The establishment of a central records and archives institution charged with over all records care is critical to the success of a record-keeping programme.
- However, the day-to-day administration of records may fall to various departments or agencies, depending on the currency of the records.
- Records that are in full daily use by government and state owned enterprises that created them are called 'current records'.
- When, after some time, they are no longer used regularly but must still be kept, they become 'semi-current'.
- At this point they should be removed from current systems, in part so that they do not take up space unnecessarily.
- After some time, many of these records are deemed obsolete and can be destroyed, while others are retained for their ongoing value as evidence or for research.
- These records become 'non-current records', some of which are kept as archives.
- When records cease to be current and become semi-current, some of them can be destroyed (under the authority of the disposal schedules).
- The majority of records should be transferred from the records offices to a central place where they can be kept securely, used as sources of information and then disposed of systematically. This central place is the records centre.
- In practice, there may be more than one records centre in an organisation, or one records centre may have several storage areas. Even if the institution holds records in several locations, administratively all of these should form part of one records centre.
- The majority of semi-current records have to be kept for various periods of time for legal, Financial or administrative requirements. Some should be kept because it is believed that

they will be valuable for research. The records centre and archives institution is charged with keeping these categories of records in such a way that they can be retrieved for use when required and can be disposed correctly at the right time.

- The function of the records centre is to hold semi-current records and make available for use until the date of their disposal. Therefore, the records centre is a temporary or, as it is often called, an intermediate storage facility. In other words, it is an intermediate storage between the organisation's records offices and the archival institution.
- The records centre provides a general service to all parts of the government or corporation. It is a high-density, low-cost storage area, equipped with a system for retrieving and consulting the records held. The records centre receives and makes available all records that have any continuing utility, regardless of their bulk or form. It is also a service intermediate between the records offices of operational agencies and the archival institution.
- The records centre should be safe, secure, clean, efficient and economical. It should be capable of holding all designated semi-current records in all media and able to provide a dependable retrieval service. The records centre is not a place for permanent retention of records. It is a fundamental rule that no records should be transferred to the records centre unless appraisal has taken place and there is an action date attached to the records.
- The appropriate action may be to destroy, review or transfer them to the archival institution or to another appropriate repository within the records and archives institution. These actions are indicated against each series of records in the disposal schedule, which is an authoritative official record.

2. FUNCTIONS OF THE RECORDS CENTRE

- Governments and organisations or individuals create records in the course of their daily work.
- During the period when the records are current, the stage when they must be available for use in the office, it is the responsibility of the records offices to manage them and to see that they are available when needed.
- After a certain period, almost all records cease to be current.
- Especially within government, many records that must be retained for legal or other reasons can be very bulky.
- It is expensive and difficult to manage them when they are kept in the offices in which they were originally created and used.

- It is generally advantageous to establish a central repository to provide for medium to long-term records storage.
- Systems for the management of current records should not be used to administer non-current or semi-current records.
- The point at which records cease to be current should be established in the organisation's records retention and disposal schedules.
- These schedules set out instructions for transferring records from the records office to the records centre.
- The schedules also provide instructions for the eventual disposal of the records, either by destruction or by transfer to the archival repository.
- When the appropriate time for transferring records is reached, they should be retired from the current systems in the way specified and stipulated in the disposal schedule.
- Some series of records will be destroyed at this stage, and a small number may be transferred directly to an archival repository (3% of records created in the context of a business transaction will eventually make it to the Archives for permanent preservation), but the majority (all that have any continuing value) are transferred to the records centre.

3. CHARACTERISTICS OF A RECORDS CENTRE

- The records centre must be secure, clean, efficient and economical. These issues are discussed below.

3.1 SECURITY

- There is no point in transferring records to a records centre if it is not completely secure. It is also important that all users of the records centre know that the facility is safe and secure.
- To ensure security, a records centre must be:
 - ✓ Externally secure, as a place of custody of valuable materials
 - ✓ Environmentally secure, as a place where valuable documents and information must be maintained in a usable state for long periods
 - ✓ Clean and orderly.
- Security involves both custodial and environmental security and is necessary both externally (outside of the physical space) and internally (within the building itself).

3.2 CUSTODIAL SECURITY

- It should not be possible for unauthorised persons to gain access to records in the records centre.
- In some cases it may be necessary for a special area to be set aside for classified records (secret, top secret), in order to ensure unauthorised access to these records. These areas should be separated from the rest of the storage area by a locked enclosure, and access should be restricted to staff who have been specially authorised for this purpose.
- The records held in records centres are of great sensitivity, created from all levels of government or corporate office. If there is any suspicion of poor security, clients and records creators will lose confidence in it.
- The office areas must always be staffed during working hours. The building must be guarded at night. No person other than authorised records and archives institution staff should be admitted to the storage area or to the working areas without the direct and specific permission of the head of office.
- Everyone in the records centre should have identity cards. Staff should wear a card carrying their photograph, and visitors should wear a temporary identification card issued to them at the entrance. Anyone on site without a visible identity card should be challenged or confronted.
- The entrance to the records centre should have a prominent notice that no unauthorised persons are permitted.
- The records centre manager is responsible for controlling the keys to the building. The manager should keep a record of all keys issued to staff members.
- All external doors must be kept locked, subject to safety regulations. Keys should be numbered and kept in a locked security cabinet. Spare keys for use in an emergency should be kept in a location set out in the disaster management plan.

3.3 ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY

- The records centre should be isolated from any dangers that might threaten the safety of the records, including fire, flood or natural disaster. This system of isolation should be supported by the installation of automatic alarm systems and by constant monitoring of the area.
- Alarms should connect automatically with the appropriate police or security authorities. Smoke, fire and flood alarms should connect with the appropriate local fire service provider.

- Staff should be trained in the use of extinguishers and should know what to do in an emergency. All alarm systems and extinguishers should be tested regularly.

3.4 SECURITY AND ACCESS

- Records brought into the records centre are stored in randomly selected locations. Usually, the boxes themselves should carry codes of the offices where they were created. It is important to ensure the contents of boxes are not easily identifiable on the outside of the box, in order to ensure the secure storage of the records.
- Records officially classified as confidential, secret or top secret must be kept in accordance with the general rules for the management of such confidential or classified records. However, records centre staff should seek to declassifying records according to regulations and guidelines whenever possible. In particular, it is important not to allow absolute restrictions to remain in effect, preventing the full and appropriate use of the information in the records.
- Records may only be issued to, or by the direct authority of the office that transferred them to the records centre (records creators). If duly authorised people come to the records centre to consult records there, they must do so under supervised conditions, and they must conform to the rules applicable.
- Requests for access by other persons must be referred to the head of the records and archives institution, who will, as appropriate, seek authorisation from the office of the creators.

3.5 CLEANLINESS AND ORDER

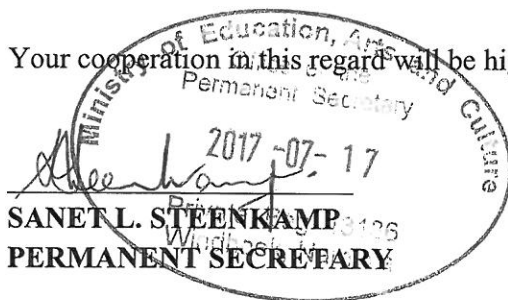
- The records centre must be clean. This means that the records in the centre must be protected from damage from dirt, insects or rodents or infestation by moulds.
- To maintain cleanliness, no one should be allowed to eat or bring food into the records centre: crumbs could encourage insects or rodents.
- Smoking must be prohibited in the records centre at all times, and there should be notices to this effect.
- The records centre should be cleaned, dusted and inspected on a regular basis.
- The records centre should also be orderly. This means that the records kept in it must be in logical appropriate/order on the shelves, so that any record can be found at any time with a minimum of delay.
- Records should be kept in suitable containers clearly labelled with their reference codes and numbers.

- Regular inspections should be made to ensure records are returned to their appropriate locations and are not stored inappropriately.

3.6 EFFICIENCY AND ECONOMY

- The records centre must be efficient. Every record held in the centre should be retrievable quickly and easily.
- Records should be disposed of according to disposal schedule.
- The cost of space in a records centre is less than that in active office buildings.
- It is generally accepted that high-density, low-cost storage away from the offices where records were created will be much more economical than non-current storage in or near active offices or administration offices.
- The records centre is itself a less expensive building than an active office site. This is because it is designed or adapted for its specific purpose.
- Records can be stored more densely in a records centre than in an office. This density can be quantified in terms of the ratio between cubic metres of records stored per square metre of floor space.
- Records centres are organised so as to be able to identify and retrieve records efficiently, whereas offices are generally organised in support of administrative services.

Your cooperation in this regard will be highly appreciated.



 SANETL. STEENKAMP

 PERMANENT SECRETARY

14.7.17

 DATE