



Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

RECORDS AND DATA MANAGEMENT MANUAL

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Table of Contents

Introduction	4
Specific Roles and Responsibilities	4
Commissioner	4
Data Services Section Manager/Agency Record Managers	4
Deputy Commissioners/Division Directors/Section Managers/Supervisors	5
Minnesota Information Technology Systems	5
Continuity of Operations Program Planners	6
Employees	6
Background Information	6
Benefits of a Records Management Program	6
What is a Record?	7
Administrative Value	7
Evidential Value	7
Fiscal Value	7
Historical Value	8
Informational Value	8
Legal Value	8
Record Types	8
Official Record	8
Transitory Record	9
Duplicate Record	9
Working Paper	9
Nonrecord	11
Is it a Record or a Nonrecord?	12
Record Media Types	13
Lifecycle of a Record	13

Creation	14
Classification	14
Maintenance and Use	15
Checking-out Files	17
Storage and Archiving	18
Retrieval of Records.....	24
Disposition	24
Security of Agency Records.....	25
Data Practices	26
Information Requests.....	27
Legal Holds	27
Working with Not Public Information.....	27
E-mail.....	27
Redacting Not Public Information	27
Requests from Outside Parties to Classify Records as Not Public Data	28
Records Compliance Checks.....	28
Training.....	29
Citations, References and Sources.....	30
Glossary	34
Document Change Tracking	47

Introduction

Pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 15.17, all governmental entities such as the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) must make and preserve all records necessary to a full and accurate knowledge of their official activities. These records must be passed on to successors in office to ensure that it is understood why past actions and decisions were made.

Minn. Stat. § 138.17 requires all governmental entities to keep an inventory of their records and to maintain a records retention schedule that determines how long these records need to be preserved and describes the manner in which they should be disposed.

Governmental entities that fail to create, preserve and properly dispose of their records according to the law may not be able to meet their obligations under the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, found in Minnesota statutes chapter 13, which is a state law that regulates the handling of all governmental data that are created, collected, received, stored, maintained and disseminated by a governmental entity regardless of their physical form, how they are stored or how they are used.

Specific Roles and Responsibilities

In order to fulfill these statutory requirements, all agency employees are responsible for following the agency's Records and Data Management Policy (number 1-admin 8-12) as well as the requirements described in this manual. This manual defines the following records management-related requirements and responsibilities:

Commissioner

The Commissioner is responsible for creating and preserving records that adequately and properly document the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures and essential transactions of the MPCA. This responsibility is delegated to the Data Services Section Manager.

Data Services Section Manager/Agency Record Managers

The Data Services Section Manager is responsible for the planning, guidance and general oversight of the records management program in the agency and its incorporation into the agency culture and the broader information resources management framework. The Data Services Section Manager is responsible for:

- incorporating records management and policies into the agency's overall information resources and management policy and planning;
- designating agency Records Managers who will be responsible for:
 - leading and managing the agency-wide records management program;
 - ensuring senior agency staff members are aware of their programmatic and individual records management responsibilities;
 - advising on records management issues and developing agency-wide records management policies, procedures, guidance and training materials;
 - coordinating the approval of the agency's records retention schedule;

- coordinating records management issues with other agencies, including federal oversight agencies;
- providing technical advice and training to all agency employees and establishing and maintaining an effective records management program; and
- evaluating recordkeeping practices to determine the effectiveness of the program
- designating records management staff as required or needed;
- promulgating and communicating agency-wide policies and guidance that reflect the agency's records management mission and goals, incorporating any state or federal requirements; and
- assigning overall responsibility for the records management aspects of centrally provided information technology infrastructure, including local area network applications.

Deputy Commissioners/Division Directors/Section Managers/Supervisors

The Deputy Commissioners, Division Directors, Section Managers and Supervisors are responsible for:

- ensuring that there are adequate skills, resources and time for staff to regularly conduct recordkeeping activities;
- developing and disseminating directives and operating procedures as needed to supplement the agency-wide Records and Data Management policy in order to meet the unique records management needs of the organization and to support a records management program within the organization;
- ensuring records and other types of required documentary materials are not unlawfully removed from the agency by current or departing officials, employees or agents;
- developing records management oversight roles and a communication network with all program units including field offices and other facilities, as appropriate, to ensure that the records management program is implemented at all sites under their jurisdiction;
- ensuring that not public records are protected in accordance with appropriate laws;
- monitoring staff members under their supervision to ensure that they understand and comply with the agency's recordkeeping policies and procedures for the creation and maintenance of records; and
- supporting and fostering a culture within their workgroup that promotes good recordkeeping practices.

Minnesota Information Technology Systems

The agency Minnesota Information Technology Systems staff members are responsible for:

- ensuring that information systems intended to carry out electronic records management comply with the agency's electronic recordkeeping system;
- implementing proper recordkeeping procedures for existing information systems and ensuring recordkeeping requirements are included in proposed systems;
- ensuring that internet and intranet postings containing official records are maintained in accordance with the agency's recordkeeping requirements; and
- working with the agency Records Manager to establish and update records schedules for electronic systems.

Continuity of Operations Program Planners

The Continuity of Operations (COOP) Program planners are responsible for:

- working with records management staff to implement the vital records plan to ensure the continuation of designated COOP essential functions and
- ensuring that vital records are accessible from designated COOP locations.

Employees

All employees must ensure that they:

- understand the recordkeeping obligations and responsibilities that relate to their positions;
- adhere to agency policies, procedures and standards in keeping records documenting their daily work;
- create all records needed to conduct the agency's business and document its actions, activities and decisions and capture these records into identified agency recordkeeping systems as required by law and the MPCA's policies and procedures;
- follow the operational standard throughout the agency for the creation, capturing, maintenance, retention, storage and disposition of records;
- understand their records management responsibilities relative to the creation, capturing, maintenance, retention, storage and disposition of records;
- maintain and store agency records in such a manner that they can be easily accessed and retrieved when needed; and
- safeguard the agency's records through appropriate access and security arrangements is understood and observed by all employees for all classifications of data (public or not public).

In order to follow required records management procedures, employees must have a good understanding records and records management.

Background Information

Benefits of a Records Management Program

Records enable and support the agency in its work to fulfill its mission. "Records management" involves controlling and governing the records of the agency.

Records management:

- allows quicker retrieval of records from files;
- contributes to the smooth operation of the agency's programs by making the records needed for decision making and operations readily available;
- facilitates effective performance of activities throughout the agency;
- improves office efficiency and productivity;
- provides better documentation more efficiently;
- helps deliver services in a consistent and equitable manner;
- meets statutory and regulatory requirements regarding archival, audit and oversight activities;

- protects records from inappropriate and unauthorized access;
- protects the rights of the agency, its employees and its customers;
- provides protection and support in litigation;
- provides continuity in the event of a disaster;
- supports and documents historical and other research;
- avoids unnecessary purchases of office equipment and
- frees up office space for other purposes by moving inactive records to storage facilities.

The work of records management includes identifying, classifying, prioritizing, storing, securing, archiving, preserving, retrieving, tracking and disposing of records.

The agency's Records Management program aims to maintain, protect, retain or dispose of records in accordance with governmental regulations, legal requirements and historical and reference requirements. The goals of the records management program are to:

- provide an historical record of the agency's operations and activities to facilitate sound, consistent decision making;
- provide evidence of business transactions and decisions - for purposes of accountability;
- meet legislative and service delivery requirements and
- minimize or eliminate risks of poor decision-making arising from gaps in information and background.

What is a Record?

"Records" are broadly defined by statutes and regulation to include all recorded information, regardless of medium or format, made or received by the agency or its agents under law in connection with the transaction of public business and either preserved or appropriate for preservation because of their administrative, evidential, fiscal, historical, informational or legal value.

Administrative Value

Records that have administrative value support the ongoing, day-to-day administrative affairs of the agency and are used in conducting routine business and they assist the agency in performing its current and future work.

Evidential Value

Records that have evidential value document, in the historical sense, the existence and achievements of the agency and are useful for ensuring accountability and for writing organizational administrative histories.

Fiscal Value

Records that have fiscal value pertain to financial matters and transactions. They are often needed for audit purposes. Federal and state requirements often determine retention periods for records with fiscal value.

Historical Value

Records that have historical value provide information about the past. They often document the development of the agency and its policies, provide unique evidence of the lives and activities of its employees and describe social and economic conditions of the agency.

Informational Value

Records that have informational value pertain mostly to the external activities in which the agency has been engaged and are useful for researching people, significant historical events and social developments.

Legal Value

Records that have legal value deal with matters related to law. They often demonstrate compliance with legal, statutory and regulatory requirements.

Record Types

There are different types of records managed at the MPCA and the agency has procedures for managing these records regardless of their type. These types include:

- Official Record;
- Transitory Record;
- Duplicate Record;
- Working Paper and
- Nonrecord.

Official Record

An "official record" is broadly defined by statutes and regulation to include all recorded information, regardless of medium or format, made or received by the agency or its agents under law in connection with the transaction of public business and either preserved or appropriate for preservation because of its administrative, evidential, fiscal, historical, informational or legal value.

An official record includes any final product related to the agency's activities. Some examples may include: enforcement actions, letters, models, permits, reports etc.

An official record also includes supporting materials and data that document and explain the agency's decision-making processes connected with the transaction of its business - such as annotations, drafts, meeting minutes, raw data, reports, telephone logs etc.

Once a document is scanned into the agency's electronic document management system (e.g. OnBase), the document then becomes the agency's "official record."

