



Physical storage and preservation of protected information and records

Instruction to local authorities

February 2020

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1 Introduction

1.1 Mandate

This instruction is issued under section 40(2) of the *Public Records Act 2005* (the Act).

Protected records are local authority information and records declared by the Chief Archivist under section 40(1) to be protected for the purposes of the Act.

Under section 40(2) of the Act a local authority must provide for the adequate protection and preservation of protected information and records it holds, in accordance with any applicable standards or instructions issued by the Chief Archivist. This includes protected information and records that are no longer in current use or have been in existence for 25 years or more.

1.2 Background

On 1 July 2014 the *Storage Standard* and other mandatory standards issued under the Act were revoked and replaced with the *Records Management Standard for the New Zealand Public Sector*. The *Records Management Standard* did not apply to archives managed by local authorities. It was a records management standard rather than an archives management standard. The *Protection and preservation of protected records: Instruction to local authorities (16/Sp3)* (hereafter 'the Instruction') issued in July 2014 therefore provided for the continuation of the requirements set out in the *Storage Standard* beyond the life of that standard.

The *Records Management Standard for the New Zealand Public Sector (2014)* was revoked and replaced with the *Information and records management standard (16/S1)* in July 2016. This standard covers the continuum lifecycle of information and records and applies to public offices and local authorities. At this time, the decision was made not to undertake a full review of the Instruction but to make some minor updates and rebrand it.

The *Instruction* was reviewed in September 2019 with the intention to make it more future-focussed and format neutral, however, given the rapidly changing nature of digital storage and the fact that this is an issue that also concerns public offices, it was decided to create separate best practice guidance for all public sector organisations on digital storage.

Consequently, much of the content of this Instruction remains unchanged but has been updated in line with international standards, in particular, British Standard BS EN 16893:2018 *Conservation of Cultural Heritage: Specifications for location, construction and modification of buildings or rooms intended for the storage or use of heritage collections*, BS 4971:2017 *Conservation and care of archive and library collections*, and International Standard ISO 117799:2015 *Information and documentation – Document storage requirements for archive and library materials* and ISO 15489:2016 *Information and documentation – Records management: Part 1 – Concepts and principles*.

2 Scope

This instruction applies to all local authorities defined in section 4 of the Act.

Specifically, it applies to the physical storage and preservation of protected information and records which are local authority archives.

Local authority archives are local authority information and records that are no longer in current use or that have been in existence for 25 years or more. They include protected records and other local authority information and records the controlling local authority has determined are worth permanent preservation.

This instruction does not apply to the digital storage of local authority archives. Local authorities should follow best practice guidance for all public sector organisations on digital storage and preservation.

Whilst this instruction does not apply to those protected information and records still in active use, local authorities should manage these in accordance with the requirements set out in the *Information and records management standard (16/S1)*.

3 Requirements

The Chief Archivist instructs local authorities to maintain protected local authority archives (referred to below as 'archives') in accordance with the following requirements:

3.1 Identification and Accessibility

1. Archives must be identified and registered in a system which controls them and allows efficient retrieval.
2. Archives must be arranged in an orderly manner and be well managed so that order is maintained.
3. Procedures must be in place for retrieving, handling and re-shelving archives.

3.2 Facilities

4. Archives must be stored in a dedicated storage area.
5. Storage areas must allow ongoing access to archives by authorised users.
6. Archives must be stored in locations which reflect the characteristics of their format and their retention period.
7. The building in which archives are stored must comply with the New Zealand Building Code that applied at the time of construction and associated codes and standards and be appropriate for use in storing archives.
8. The building in which archives are stored must have adequate drainage systems to prevent flooding.
9. Dedicated storage areas for archives must be insulated from the climate outside.
10. Dedicated storage areas for archives must be protected against internal hazards, for example, vermin or fire caused by an electrical fault.
11. A building maintenance programme must be in place.

3.3 Protection and Preservation

12. Archives must be located as far as possible from natural and man-made hazards.

13. A disaster management plan and procedures, as well as a business continuity plan, must be in place, regularly tested and kept current, and known to staff.

14. Staff responsible for archives must be trained in emergency procedures to protect and salvage the information and records.

15. There must be a comprehensive fire protection system and equipment for the building, in compliance with the New Zealand Building Code that applied at the time of construction.

3.4 Privacy and Security

16. Archives which contain personal or classified information must be identified and protected.

17. Access to archives storage areas must be controlled and restricted to authorised staff.

18. Dedicated storage areas for archives must be intruder resistant and have an intruder alarm system.

3.5 Shelving and Packaging

19. Archives must be stored using shelving or equipment appropriate to the format and size of the items.

20. The minimum height for the lowest shelf must be 150mm off the floor.

21. Archives must be packaged in containers which are clean, in good condition and appropriate to the format of the archives.

3.6 Environmental Control

22. Archives must be stored away from sunlight and artificial light.

23. Magnetic media must be stored away from magnetic fields and avoid areas with high temperature and humidity.

24. Dedicated storage areas for archives must be kept clean and free of insects, with no food or drink permitted.

25. Archives must be stored in conditions where the relative humidity (RH) is never above 60% RH or below 30% RH.

26. Archives must be stored in conditions where the temperature is never above 25 degrees Celsius.

27. Audio-visual media must be stored in a cool stable environment and avoid high heat, relative humidity or dramatic fluctuations in either.

28. Archives must be stored in conditions where the relative humidity (RH) does not fluctuate by more than $\pm 5\%$ RH in a 24hr period, and seasonal variations are not more than $\pm 10\%$ RH over a year.

29. Archives must be stored in conditions where temperature does not fluctuate by more than ± 2 degrees Celsius in a 24hr period, and seasonal variations are not more than ± 5 degrees Celsius over a year.

30. Environmental conditions for archives must be regularly monitored, and documentation of monitoring must be kept.