	POLICY No. 2016-02 **Records and Information Management (RIM) Policy**
Originating Department CS-CL-04-2016	
SMT Approval: 2016-06-16	
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1. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Records and Information Management (RIM) policy is to establish a legally compliant and best practices-based corporate program for the lifecycle management of County records and information assets. This policy will support the administration of records and information assets in an effective, coordinated and strategic manner.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

The objective of the RIM program is to support efficient and effective program implementation and service delivery; to foster informed decision making; to support the County's objectives related to Open Data and Routine Disclosure, and by doing so, to facilitate accountability, transparency, and collaboration; to meet operational requirements; to support the provision of customer service; to protect the legal, fiscal, historical and other interests of the County and to preserve and ensure access to records and information in accordance with the laws of Canada and Ontario for the benefit of present and future generations.

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to all records within the custody or under the control of Haldimand County and addresses all aspects of County operations and all records created, received, or used in the day-to-day business operations of the County, regardless of the location or medium in which those records are stored and maintained. It applies to all County employees who collect or receive records and information on behalf of the County.

4. RATIONALE

Haldimand County is committed to implementing and maintaining a comprehensive RIM program that will establish Corporate-wide standards governing the creation, use, retention, disposition and preservation of records and information, ensuring such holdings are accurate, authentic, reliable, trustworthy, support accountability, and are able to serve as evidence in legal proceedings. Records and information shall be safely and securely maintained for as long as they are required and employees shall be trained on their responsibilities with regards to County records.

5. LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

The County operates under the authority of the *Municipal Act, 2001*. The creation and management of County records shall be carried out in accordance with the provisions of the *Municipal Act, 2001* and the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 1990*, the principles of The Ontario Municipal Records Management System (TOMRMS) and any other relevant statutes and regulations of the Province of Ontario and the Government of Canada.

6. DEFINITIONS

The following terms for the purposes of this policy shall have the following respective meanings:

Agreement – means a written document representing a contractual relationship between the County and any other party, that binds the corporation to give or receive certain action, goods or services.

Classification – means the arrangement of records into consistent categories according to approved industry standards.

Clerk – means the Clerk of The Corporation of Haldimand County.

Copy – means a duplicate of an original record.

Destruction – means the permanent deletion of e-mail or other electronic records and copies from all servers, and the appropriate destruction of all records in other mediums. Methods of destruction for physical records include, but are not limited to shredding, burning, recycling, and throwing records in the trash. Records containing sensitive or potentially sensitive information should always be shredded in a secure manner.

Disposition – means a range of processes; associated actions; implementation; retention; destruction; loss; and/or transfer of custody of ownership.

Document – means any media that contains or displays information.

Employee – means a person who is hired for a specific job or to provide labor and who works in the service of Haldimand County. For the purposes of this policy, the term employee includes volunteers.

File – means a document labelled with the identifiers deemed necessary to make the document findable.

Legal Hold – means the suspension of normal processing and/or destruction of records due to a current or impending legal or administrative matter.

Medium – means the physical material which serves as a functional unit, in or on which information or date is normally recorded.

Non-Record – means recorded materials with no value to the County.

Official Record – means recorded information that provides evidence of the County's business activities, rights, obligations or responsibilities; and/or was created, received, distributed or maintained by the County.

Records Management – means the systematic control of identifying and managing information that provides evidence of business activities, in order to satisfy legal obligations and business needs.

Retention Period – means the specified period of time that records are kept to meet operational, legal, regulatory, fiscal and/or other requirements.

Retention Schedule – means the control document that describes the length of time that the County's records shall be retained before their final disposition. It legally authorizes on a continuing basis the destruction of the remaining records after the lapse of a specified Retention Period.

Short-Term – means 120 days or less from the creation date of the record.

TOMRMS – means The Ontario Municipal Records Management System which is used as the basis for the County's Records Retention Schedule.

Working Record – means a record that has temporary usefulness and is only required for the completion of a routine action, or the preparation of another record.

7. RIM PRINCIPLES

The Corporate RIM program will be established based on the following principles:

Accessibility: Records and Information will be readily available and accessible to those who need it, when they need it.

Accountability and Stewardship: Accountability for managing records and information in the custody and control of the County is clearly defined, communicated and monitored.

Risk Management: Risks to records and information are managed, and practices and processes are in place to protect information assets.

Usability and Quality Control: Records and information meet the needs of employees and stakeholders. Information is timely, accurate, reliable, relevant, has integrity, and is easy to use.

Planning and Coordination: Coordinated planning for records and information management is linked to organizational goals, objectives, and financial planning.

Integration: The management of records and information is integrated with program planning and other business processes.

8. RESPONSIBILITIES

8.1 Corporate Divisions

Each Division within the County must support the RIM program by ensuring that its policies and procedures are applied, and must also:

- Create, receive, and manage County records and information in an appropriate format and in accordance with the County's Records Retention Schedule;

- Identify and regularly dispose of working records and non-records;

- Protect all County records from unauthorized disclosure, inadvertent loss, and destruction;

- Protect personal information contained in County records according to the requirements of relevant legislation.

8.2 Employees

All County employees are responsible for the records and information they create and maintain to support the business operations of the County. They must be aware of this policy and its requirements and ensure ongoing compliance with it. Every employee who creates, receives, or maintains records shall:

- Keep accurate and complete records;

- Not make any entry, alteration, falsification or omission with the intent of obscuring or disguising the true nature of a transaction in the County's records or in order to impede, obstruct or influence a pending or threatened internal or external investigation;

- Follow the specific requirements of the Records Retention Schedule and corporate procedures when making decisions about whether to classify information as an official record, working record, or non-record;

- Organize and file electronic records, mail and information according to the County's Electronic File Naming Conventions (Appendix I);

- Organize and file non-electronic media records and information in an appropriate format and ensuring that all records are kept in accordance with the County's Records Retention Schedule;

- Access and create records and information in his/her role within the County, but must do so using authorized applications, programs, interfaces and processes;

- Maintain records in his/her custody or control until either it is appropriate to transfer them to offsite storage or s/he is authorized to dispose of them pursuant to the Records Retention Schedule;

- Abide by all Legal Holds requiring the processing of records as a result of current or reasonably foreseeable litigation, government investigation, Freedom of Information request and/or audit;

- Ensure any official records in his/her custody or control are not removed from County premises. Working records may be brought offsite for the purpose of completing a work-related task only;

- Employees leaving their positions with the County shall leave all official records for their successors. This applies to both temporary and permanent departures, including transfers within the organizations.

8.3 Managers

It is the responsibility of management in each division of the County to communicate to employees the specific records requirements for the purposes of their Division and to designate an employee to:

- Act as a records management liaison for their division;
- Participate in all necessary training for the performance of this role; and
- Coordinate space and filing equipment needs for active records.

8.4 Records Management Liaison Committee

Designated employees from each division who shall meet regularly shall provide corporate leadership and support for the RIM program.

8.5 Clerk

The Clerk and his or her delegates shall be responsible for the administration of the Corporate RIM program including the establishment, implementation and maintenance of related procedures. Such authority is outlined under the *Municipal Act*, 2001 where the Clerk is identified as the "Official Records Keeper" of the municipality.

8.6 Employee Exit Procedures

Prior to leaving the employment of the County or moving to another position within the County, employees must appropriately identify, organize, and submit to their respective supervisor all County records in their possession, including but not limited to paper, electronic, and e-mail records.

9. RECORDS OWNERSHIP

All records created, received, used or maintained by officers and employees in the course of their duties on behalf of the Corporation of Haldimand County are the property of Haldimand County.

10. AGREEMENTS

An original of all agreements, renewals, and amendments and all related schedules and attachments, regardless of their originating divisions or respective parties, must be submitted to the Clerk's division. All parties must have executed the agreement prior to submission.

11. ORGANIZATION

The County will organize records according to the approved Records Retention Schedule which is based on the County's business activities and The Ontario Municipal Records Management System (TOMRMS).

12. RECORDS PROTECTION AND STORAGE

Records will be stored in a protected environment for the duration of their scheduled retention in a manner that ensures their continued readability and prevents loss through misplacement, deterioration, accidental destruction, theft, and unauthorized or inappropriate access.

13. DISPOSAL OF RECORDS

All records must be destroyed in accordance with the County's Records Retention Schedule and in a secure and confidential manner based on their informational content and format. The following principles shall govern the destruction of records:

- No official record shall be destroyed unless first classified according to the current Records Retention Schedule;
- No official record shall be destroyed unless the retention period has expired or the record is a copy of the original record;
- No official record shall be destroyed without the appropriate authorization; and
- Any records pertaining to pending/actual litigation, an investigation or a request under privacy legislation shall not be destroyed until such records are no longer required for this purpose.

14. LIMITATIONS

Subject to the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, 1990, the following applies to the retention and disposal of all working, duplicate or copy records created or received by County employees:

- A copy of a record may be destroyed at any time if the original is subject to a retention period established by the Records Retention Schedule.

- A working record may be deleted or otherwise destroyed unless otherwise specified in the schedule or unless required for legal or legislated purposes when their value ceases as determined by the originating Division.

15. COMPLIANCE AUDITS

Compliance with the records retention program will be reviewed on a regular basis. Any County employee found in noncompliance may be subject to disciplinary action.

16. REFERENCES

5.1 *Municipal Act*, 2001
5.2 *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, 1990
5.3 Privacy & Information Management (PIM) toolkit, 2008

REVISION HISTORY					
REPORT	**CIC**		**COUNCIL**		**DETAILS**
	Date	Rec#	Date	Res#	
	Date	Rec#	Date	Res#	
	Date	Rec#	Date	Res#	
	Date	Rec#	Date	Res#	
	Date	Rec#	Date	Res#	

Appendix I – Electronic File Naming Conventions

PURPOSE

- This document is intended to provide a common set of rules to apply to the naming of electronic records.
- This document is intended to support the County's electronic records management practices for integration into an Electronic Document and Records Management System (EDRMS).
- The conventions are intended for use with all electronic documents created and used by Haldimand County employees in the course of their work for the County, and include, but are not limited to word-processing documents, spreadsheets, presentations, e-mails and project plans.
- 'File names' are the names that are listed in the file directory and that users give to new files when they save them for the first time.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PROPER DOCUMENT NAMING

- Naming records consistently, logically and in a predictable way will distinguish similar records from one another at a glance, and by doing so will facilitate the storage and retrieval of records, which will enable users to browse file names more effectively and efficiently.

NAMING INDIVIDUAL FILES

- File names should be accurate and concise. File names should contain:
  1. Document title (**NO** spaces, separators, or symbols)
     - The use of spaces and symbols invites inconsistency in file naming. For example, "by-law" can be written at least 3 different ways (by-law, by law, or bylaw) which provides many challenges when searching for and identifying files.
     - Use **capital letters** instead of spaces, separators or symbols to delimit words.

       Example: JobsforSummerStudent

  2. Date (year, month, and day if applicable)
     - Dates should be included in the file name **ONLY** if necessary to differentiate between files (such as daily logs, which may have the same title but were created on different days).
     - Dates should always be presented 'back to front', that is with the year first (always given as a four digit number), followed by the month (always given as a two digit number), and the day (always given as a two digit number).
     - Date formatting: YYYYMMDD (or YYYYMM if no day is applicable).

       Example: 20160213EMSDailyLogs

Tracking Versions:

- For files that are constantly undergoing revisions and amendments, such as policies or plans, a version number should be included in order to identify the most recent file.
- File names should be accurate, concise, and should contain:
  1. Document title (**NO** spaces, separators, or symbols).
  2. Version number (increase version numbers to indicate document changes).
     - Version numbers should always contain two digits – it is important to include the zero for numbers 1-9 to maintain the numeric order.
     - For drafts and revisions, name the first draft v01, the second v02, etc.

       Example: ElectronicFileNamingConventionsv06

<u>"Coded" File Names</u>

- For files that are awarded a "code" or specific number to identify them, such as policies (ex. 2016-05) or reports (ex. CS-CL-16-2004), include the "code" ***without spaces or symbols*** in the file name.
- Ensure there is ***consistency*** in naming these files (ex. If the code is recorded as Z-HA-4-2016, record the number in the file name as ZHA42016, **not** HAZ42016).

Example: 201602NewClerksPolicy

ORGANIZING FILES

- Files should be saved in the appropriate folder on the T: drive.
- Each division has been allotted their own area on the T: drive for saving their documents.
- Folders within each restricted area have been set up according to the classification codes that are described in the Records Retention Schedule. Each division has been set up with the classification codes they use most often.
- Working files that need to be accessed by multiple divisions while they are in use should be saved into **one** folder within the shared drive and modified from this location to eliminate the need for multiple copies and versions of the same file.

<u>Naming Sub-folders:</u>

- Sub-folder names should contain the project or subject name (each word separated by a space), and should divide the main, coded folder into more specific categories.
- A date may be added to a sub-folder name if necessary to further differentiate between projects or subjects.
    1. If a date is necessary, include the year (YYYY) or year and month (ex. YYYYMM) only.
- Avoid the use of symbols (&, /, -, #, etc.) in naming your sub-folders.

Example: The "Electronic File Naming Conventions" file may be found in:

Folder	→	*Sub-folder*	→	*File*
A10 Records Management	→	Procedures for Electronic Documents 2016	→	ElectronicFileNamingConventionsv1

TIPS:

1. Keep file names short but meaningful.
2. The keys to proper and effective file naming are logic and **<u>consistency</u>**.
3. When using abbreviations, only use standard abbreviations that have been agreed upon by the County.
4. Avoid using common words such as 'draft' or 'letter' at the start of file names, or all of those records will appear together in the folder, making it more difficult to retrieve the records you are looking for.

If you have any questions or would like any guidance on naming and organizing your electronic files, please contact the Records Analyst.