

SERVICE STANDARD 2.1.7

MANAGEMENT OF BRIGADE RECORDS

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1 Purpose

- 1.1 A rural fire brigade (brigade) is a component of the NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS), an agency of the NSW Government. As a consequence, documents, records and other information held by a brigade are State records within the meaning of the *State Records Act, 1998* NSW.
- 1.2 This Service Standard establishes minimum requirements for the custody, storage and retention of documents, records and other information held by or under the control of brigades and their members.
- 1.3 The Service Standard also establishes a procedure for the production of brigade records upon request by district managers and others.

2 Definitions

- 2.1 For the purpose of this policy document, the following definitions apply:
 - a. **Financial record:** any financial transaction including but not limited to, statements, pass sheets, ledgers, cheque books, receipt books, invoices, tax invoices, books of account or other records of financial transactions, treasurer's reports, auditors reports, documents authorising the payment of expenditure of brigade funds, extracts of minutes of brigade meetings where expenditure of brigade funds was approved or declined by the brigade or executive committee and correspondence passing between the brigade and the Australian Taxation Office or any other public authority; and fund raising events or activities;
 - b. **Financial transaction:** any payment, receipt or donation made by or to the brigade or any person on its behalf;
 - c. **Health information:** means personal information that is information or an opinion about a person's physical or mental health, disability, injury or treatment;
 - d. **Minimum retention period:** means the minimum period of time for which a record must be retained by the brigade or another office or component of the NSW RFS;
 - e. **Personal information:** means information or opinion about an individual whose identity is apparent or can reasonably be ascertained from the information or opinion. This includes information forming

part of a database, and whether or not recorded in a material form. It also includes health information;

- f. **Record:** any document or other source of information compiled, recorded or stored in written form or on film, or by electronic process, or in any other matter or by any other means;
- g. **Secretary:** the member elected as secretary at the brigade's annual general meeting and any other member undertaking the role of secretary from time to time; and
- h. **Treasurer:** the member elected as treasurer at the brigade's annual general meeting and any other member undertaking the role of treasurer from time to time.

3 Policy

Care, Custody and Control of Brigade Records

- 3.1 The secretary is responsible for the care, custody and control of the brigade's records other than its financial records and must ensure that the records are:
 - a. properly maintained and securely stored;
 - b. capable of being retrieved and produced upon request; and
 - c. retained and accessible for the minimum retention period specified in the Service Standard or Brigade Management Handbook calculated from the date on which the record was created.
- 3.2 The treasurer is responsible for the care, custody and control of the brigade's financial records and must ensure that the financial records are:
 - a. properly maintained and securely stored;
 - b. capable of being retrieved and produced upon request; and
 - c. retained and accessible for the minimum retention period specified in the Service Standard or Brigade Management Handbook calculated from the date on which the record was created.
- 3.3 The minimum retention periods specified in the Service Standard or the Brigade Management Handbook are the minimum periods records must be retained and accessible upon request. Brigades may choose to retain brigade records or some classes of brigade records for a longer period or indefinitely.
- 3.4 A brigade will be deemed to have satisfied the obligations imposed on the secretary or treasurer in relation to a brigade record if that record has been transferred to the custody of the district office or another office or component of the NSW RFS in accordance with any procedure specified in this Service Standard or the Brigade Management Handbook.
- 3.5 Members must comply with Service Standard 1.1.14 *Personal Information and Privacy* in dealing with and storing records that include personal information.
- 3.6 The Brigade Management Handbook may specify methods or standards for the storage of brigade records.

Production of Brigade Records

- 3.7 A member of a brigade who has the care, custody or control of a brigade record must provide that record or a class of records to the district manager, a regional manager, director, executive director or other person authorised by the Commissioner upon written request and within the period specified in that request.
- 3.8 The treasurer or other member of a brigade must provide any information or explanation in relation to a record or financial transaction to the district manager, a regional manager, director or executive director or other person authorised by the Commissioner upon written request and within the period specified in that request.

Government Information (Public Access) Act, 2009 (GIPAA)

- 3.9 For the purposes of the GIPA Act, brigade records constitute government information held by the NSW RFS. As a consequence, brigade records must be produced in response to search requests for information when the NSW RFS receives an informal or formal access application.
- 3.10 The Right to Information Officer (Manager, Legal and Government Information) has the delegation to decide if information should be released.
- 3.11 If a brigade or a member of a brigade receives an information request made pursuant to the GIPAA, they must immediately send the request to the district manager to forward to the Right to Information Officer.
- 3.12 Any brigade records requested by the Right to Information Officer for the purposes of assessing or responding to a GIPPA request must be provided as soon as possible and, in any event, within seven days of the receipt of the request.

4 Related documents

- > [State Records Act 1998](#)
- > [P5.1.6 Records Management](#)
- > [Service Standard 1.4.3 Public Access to Government Information](#)

5 Amendments

AMENDMENT DATE	VERSION NO	DESCRIPTION
22 February 2019	1.0	Initial release

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RETENTION OF BRIGADE RECORDS

1 Purpose

- 1.1 This Standard Operating Procedure specifies the minimum retention period to be applied in relation to specific records and classes of records.
- 1.2 Minimum retention periods that are mandated by the State Record Authority of New South Wales are marked with an asterisk (*).

2 Procedures

- 2.1 A brigade may retain a record beyond the minimum retention period.
- 2.2 Where a copy of a record has been received from or submitted to the district office in accordance with a normal administrative practice the record does not have to be retained by the brigade.

Minimum Retention Periods

- 2.3 The following records or class of records must be retained and be accessible for not less than the period specified:
 - a. **minutes of brigade annual general, general and executive committee meetings** - seven years after the date of meeting;
 - b. **correspondence, including emails** - seven years after the date of the document or message;
 - c. **financial records*** - seven years from the end of the financial year in which the transaction was completed;
 - d. **records relating to fund raising** - seven years from the end of the financial year in which the event or activity was completed;
 - e. **records relating to community engagement and community safety events*** - seven years after the action was completed;
 - f. **vehicle log sheets recording every time a vehicle leaves a brigade station*** - 25 years after action completed;
 - g. **records relating to the inspection and/or testing of vehicles, vessels and other fire fighting equipment and gear*** - seven years from date of inspection;
 - h. **attendance books or other attendance records*** - 25 years after the attendance;
 - i. **brigade constitution and brigade rules*** - 25 years after being superseded; and
 - j. **pre-incident plans and planning sheets*** - 25 years after being superseded.

Use of Computer Systems

- 2.4 If a record or class of records is recorded or stored using computerised system or storage the brigade must ensure that the system is accessible and that the record can be extracted from that system for the entire retention period.

Destruction of Records

- 2.5 At the expiration of the minimum retention period, or any additional retention period adopted by the brigade, a record should be destroyed.
- 2.6 As a matter of good practice all records should be securely destroyed by shredding, burning or other means of destruction that ensure that the record cannot be read or accessed.

- 2.7 Records that included personal information in relation to a member or other person must be destroyed by shredding, burning or other means of destruction that ensure that the record cannot be read or accessed. If this cannot be achieved locally, the record must be transferred to the district office for destruction.
- 2.8 Where a record that includes personal information has been created or stored on a computer reasonable efforts must be made to delete the record from that computer and any related back up or storage.
- 2.9 If a record containing personal information, for example a membership application or notification of injury, is scanned for electronic transmission or sent by facsimile to the district office the original record and any copies must be securely destroyed after transmission.