
DESIGNATING AGENCY/DEPARTMENT RECORDS OFFICERS

Effective Date: January 1, 2009

(Procedure VSARA0004)

I. OVERVIEW/DESCRIPTION

Pursuant to 3 V.S.A. § 218, the head of each state agency or department shall establish, maintain, and implement an active and continuing records management program approved by the Vermont State Archives and Records Administration (VSARA). To help meet these responsibilities, every agency/department head is required to designate a records officer.

A records officer fulfills a critical role within state government and his or her work is essential in establishing and sustaining an effective records management program. In addition, a records officer serves as the primary contact between an agency/department and VSARA.

This procedure outlines steps for appointing agency/department records officers. Moreover, it defines the roles and responsibilities of a records officer and offers guidance to inform the selection process. While this procedure applies specifically to executive agencies and departments in state government, constitutional officers and legislative and judicial bodies may adopt this procedure as a best practice and designate records officers accordingly.

II. AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

Agency/Department Head: Appoints a member of his or her staff to serve as records officer and informs VSARA of the selection (3 V.S.A. § 218). Informs VSARA of any changes in an appointment, and confirms such appointments as required by the State Archivist.

Records Officer: Oversees the records management program for a state agency or department (3 V.S.A. § 218).

State Archivist: Approves agency or department records management programs (3 V.S.A. § 218). Annually confirms the appointment of an agency/department's records officer.

III. GUIDELINES

Within an agency or department, the records officer is responsible for overseeing the establishment, maintenance, and implementation of an effective records management program in accordance with 3 V.S.A. § 218. Under this authority, individuals who are appointed as records officers are expected to:

- Establish and maintain accurate inventories of all agency/department records;
- Ensure that senior management is aware of the agency/department's records management responsibilities;
- Facilitate the development and implementation of policies and procedures related to records management;
- Implement and sustain an approved records schedule that provides for the effective management and appropriate disposition of all agency/department records;
- Advise the agency or department on records management issues, and provide appropriate guidance and training about the proper management of records to agency/department staff;
- Evaluate the overall effectiveness of the records program;
- Authorize the transfer of records to and from the State Records Center, and authorize individuals to review records at that facility;
- Authorize the destruction of agency/department records as required;
- Designate and supervise records liaisons as needed to carry out the daily activities of records management within the department's various divisions;
- Work in close partnership with the staff of the Vermont State Archives and Records Administration to address records-related issues and to develop sound records management programs.

A secretary or commissioner may appoint any individual in his or her agency/department to serve as records officer provided that the individual can perform these duties. It is recognized that records officers may fulfill these duties in addition to other responsibilities within their respective agencies or departments.

Each secretary or commissioner may appoint only one records officer. A commissioner should appoint a records officer to oversee records management for his or her entire department. It is recommended that a secretary appoint a records officer to oversee the agency's central office only. A secretary may wish to appoint a records officer to

oversee an entire agency, but this type of arrangement should be discussed with VSARA prior to an appointment.

Records officers shall be appointed annually. *In the event that an individual serving as a records officer is suddenly unable to perform the requisite duties, the secretary or commissioner must appoint a new records officer immediately and inform VSARA of the new appointment.*

IV. PROCEDURE STEPS/CHECKLIST

A. Agency/Department Head:

1. Understands the role of an agency/department records officer in sustaining an effective records management program.
2. Identifies an individual within his or her organization who can fulfill the role of records officer and informs the individual of his or her appointment.
3. Ensures that the individual has the appropriate skills, resources, time and support to perform his or her assigned duties.
4. Completes and signs the “Records Officer Designation Form” on an annual basis and has his or her records officer designee sign the form.
5. Submits the form to: Vermont State Archives and Records Administration
Attn: Records Officer Program
1078 US RTE 2, Middlesex
Montpelier, VT 05633-7701
6. Immediately informs VSARA of any changes in the appointment of a records officer, and appoints an individual to fill a vacant position as necessary.

B. Records Officer:

1. Understands the role and responsibilities of a records officer.
2. Signs the “Records Officer Designation Form.”
3. Informs his or her agency/department head whenever he or she is no longer able to fulfill the duties of a records officer.
4. Informs the State Records Center of any changes in his or her status as records officer and of any changes to his or her contact information.

C. State Archivist

1. Advises secretaries and commissioners about records officers; receives their designations; and maintains and updates records officer information as needed.
2. Annually requests the secretary or commissioner to designate or re-designate a records officer for his or her agency.
3. Provides the appropriate forms for designating a records officer.

DEFINITIONS

Commissioner. The head of an administrative department of the executive branch of state government (3 V.S.A. § 213).

Records management. “The systematic identification and management of public records to assure their authenticity and accessibility from creation to ultimate disposition” (3 V.S.A. § 117).

Record Liaison. An individual at the division level who assists a records officer in carrying out the agency/department’s records program.

Record schedule. A “manual, directive, or policy containing descriptions of and disposition instructions for retention, access, and management” of records (3 V.S.A. § 117).

Secretary. The head of an agency of the executive branch of state government (3 V.S.A. § 213).

V. GETTING HELP

The Vermont State Archives and Records Administration (VSARA) provides records training, assistance and services to public agencies.

<i>If you need help with....</i>	<i>Contact....</i>
...appointing or updating a records officer for your agency or department.	Records Analysis and Policy Development Unit rim@sec.state.vt.us

VI. APPLICABILITY AND AUTHORITY

This procedure is for the appointment of agency/department records officers and pertains to all state agencies and departments as defined by 3 V.S.A. § 213.

This is a new procedure and therefore supersedes any State of Vermont practices in existence prior to its effective date.

The Vermont State Archivist is the statutory authority for records management programs and this procedure for appointing records officers. This procedure was reviewed and approved by the Vermont State Archivist on December 20, 2008. . It was revised on October 22, 2010. The next review date is October 2012.

VII. REFERENCES

Act 96 of 2008:

<http://www.leg.state.vt.us/docs/legdoc.cfm?URL=/docs/2008/acts/ACT096.HTM>

Vermont Statutes Annotated: <http://www.leg.state.vt.us/statutes/statutes2.htm>

REVISION HISTORY

2010-10-12 Updated contact information in "Getting Help" section