

## **DESIGNATING AGENCY/DEPARTMENT RECORDS OFFICERS**

Effective Date: January 1, 2009  
Revised: April 17, 2015  
(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.

Although 3 V.S.A. § 218 applies specifically to executive agencies and departments in state government, constitutional officers and legislative and judicial bodies are encouraged to establish, maintain, and implement an active and continuing records management program as a best practice and designate Records Officers accordingly. Designation of a Records Officer, however, is required to transfer, store, and retrieve records from the State Records Center and/or transfer archival records to the Vermont State Archives.

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 designating agency/department Records Officers. Moreover, it defines the roles and responsibilities of a Records Officer and offers guidance to inform the selection process.

### **II. AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY**

*Agency/Department Head:* Designates a member of his or her staff to serve as Records Officer and informs VSARA of the selection.

*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 the program.

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

*Chief Records Officer:* Coordinates Records Officer and Liaison Program and oversees the maintenance of a register of Records Officer designations and Records Liaison appointments.

*Records Analyst:* Records Analyst I or II handling the day-to-day administration of the Records Officer and Liaison Program, as assigned by the Chief 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, designated 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 designate 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 shall designate only one Records Officer. It is recommended that a secretary designate a Records Officer to oversee the agency's central office only rather than the entire agency, including departments. Instead, a commissioner should designate a Records Officer to oversee records management for his or her department.

Annually, the agency/department head will be asked to verify the status of his or her designated Records Officer. *In the event that an individual serving as a Records Officer is suddenly unable to perform the requisite duties, the secretary or commissioner must designate a new Records Officer immediately and inform VSARA of the new designation by completing a new form.*

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

A. Agency/Department Head:

1. Understands the role of an agency/department Records Officer in establishing, maintaining, and implementing an active and continuing records management program.
2. Identifies an individual within his or her organization who has the appropriate skills, resources, time, and support to fulfill the role of Records Officer and informs the individual of his or her designation.
3. Completes and signs the “Records Officer Designation Form” (VSARA-01) and has his or her designated Records Officer sign the form.
4. Includes his or her official seal or stamp on the “Records Officer Designation Form” in the event the Secretary of State’s Office is asked to authenticate documents using the agency/department’s official seal or stamp.
5. Submits the form to: (preferred) [rim@sec.state.vt.us](mailto:rim@sec.state.vt.us) or

Vermont State Archives and Records Administration  
Attn: Records Officer and Records Liaison Program  
1078 US RTE 2, Middlesex  
Montpelier, VT 05633-7701

Fax: (802) 828-3710

6. Immediately informs VSARA of any changes in the designation of a Records Officer and designates an individual to fill a vacant position as necessary.
7. Upon request, verifies the status of his or her Records Officer designation.

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 VSARA of any changes in his or her status as Records Officer and of any changes to his or her contact information.
5. Appoints one or two individuals per division or district office to act as Records Liaisons, and informs the individuals of their appointments.
6. Ensures that their designees have the appropriate skills, resources, time, and support to perform their assigned duties.
7. Completes and signs the “Records Liaison Appointment Form” and has each appointed Records Liaison sign the form.
1. Submits the form to: (preferred) [rim@sec.state.vt.us](mailto:rim@sec.state.vt.us) or

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8. Immediately informs VSARA of any changes in the appointment of a Records Liaison, and appoints an individual to fill a vacant position as needed.
9. Upon request, verifies the status of his or her Records Liaison appointments.

C. Chief Records Officer:

1. Advises secretaries and commissioners about designating Records Officers and provides the appropriate form for designating a records officer.
2. Oversees the processing of completed Records Officer Designation forms and maintains a register of Records Officer designations.
3. Annually requests the secretary or commissioner to verify the status of his or her designated Records Officer.

D. Records Analyst:

1. Processes Records Officer Designation forms and other changes Records Officer designations.
2. Handles other duties as assigned by the Chief Records Officer.

<b>V. DEFINITIONS</b>
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*Commissioner:* The head of an administrative department of the executive branch of state government (3 V.S.A. § 218).

*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).

*Records Liaison:* An individual appointed 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. § 218).

**VI. 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>
Designating or updating a Records Officer for your agency or department.	Records Analyst at <a href="mailto:rim@sec.state.vt.us">rim@sec.state.vt.us</a>

**VII. APPLICABILITY AND AUTHORITY**

This procedure is for the designation of agency/department Records Officers and pertains to all state agencies and departments as defined by 3 V.S.A. § 218.

The Vermont State Archivist is the statutory authority for records management programs and this procedure for designating Records Officers. This procedure was initially approved by the Vermont State Archivist on December 20, 2008. The State Archivist reviewed and approved the current version of this procedure on April 17, 2015. The next review date is April 2017, or sooner at the discretion of the State Archivist.

<b>REVISION HISTORY</b>	
2015-04-17	Made General changes to language throughout procedure, corrected typo from 3 V.S.A. § 213 to 3 V.S.A. § 218. Updated title of Chief Records Officer and added Records Analyst in "Area of Responsibility," and in "Procedure Steps/Checklist," updated links. Updated title in "Getting Help" section.
2012-05-21	Made general changes to language throughout the procedure and updated process to allow for annual confirmation rather than re-designating Records Officers.
2010-10-12	Updated contact information in "Getting Help" section.
2008-12-20	Procedure approved by Vermont State Archivist.