

Corporate Record Retention & Destruction Policy

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Policy, Economy & Corporate Services Directorate
Falkland Islands Government

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Directorate

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Document Status

This is a controlled document. Whilst this document may be printed, the electronic version which has been posted on the Intranet is the controlled copy. This should not be saved onto local or network drives but should always be accessed from the Intranet.

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 All Falkland Islands Government (FIG) staff members must ensure that they are familiar with the contents of this policy, which outlines the standards of practice required in the management of Government corporate records. It is based on current legal requirements and professional best practice.
- 1.2 All organisations need to keep records, and the public would rightly expect that FIG maintains records on its activities and decisions that affect the social, economic and political development of the Islands. Records support accountability, justify business decisions, and preserve corporate memory and knowledge.
- 1.3 Records and documents are different. A document is defined as the smallest unit of filing, and is often identifiable as it is a single letter, form or report. Records are the recorded evidence of policies and decisions created by FIG.
- 1.4 A record is defined as: information created, received and maintained as evidence and as an asset by an organisation or person, in pursuit of legal obligations or in the transaction of business (BS ISO 15489-1:2016). A record can be in various formats including: paper; electronic; email; social media; videos and telephone messages.
- 1.5 Records, regardless of form or structure, should possess the characteristics of authenticity (they are what they say they are), reliability (can be trusted as full and accurate), integrity (not be altered since created, last modified, approved or filed) and useability (can be retrieved, read and used) to be considered as evidence and meet requirements of business.
- 1.6 Records are important information assets to all organisations. Information is most valuable when it is up to date, accessible and accurate. Effective records management ensures that information is properly managed and available, in whatever format it is stored.

- 1.7 Records management is the field of management responsible for the efficient and systematic control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use, storage (retention) and disposition (final operational action which may include destruction or transfer to another entity for permanent preservation) of records. By having frameworks in place, which provide evidence of actions and decisions taken, it ensures that FIG remains accountable and transparent, and that this information remains available for reference and use when required.
- 1.8 A record retention schedule is a controlled document which sets out the length of time records are retained for before final disposition action is taken (secure destruction or transfer to the Jane Cameron National Archive for permanent preservation). It applies to all information regardless of format upon which it was created or held. All staff should be familiar with their Department's retention schedule and apply the relevant retention period to the records.
- 1.9 A Corporate Record Retention & Destruction Policy is essential to supporting and providing effective management of records. This document provides guidance on the procedures relating to the retention and destruction of records. It will ensure that FIG securely keeps the corporate records it needs for business, regulatory, legal and accountability purposes.

2 Scope

- 2.1 All FIG Directorates and Departments are within the scope of this policy. This includes any staff working in or on behalf of FIG – including contract workers, temporary/casual staff, or honorary appointees.

3 Roles and Responsibilities

- 3.1 The Chief Executive through the Directors is accountable for the Records Management within FIG.
- 3.2 Directors are responsible for ensuring that the Directorate they are responsible for is managed in accordance with this policy and also for maintaining adequate records within the context, both legal and regulatory, of the business area their FIG Directorate operates.
- 3.3 Directors are also responsible for reviewing and approving record retention schedules for their respective Directorate and Departments. This is important for managing directorate specific records and policies.

- 3.4 The Director of Policy, Economy & Corporate Services has lead responsibility for records management and maintaining this policy as an active document within FIG Departments.
- 3.5 The Corporate Records & National Archives Manager has operational responsibility for the Corporate Record Retention & Destruction Policy.
- 3.6 The Heads of Service and Office Managers for each Directorate are responsible for ensuring that their respective FIG Departments are compliant with their record retention schedule.
- 3.7 All staff members are responsible for keeping a record of business transactions or evidence of actions conducted as part of their duties for FIG. The record should be stored appropriately, a retention period assigned and access controls applied.

4 Corporate Record Retention

- 4.1 An efficient retention schedule makes it easier for staff to retrieve records by removing those which are redundant; help avoid inadvertent destruction; and eliminate the financial and environmental costs of storing and maintaining unwanted records.
- 4.2 As evidence of transactions and FIG activities, records are retained for administrative or legal/compliance purposes. Retention Schedules provide accountability and ensure that retention decisions are made rationally, by listing the reason why records are retained and the actions carried out at the end of retention periods.
- 4.3 Record Retention Schedules have been developed for each FIG Directorate and corresponding Department, using the standard template outlined in *Appendix 1*.
- 4.4 Each schedule sets out the types of records which are created, stored and managed by each Department, the length of time records are to be retained for, and the corresponding actions once retention periods are complete. Special processes are also noted for those documents that require additional detail or conditions for the retention period.

- 4.5 To provide accountability for action taken once a record has reached the end of the retention period, a responsible officer is assigned to each document. This individual(s) is responsible for overseeing the disposition process [See *Item 5.2*] and either arranging for records to be securely destroyed or archived. They also have authority to confirm any updates or amendments to the retention period itself, should this be required to change due to legal or administration purposes. All Directors, as accountable officers for their Directorates, are named as de-facto responsible officers.
- 4.6 Retention consistency has been applied across all FIG records retention schedules where relevant. This includes, but is not limited to, retention periods for: financial, personnel, complaints, and Committee records. Standard advice is also provided on how long Directorates are required to store duplicate information until the relevant Directorate takes ownership and responsibility for the master version's longer-term retention and disposition processes.
- 4.7 Some records are retained indefinitely, which means they are retained permanently and have no limit on the retention period. These records will be reviewed every 30 years to reassess their status and confirm that the records still need to be kept.
- 4.8 Record Retention Schedules will be held and maintained by the FIG Records Manager.
- 4.9 Record Retention Schedules are living operational documents which are used by staff as tools for effective management of the information they create and store. Retention periods or decisions associated with retention should be actively reviewed and updated, in line with changes in legal/compliance and administrative requirements. Any updates are to be communicated and agreed with the FIG Corporate Records & National Archives Manager.
- 4.10 FIG Records Retention Schedules will be formally reviewed annually by both the relevant Directorate and the Corporate Records & National Archives Manager. This will ensure retention periods are accurate, relevant and any organisational-wide amendments are communicated and implemented consistently.

5 Corporate Record Destruction

- 5.1 Following the completion of retention periods, records enter the disposition process.
- 5.2 The disposition process is the implementation of appraisal and review decisions, and involves actions that are associated with implementing decisions about retention and destruction. It is not the same as destruction; though records may be selected for secure destruction, they may also have custody transferred to the Jane Cameron National Archives.
- 5.3 Records which are of historic or enduring value, or which have been identified as such in the retention schedule, are to be discussed with the Corporate Records & National Archives Manager to ascertain whether the record will be transferred to the Jane Cameron National Archives for permanent preservation.
- 5.4 More information about records that are captured by the Jane Cameron National Archives can be found by reading the [Archives Collections Development & Acquisition Policy](#).
- 5.5 A structured retention schedule allows organisations to prove that destruction took place as part of normal business practice. Destruction of corporate records is carried out for records which have the action 'secure destruction' assigned to them in their retention schedule.
- 5.6 Secure destruction in this context means the process of eliminating or deleting a record, beyond any possible reconstruction (BS ISO 15489-1:2016).
- 5.7 Destruction methods within FIG are limited. Paper records can be destroyed by shredding (different types of shredders may allow for more secure destruction and can include multiple formats such as paper, CD-ROMS, cards etc.) or more securely by incineration. Electronic records can be destroyed by reformatting, degaussing (demagnetizing the magnetic storage media, such as, hard disk drives and tapes, thereby destroying data and the device) or physically destroying storage media itself. The 'delete' function is standard operating procedure for office suites but it is important that back-ups or multiple/duplicated versions stored across the platform are also destroyed so that no information remains accessible or retrievable. The choice of method will be determined by security needs, costs and environmental impact.

- 5.8 The responsible officer must ensure that destruction of records is undertaken confidentially and if required, a log of destruction must be kept to provide assurance that records have been disposed of in accordance with the schedules. It will provide documentation on what was done and how it was authorised.
- 5.9 In conjunction with record retention schedules, a destruction log will also ensure that there is accountability for the decisions being made and that, for future reference, staff are clearly able to identify which records have been destroyed for compliance purposes and justify their actions to colleagues, successors and executive staff. See [Appendix 2](#) for standard template guidance.
- 5.10 The destruction logs themselves will be shared with and retained by the Corporate Records & National Archives Manager for six years.

6 Distribution and Implementation

- 6.1 This document will be made available to all staff via FIG's Intranet, along with templates and further guidance on this subject matter.
- 6.2 A notice will be sent to all Directors and Heads of Service informing them of the document's release and corresponding updates hereafter.
- 6.3 FIG Record Retention Schedules are shared with each FIG Directorate, the corresponding Departments, and implementation will be supported and monitored by the FIG Corporate Records & National Archives Manager.
- 6.4 FIG Record Retention Schedules are made available on the FIG Intranet so that all staff are aware of retention periods for their Directorate's records and information.

7 Associated Documentation

- 7.1 The FIG Corporate Document & Record Management Policy is also available and provides additional information and a framework for record management procedures.
- 7.2 The [Archives Collections Development & Acquisition Policy](#) is available on the Jane Cameron National Archives website.
- 7.3 The Corporate Records & National Archives Manager holds the electronic versions of the following standards:

- BS ISO 15489-1:2016 *Information and documentation - Records management Part 1: Concepts and principles*

8 Policy Review

- 8.1 After its initial approval by ExCo, any amendments to this Policy will be approved by CMT.
- 8.2 The Policy will be reviewed every three years. The next review date is August 2029.
- 8.3 The Corporate Records Management & National Archives Department, under the Policy, Economy and Corporate Services Directorate, is responsible for overseeing, reviewing and updating the contents of this document.
- 8.4 They will also liaise with FIG Directorates to ensure that FIG record retention schedules are kept up to date and are reviewed annually by Directorates and Departments.

9 Version Control Tracker

9.1 Version control information is as follows:

Version Number	Date	Author Title	Status	Comment/Reason for Issue
1.0	2016.03.22	Director of Commercial Services	Approved ExCo 61/16	New Policy
2.0	2023.04.25	Records Manager	Approved ExCo 25/23	Revised Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none">- reformatted- provide current procedures/guidance on developing retention schedules.- provide current procedures/guidance on record destruction
3.0	2026.02.23	Corporate Records & National Archives Manager	CMT Approved	Review <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Updating Directorate and officer titles- Updated and associated documentation (7)- Added in Policy Review (8)- General updates to phrases in text

10 Appendices

Appendix 1: Guidance on Record Retention Schedules

The purpose of the records retention schedule is to ensure that all documents and records created by FIG are stored for the required period of time; before undergoing the disposition process where they are either destroyed or sent for long term preservation. This schedule will allow Directorates and Departments to know how long their records should be retained, the action which must be taken once this period is complete, and the person responsible for the action.

This document provides guidance on the fields which are to be completed. It is an ongoing task which, though it may be time consuming, will benefit the long-term storage of records and ensuring records are not prematurely destroyed or unnecessarily kept.

Retention schedules are to be reviewed annually and the responsible officer for review is the Director of the relevant Department/Directorate.

Type of Record

This is the subject of the record which is to be retained, and can be specific to Government Departments.

Storage Format

This relates to the medium which the record is stored, such as paper or electronic.

Reason for Retention

There are three reasons for records to be retained:

1. Administrative – records that have continuing value in enabling Departments to reach their objectives, or may be required for points of reference in the future. An example includes Committee Minutes.
2. Statutory/Legal – required by law or statutory obligation to retain record for specific amount of time. An example is Financial Instructions for financial records.
3. Historic – records which are of enduring value and may be of historical value. In these cases records are permanently preserved.

It is important to be specific with any legal obligations which surround certain records, in order to provide further accountability when making decisions to retain records, and the action to be taken following this period.

In cases where material may still be required for points of reference or to mitigate potential legal action, these reasons are also to be included.

Special Processes

This field is relevant for a record which may begin its retention period on certain conditions, such as closing of last account or after the current year.

Retention Period

This relates to the period of time which the record is to be stored for – month/year/indefinitely. Where some records may require permanent preservation, it is also valuable to liaise with staff in the Jane Cameron National Archives, who will be able to advise accordingly.

Review Date

This is the time period at which the retention period, or disposition process, should be reviewed. It is needed in occasions where a record is retained indefinitely but, may be reviewed after five years to ascertain whether it is still of continuing value and should be securely destroyed.

Action

Following the completion of the retention period, this field specifies the next steps which need to be taken, otherwise known as the disposition process, where the decision is made for records to be destroyed securely or sent to an Archival facility for permanent preservation. Within this field it is important to state the type of disposal which is required, as it may differ depending on the record's own level of confidentiality (i.e. for sensitive information records may be securely burnt at abattoir but for less confidential records it may be shredded).

Responsible Officer

This is the authorised person responsible for carrying out the action to be taken once the retention period is complete (disposition process), and for reviewing the retention period should it be required. Depending on the sensitivity or level of confidentiality, some records will be dealt with by Heads of Service (HoS) or responsible staff member. No other member of staff should be authorised to destroy records, or make decisions on the consequent action which is to be taken

The template for completing record retention schedules is accessed internally via the FIG Intranet:

<https://intranet.gov.fk/files/Documents/Corporate%20Records%20Management%20-%20Record%20Transfer%20Template.pdf>

Appendix 2: Guidance on Record Destruction Log

The purpose of the destruction log is to provide assurance that records have been disposed of in accordance with the record retention schedule. It will provide documentation on what was done and how it was authorised. The destruction of records should only be carried out on those records, which have been previously marked for secure destruction, that have completed their retention period. Destruction log may not apply or be required in all cases but, for those records which contain confidential information or that require that level of destruction assurance for audit or legal reasons.

This document provides guidance on the fields which are to be completed as part of the destruction log. The log itself will be retained centrally by the Records Manager, but completed as necessary by the relevant Directorate or Department to provide accountability for which records have been destroyed in accordance with approved record retention schedules.

Type of Record (Series File Identifier)

This field contains details relating to the subject or file identifier of the record being removed. This is important if only one file within record is being destroyed or multiple records are listed under the same title/subject matter.

Required Retention

This relates to the period of time which the record has been retained for before the destruction process has taken place. This should coincide with the retention period listed on the relevant records retention schedule.

Date Range

To provide specific information on the record being destroyed, include reference to the date range that the record covers. This is useful if multiple records are listed under the same title/subject matter.

Volume

To provide specific information on the record being destroyed, include reference to volume of record being destroyed. This is useful if multiple records are listed under the same title/subject matter and there are multiple volumes.

Storage Format

This relates to the specific format of the record being destroyed. Commonly it is associated with paper-based records but can include electronic records if back-ups or evidence is not maintained by IT systems.

Destruction Date

This is the date on which the record was destroyed.

Method of Destruction

Following the completion of the retention period, this field specifies the specific method/process of destruction which has been undertaken. For sensitive information records these might be securely burnt at the abattoir but for less confidential records they may be shredded. Electronic records will be deleted from IT systems.

Departments will choose the method based on contents of the record contents, costs and environmental impact.

Responsible Officer & Authorisation for Destruction

This is the authorised person responsible for carrying out the destruction of the record. Depending on the sensitivity or level of confidentiality, some records will be dealt with by HoS or responsible staff member as identified on the record retention schedule. No other member of staff should be authorised to destroy records.

Signature

This field should be signed by the authorised person who has overseen the destruction of the record(s).

The template for completing record retention schedules is accessed internally via the FIG Intranet:

<https://intranet.gov.fk/files/Documents/Corporate%20Records%20Management%20-%20Record%20Destruction%20Log%20Template.pdf>

Further guidance on destruction methods is accessed internally via the FIG Intranet:

<https://intranet.gov.fk/files/Documents/Corporate%20Records%20Management%20-%20Destruction%20Methods%20%26%20Procedures%20Guidance.pdf>