

Information Management Advice 62 Help! We're moving

Introduction

This advice provides practical guidance on the physical relocation of records in any format when you are moving premises, including:

- *planning for a move*
- *how to identify records affected*
- *how to apply disposal classes to affected records*
- *how to move them.*

This type of move generally occurs when an organisation moves to new offices, regional offices merge or when parts of one organisation are transferred to another organisation (as a result of administrative change).

You may need to move records as a result of other occurrences. If so, additional issues will need to be considered. The table below gives sources of guidance.

Moving premises - the process for moving records

Once you know you need to move records between premises you should follow this process:

1. Assess your current situation
2. Plan the project
3. Identify affected records
4. Apply current disposal schedules to affected records
5. Organise the physical move of affected records
6. Check that the records have been moved successfully

Assess your current situation

To successfully move records you need to know:

- what records are affected by the move
- the formats of records and the equipment needed to assess them, e.g. paper, magnetic tape, stored on servers, etc.
- how the affected records are controlled and whether they are covered by a current disposal schedule

- where the records are physically located, e.g. in offices, on servers, in onsite or offsite storage facilities, with a commercial storage providers, etc.

You should maintain this information as part of your ongoing records management program. If you don't have this information:

- interview staff of business units to find out what records they have, where they are kept and what tools they use to keep track of them e.g. registers, index cards, spreadsheets
- undertake a records inventory. If time permits, do this across the agency. If you have limited time or resources, as a minimum, do an inventory for the affected business functions or sites. Remember also that some records may be stored with commercial storage providers - these must be included on the inventory.
- Contact TAHO for more advice on any aspects of moving records.

I. Carrying out a records inventory

I.1 Establish the purpose

There has been lots written about carrying out records surveys and designing records inventory forms and questionnaires. The starting point is to know for what purpose you are gathering information about the records. In this case it is for moving premises - as a result, the information you require is not as complex as if you were, for example, developing a disposal schedule.

I.2 Determine the methodology

It is generally accepted that best results are gained by records management staff carrying out the survey. However this is resource-intensive and is often not practical. The alternative method is to send out questionnaires and ask business managers to complete these and return them. For best results, make sure you:

- explain clearly the purpose of the exercise
- design forms for easy use by non-records people
- if possible, give some training or provide guidance, for example, a completed pro-forma.

You may adopt a combination of the two methods for different parts of your agency, e.g. administrative functions do self-assessment, core business functions are surveyed by the records management team.

I.3 Design the tools

Bearing in mind the need to keep things simple, TAHO has developed some templates that you may customise for use within your agency. You may need to add, amend, or delete as is appropriate to your agency. For further information including forms and checklists see *Information Management Advice 61 How to Review your Records Holdings*.

2. Plan the project

In most cases when an agency or part of it is moving, a project steering group will have been set up to oversee all aspects of the move. Make sure that records are included in their plans. Moving paper records particularly takes a long time to plan and implement. The project team need to be aware of these resource requirements.

The table below sets out the different elements you need to think about in your planning. The output should be a project plan with milestones to help you keep the project on track. Use the project plan to assign responsibilities to staff involved in the project.

Note: if your agency has moved locations before, check the records and use this experience to help you plan - this includes things to do and things not to do!

Identify ...	Consider ...
What is happening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the reason for the move (this will affect what needs to happen to the records) • which site/s and staff are affected • when it is scheduled to take place • the facilities to which the agency is moving
Time required to plan and implement the change (or the time available)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how long you need to do the job well. <p>Note: If the timeframe is set for you then this will affect the amount of staff you need and possibly costs.</p>
Who will do the work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • whether the move will be handled by contractors or staff of the agency • if contractors, ensuring that the security of records is adequately safeguarded
Staff resources required (or available)	<p>Even if contractors are employed, staff time will be needed to plan, prepare and to evaluate at the other end. Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • as above • how much staff time you need to do the job in the time available • staff needed at different sites and from different parts of the agency, e.g. records team affected business units/affected sites, HR staff, etc. • temporary staff required to do legwork such as packing and labelling. (This may be handled as part of an overall contract). Make sure they get some training! • assigning responsibility for tasks.
Facilities available at new site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what is already available • what is required • budget and equipment to meet the needs
Other resources required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • budget for hiring temporary staff, transportation, temporary packaging, conservation work, etc. • insurance for loss or damage during transportation • formal contract with contractors carrying out the work with indemnities against loss or damage to records and setting out requirements when handling any personal or confidential information.

3. Identify affected records

You need to find out which records are affected by plans to move.

If it is..	then..
the whole agency	All records (in any format) are affected. Note: Records in secondary storage may or may not need to be moved. If not, make sure that their existence is not forgotten and is fully documented in the records control system.
one or more sites, e.g. a regional office	The records created and maintained by that site will be affected. Also find out if they provide storage for the records of other sites of the agency
one or more business functions, possibly being outsourced or privatised, e.g. financial services	This is the most complex scenario. The records relating to those business functions or units will be affected. These may be dispersed over several sites, depending upon how the business operated. Talk to staff to help identify all affected records. Remember that as well as records of the business function, administrative records may also need to be moved.

4. Apply retention and disposal schedules to affected records

Moving premises is often a trigger for agencies to apply approved retention and disposal schedules to their records. This process is known as 'sentencing'. Carrying out sentencing prior to a move will reduce the volume of records to be moved and ensure those records required as State archives are transferred to TAHO. It may be a timely opportunity to sentence records in secondary storage. Different disposal actions are summarised in the table below. Note that these actions apply to both paper and electronic records.

Note: If time and/or resources are limited, you may not have enough time to carry out disposal processes. It is important that all sentencing and disposal work is carried out in an accountable manner. Undue haste or pressure to reduce the volume of records could result in records being improperly sentenced or illegally destroyed.

If records are..	then..
in active use	transfer the records with the business unit or function
used fairly regularly (semi-active)	Transfer the records to storage in the new premises - keeping these records in office accommodation will be wasteful of space and money. As use declines, transfer to secondary storage.
inactive but NOT eligible for destruction	transfer the records to secondary storage, either in-house or a commercial storage provider
inactive AND eligible for destruction	Destroy the records securely and document destruction in your register of records destroyed. For help on secure destruction practices, see <i>State Records Guideline 21 Approved destruction methods for State records</i>
required as State Archives	See table below Note: Agencies may keep State archives over 25 years old under certain circumstances. Approval from the State Archivist is required.

Records required as State archives

If the records are..	then..
less than 25 years old and still in active use	Move the records with the business function.
over 25 years old and still in use	Contact TAHO to arrange a 'Still in Use' determination and move the records with the business function.
less than 25 years old and not in active use	Transfer the records to secondary storage. TAHO may accept these records under special circumstances
over 25 years old and not in active use	Transfer the records to TAHO. See <i>Advice 12 Preparing hard copy records for transfer to the Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office</i>

5. Organise the physical move of affected records

Once you know which records you need to move and the facilities to which they are moving, then you can organise their relocation.

Things you need to plan for are set out in the table below.

Things to consider	Involves
Ordering stores and equipment	Working out the type and quantity of boxes/crates or other packing equipment needed. This will depend upon the format of records being moved as well as the quantity, e.g. magnetic tapes, CDs, paper files. Find out whether you need to order supplies yourself, or whether the moving company (if used) will provide them. If the latter, don't forget to tell the moving company what you need.
Packing the records	Working out what you require in terms of time, space and staff.
Labelling boxes	Deciding on a box labelling system. Make sure ALL boxes are labelled clearly and consistently, e.g. designate a particular location on the box for the label. Linking boxes to box contents through control tools - make lists of box contents e.g. in Excel, or generate these from records management software.
Assigning responsibility for tasks to staff	Informing staff involved in the move what they are responsible for and who to go to for help.
Maintaining records control tools	At all times keeping control of what records are being moved, where they were moved from and where they are going. Even if records are being transferred to another agency, you should update your records control tools to show this.
Striking a formal agreement with contractors	Setting out what contractors are required to do, the standards they are to meet and penalties for failing to achieve them
Establishing rules and/or procedures for packing and handling records	Establishing clear rules to help staff and contractors
Transporting the records	Obtaining adequate and secure transport at the right time, in the right place and for the right price.
Unpacking the records	Working out what you require in terms of time, space and staff

To help you keep track of records, essential for a successful move, take extra care with:

- labelling the boxes
- maintaining location information in records control systems
- preparing storage areas or equipment in the destination office.

Moving electronic records

Moving electronic records is in many ways easier than relocating paper records as the physical size is usually small. You may just be moving data, or data storage devices (e.g. CDs, servers) and equipment required to use the records may also need to be moved.

6. Check that records have been successfully moved

There are two aspects to this final stage:

- Checking that ALL records that should have been moved:
 - have been moved
 - are undamaged
- Evaluating your project implementation.

Checking the records

First, you should check the records at the new location - both paper and electronic - against the records control tools to check that all the records that were sent from the old premises have arrived at the new premises.

Next, check that systems are working, and that records are not damaged. If there are any missing or damaged records, make sure you follow these up as soon as possible. If there is any damage, you may need advice from a conservator or IT professional about treatment or restoration, contact TAHO for advice. Early identification will be the best hope for recovery or the prevention of further damage. Talk to:

- staff of the business unit from which the records came
- those involved in the transportation
- staff who packed and listed the records
- staff who unpacked the records (if different)
- IT staff.

Evaluating the project

Secondly, as with any project, evaluate its success on completion. From this you can learn lessons about what went well and what could be done better the next time you face a move. Document this evaluation so that others can learn from your experience.

Further Advice

For more detailed advice, please contact:

Government Information Strategy Unit
Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office
91 Murray Street
HOBART TASMANIA 7000
Telephone: 03 6165 5581
Email: gisu@education.tas.gov.au

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- *Help! We're moving*; State Records NSW

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This document has been security classified using the Tasmanian Government Information Security classification standard as PUBLIC and will be managed according to the requirements of the Tasmanian Government Information Security Policy.

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Ross Latham
State Archivist