

DHS-PB-2024-006

SUBJECT: Paper and Electronic Records Maintenance	APPLICABLE TO: DHS and Provider staff	ISSUED: March 14, 2024
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ADMINISTERED BY: Administration Support Services	APPROVED BY: Joslyn Carter, Administrator Department of Social Services/ Department of Homeless Services
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■ INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this procedure is to outline the responsibility Department of Homeless Services (DHS) and Provider staff has for maintenance of paper and electronic records, to ensure their integrity, and to enable their off-site storage or destruction.

Records management is an on-going, necessary process that, when executed correctly, simplifies records storage, retrieval, and destruction.

■ RECORDS STORAGE

Record Information Services (RIS), a component of DHS Administration located at 33 Beaver Street, NY, New York 10004, 12th floor, is responsible for records storage.

Paper records can be boxed for off-site storage at any time, once they have reached their Office Retention Period. For sites that are closing, the records storage process must begin forty-five (45) days prior to the scheduled site closing.

■ RECORDS MAINTAINCE AND PREPARATION FOR STORAGE OR DESTRUCTION

A. Records Maintenance and Retention

1. DHS Facilities

All records have a Retention Schedule, driven by their Record Series and identified by a Record Series Number, determined by the New York City (NYC) Department of Records and Information Services (DORIS). The Retention Schedule for DHS records, including those maintained by directly operated intake and assessment facilities and shelters, can be viewed here: [New York City Department of Records, Records Retention Schedule](#).

If staff has records that do not fall into a Record Series established by DORIS, they must email RIS at DHSRecords@dhs.nyc.gov to request assistance with creating a new record series number. The request must include a brief description of the records, and the length of time they wish to retain them. RIS will work with DORIS to create a new Record Series Number. As additional Record Series are created, they will be added to the Retention Schedule, RIS will provide an updated Retention Schedule to DHS Programs.

2. Provider Operated Facilities and Programs

Providers must adhere to the process outlined in **Record Retention and Protection of Client Information for Contracted Personnel (DSS-PB-2019-005)**. Additionally, they must comply with the terms of their contract by retaining all relevant records for a minimum of six (6) years after their final payment, or six (6) years after the expiration or termination of their contract. **NOTE:** No records, paper or electronic, may be destroyed without written authorization from RIS.

If a Provider produces electronic records, or scans and commits hard copies of records to their own electronic case management system, they must ensure that proper quality assurances are in place for data integrity and accountability, and that the appropriate data security measures are implemented that ensure the confidentiality of those records.

Additionally, Providers must coordinate and document the provision of case management services in DHS' Client Assistance Rehousing Enterprise System (CARES) or StreetSmart, as applicable. **NOTE:** Providers may use their own means of electronically recording and tracking client cases but must maintain client records in CARES or StreetSmart.

Providers must, within one-hundred and twenty (120) days of a client entering their facility, data enter in CARES or StreetSmart client case activity, including but not limited to, client's names, dates of birth, income, reasonable accommodation, health and mental health, criminal justice involvement, case notes, service plans, placements, documented connections to housing, and all client signed documents.¹ For Street Homeless Services, information concerning contacts and engagements must also be included.

¹ See Electronic Systems of Record ([DHS DM-2022-003](#))

NOTE: Providers must retain paper and electronic records until DHS authorizes their destruction. If a Provider has a question concerning records storage, movement, or destruction, they must contact their Program Administrator, who will contact RIS for guidance. Until Providers are authorized to move or destroy records, they must be maintained where they are stored. Additionally, Providers must record all relevant client case data in CARES or StreetSmart. Client documentation must also be uploaded in CARES or StreetSmart. While Providers are not obligated to upload client case files, they maintain in their system into CARES or StreetSmart, the details of those files must be entered in CARES or StreetSmart. If there are details in a client's case record that are not in CARES or StreetSmart, Providers must record that information in the applicable fields and case notes in CARES or StreetSmart.

B. Preparation of Records for Off-Site Storage

Record Series Numbers are required to store records. DHS and Provider staff must adhere to the below protocol concerning the organization, maintenance, and preparation of paper records to enable their movement to off-site storage.

When a site identifies records to be stored off-site, they must ensure those records are filed in standard storage boxes (15" x 12" x 10") which:

1. contain records from the same year.
2. contain records from one (1) Record Series Number (i.e., record series #12125 and #12124 cannot be in the same box).
3. are dust resistant.
4. contain only original records (no copies or duplicate records).
5. weigh no more than twenty-five (25) pounds.
6. are properly labeled with the **Sample Box Label (DHS-140)** on both ends, with the following written legibly in bold, black, block lettering:
 - Date
 - Record Series Number
 - Year
 - Record Series Title
 - Division
 - Unit
 - Contact Person
 - Telephone number of Contact Person
 - Storage location where they are currently located
 - Name of the person responsible for storage
 - Site address (including facility name, city, and zip code)
 - Box number (i.e., box "1 of 10", "2 of 10", etc.)

7. have the records facing in the same direction, with two (2) inches of space in the box to afford accessibility to them, and organized using one method below:
 - Alphabetical order
 - Numerical order
 - Chronological order
 - Contract number order.
8. contain a copy of the **Record Management Program Inventory Form (DHS-141)**, inside the box, facing up, on top of the records, and have the following information legibly written in bold, black, block lettering:
 - Date
 - Contact Person
 - Telephone number of Contact Person
 - Location at the Site (where boxes are currently stored)
 - Division
 - Unit
 - Box number (i.e., box 1 of 20)
 - Brief description of the contents (client name and case number, etc.)
 - Record Series Number
 - Year of files – (only one (1) year per storage box).

DHS and Provider staff must retain a copy of each **DHS-141**, if they need to request a record be retrieved from storage.

Once DHS or Provider staff has ensured that records have been boxed in the above manner, they must label the storage boxes in box number order (i.e., if they have 100 boxes, box 1 must be numbered “1 of 100”, box 2 numbered “2 of 100”, etc.).

After storing and labeling the records in the manner described above, DHS or Provider staff must email the Program Administrator who will then contact RIS to request the records be removed from the site. RIS will work with Program staff to affect off-site storage of the records.

C. Records Retrieval

If a site needs a record to be retrieved from storage, they must complete the top portion of the **Records Retrieval Request** form (**DHS-139**).

Once RIS receives the **DHS-139**, they will work with the Contracted Paper Records Storage Vendor to retrieve the record from storage and ensure it is sent to the site.

D. Transferring Records upon Contract Ending

When management of a site is being transferred, the current Provider must give the client records to the incoming Provider. If there is no incoming Provider, the current Provider must follow the instructions noted above under **A2**.

At Sanctuary sites that maintain paper records but do not have access to CARES, the incoming Provider who has access to CARES must data enter the client records into CARES.

E. Destruction of Records

If DHS staff believes they have paper records that have reached the end of their Retention Period, they must contact RIS to begin the destruction process. If Provider staff believes they have paper records that have reached the end of their Retention Period, they must contact their Program Administrator, who will contact RIS to begin the destruction process.

- If RIS determines the records have NOT reached the end of their retention period, they will advise accordingly that the records cannot be destroyed.
- If RIS determines that the records have reached the end of their retention period, they will request authorization for their destruction from DORIS.

DORIS will work with the New York City Law Department to ensure that the records can be destroyed.

- If the New York City Law Department authorizes the destruction of the records, they will issue a Destroy Order.
- RIS will then advise the:
 - DHS staff, if the site is directly operated, or.
 - Program Administrator if the site is Provider operated. The Program Administrator will advise the Provider.

The operator of the site can then destroy the records. Provider staff must furnish their Program Administrator written, verifiable proof that the records were destroyed, which the Program Administrator must send to RIS at DHSRecords@dhs.nyc.gov.

Until such time that the destruction of records is authorized, staff must ensure that the records are NOT destroyed.

Effective Immediately

■ RELATED PROCEDURES:

[DHS-DM-2022-003](#)

[DSS-PB-2019-005](#)

[DSS-PB-2023-014](#)

Electronic Systems of Record
Record Retention and Protection of Client Information for
Contracted Personnel
Disposal of Digital Records and Electronic Media

■ **ATTACHMENTS:**

DHS-139	Record Retrieval Request
DHS-140	Sample Box Label
DHS-141	Record Management Program Inventory Form

RECORDS RETRIEVAL REQUEST

Requester's Name	_____ / ____ / ____
Requester's Location/Unit	() Telephone
Division Name	Box Number
Record Series Number	Year

Record Title _____

Content Description (Brief): _____

SAMPLE

FOR RECORDS MANAGEMENT USE ONLY

Retrieval Location Name _____		
Returned By:		
_____	_____	_____ / ____ / ____
Name (Print)	Signature	Date
Received By:		
_____	_____	_____ / ____ / ____
Name (Print)	Signature	Date
Comments: _____		

SAMPLE BOX LABEL

Date Record Series Number Year

Record Series Title

Division Unit

()

Contact Person Telephone

Storage Location Box # of _____

SAMPLE

DO NOT DESTROY!

These records have retention periods and must be maintained until we officially receive authorization for disposal.

SAMPLE BOX LABEL

Date Record Series Number Year

Record Series Title

Division Unit

()

Contact Person Telephone

Storage Location Box # of _____

DO NOT DESTROY!

These records have retention periods and must be maintained until we officially receive authorization for disposal.

