

## APPOINTING RECORDS LIAISONS

Effective Date: January 1, 2009

(Procedure VSARA0005)

### I. OVERVIEW/DESCRIPTION

Every records officer is responsible for implementing and maintaining an active and continuing records management program for his or her agency or department (3 V.S.A. § 218). Because of the size and complexity of many of these organizations, records officers may appoint records liaisons to facilitate their important work.

Under the supervision of a records officer, records liaisons can help carry out the day to day tasks associated with records management programs. While a records officer is responsible for managing an agency/department's overall records program, records liaisons can help manage the detail work within a division or district office. The Vermont State Archives and Records Administration (VSARA) will recognize the authority of a duly appointed records liaison to perform certain records management functions.

This procedure defines the role of records liaison and outlines how records liaisons may assist records officers in establishing and sustaining effective records programs. It also describes the necessary steps for appointing records liaisons. 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 liaisons accordingly.

### II. AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

*Records Liaison:* Carries out records management functions, as delegated by a records officer, within a division or district office.

*Records Officer:* Oversees the records management program for a state agency or department (3 V.S.A. § 218), and appoints and supervises records liaisons to help manage that program.

*State Archivist:* Approves agency or department records management programs (3 V.S.A. § 218). Annually confirms the appointments of records liaisons.

### III. GUIDELINES

*What is a records liaison?*

A records liaison is an individual appointed by a records officer to help manage an agency/department records program at the division or district office level. While a records officer is responsible for managing an agency/department's overall records program, records liaisons can help carry out the daily tasks associated with that work.

*What does a records liaison do?*

Records liaisons:

- Assist records officers in implementing and maintaining the agency/department's overall records management program within a division or district office;
- Serve as the primary contact within a division or district office for records management information;
- Provide general guidance to division or district office staff regarding the proper management of records, including the use of records schedules;
- Refer records-related issues to the records officer as necessary;
- Authorize and oversee the transfer of agency records to and from the State Records Center;
- Authorize the destruction of records at the State Records Center.
- Authorize division or district office staff to view agency records at the State Records Center.

This list defines the role of a records liaison as recognized by VSARA. VSARA will assume that any individual who is appointed as a records liaison has the authority to perform all of these duties, including authorizing the destruction of records at the State Records Center and authorizing the use of agency records at that facility. Records officers can tailor these duties and authorities as they wish through their own internal records management policies and procedures. VSARA however will not be responsible for enforcing internal agency policies. **The records officer remains ultimately responsible for all aspects of his or her agency/department records program.**

*Who can be a records liaison?*

Any one who can perform the above duties can be designated by a records officer to be a records liaison. Depending on the size of a division or district office, records liaisons can be mid-level managers or administrative assistants. Regardless of his or her

position within a division or district office, an individual appointed as a records liaison should be familiar with the records that his or her division or district office maintains.

Each records liaison also should be aware of the agency/department records management policies and procedures, as well as the policies and procedures of the State Records Center. Records liaisons should be able to communicate these policies and procedures to other staff members as necessary.

*How many records liaisons can an agency/department have?*

By limiting the number of individuals authorized to transfer or approve access to agency/department records, records officers can exercise greater control over those records for which they are ultimately responsible.

As a result, each records officer can appoint up to two records liaisons per administrative division. For departments that have district offices, a records officer can appoint one records liaison per district office. Records officers may enlist additional support as needed, but VSARA will only recognize the authority of a limited number of records liaisons as described.

A records officer should contact VSARA for guidance if he or she has any questions about where records liaisons might be effectively placed within his or her particular agency or department.

*When are records liaisons appointed?*

A records officer shall appoint records liaisons annually. In the event that an individual serving as a records liaison is suddenly unable to perform the requisite duties, the records officer must immediately inform VSARA, and appoint a new records liaison as necessary.

#### **IV. PROCEDURE STEPS/CHECKLIST**

A. Records Officer:

1. Understands the role of records liaisons and the authority that they may exercise in helping to carry out an agency/department records program.
2. Identifies individuals within the divisions and district offices of his or her agency/department who can perform the duties of a records liaison.
3. Appoints one or two individuals per division and/or one individual per district office to act as records liaisons, and informs the individuals of their appointments.

4. Ensures that their designees have the appropriate skills, resources, time, and support to perform their assigned duties.
5. Completes and signs the “Records Liaison Appointment Form” on an annual basis and has each records liaison sign the form.
6. Submits the form to: Vermont State Archives and Records Administration  
Attn: Records Officer Program  
1078 US RTE 2, Middlesex  
Montpelier, VT 05633-7701
7. Immediately informs VSARA of any changes in the appointment of a records liaison, and appoints an individual to fill a vacant position as needed.

**B. Records Liaison:**

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

**C. State Archivist**

1. Advises records officers about records liaisons; receives their appointments; and maintains and updates records liaison information as needed.
2. Annually requests records officers to appoint or re-appoint records liaisons as necessary.
3. Provides the appropriate forms for appointing records liaisons.

<b>DEFINITIONS</b>
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*District office:* An office located in an administrative district in order to provide services on a regional or local level (3 V.S.A. § 4004).

*Division:* A major division of an administrative department, usually headed by a director (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 schedule:* A “manual, directive, or policy containing descriptions of and disposition instructions for retention, access, and management” of records (3 V.S.A. § 117).

## 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 records liaisons for your agency or department.	Records Analyst II, 802-828-2397 or <a href="mailto:rim@sec.state.vt.us">rim@sec.state.vt.us</a>

## VI. APPLICABILITY AND AUTHORITY

This procedure is for the appointment of records liaisons 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 liaisons. 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