



Our Ref. : HD 3-8/SD/BW- 5/9/4/3 (C)

Tel. No. : 2761 5002

Fax. No. : 2761 1110

Your Ref.: CB4/PAC/R67

26 January 2017

Clerk to Public Accounts Committee
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong
(Attention: Mr. Anthony CHU)

Dear Sir,

Public Accounts Committee
Consideration of Chapter 1 of the Director of Audit's Report No. 67
Maintenance and safety-related improvements of
public rental housing flats

----- With reference to your letters of 13 and 18 January 2017 addressed to the Secretary for Transport and Housing on the subject issue, I attach the required information at **Annex** for your consideration, please.

2. Please note that in our response to Item (I), we have provided records of the Administration's internal correspondence some of which are classified. I should be grateful if circulation of and access to such information is restricted to the Public Accounts Committee only. We have also redacted personal information and information which will make the relevant unit/premises identifiable in order to preserve privacy of the tenants concerned.

Yours faithfully,

(Stanley YING)
for Secretary for Transport and Housing

Encl.

香港九龍何文田佛光街33號房屋委員會總部

Housing Authority Headquarters, 33 Fat Kwong Street, Ho Man Tin, Kowloon, Hong Kong.

互聯網網址 :

Internet Homepage Address: <http://www.housingauthority.gov.hk>

c.c. Secretary for Transport and Housing	}	(w/ encl.)
Director of Buildings		
Director of Fire Services	}	(w/o encl.)
Director of Water Supplies		
Director of Health		
Government Chemist		
Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury		
Director of Audit		

In response to enquiries raised by the Legislative Council Public Accounts Committee (PAC) in its letters dated 13 and 18 January 2017, we provide our reply as follows:

(I) Follow-up actions on public rental housing's water sampling tests for lead

- (a) The Chairman of the Housing Authority (HA) announced on 15 July 2015 that water sampling tests for public rental housing (PRH) estates would be conducted in a more systematic way. As the work involved several Government departments, the Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing) convened the first inter-departmental meeting on 20 July 2015, comprising representatives from the Housing Department (HD), Water Supplies Department (WSD), Government Laboratory and Department of Health, to coordinate the work among different departments.

The main purpose of convening these inter-departmental meetings was to review and announce water sampling test results immediately, and to coordinate and announce and implement the follow-up actions immediately. As mentioned previously to PAC –

- (i) We agree with the Audit Commission that it is not satisfactory that no meeting records were maintained for the first seven meetings;
- (ii) However, the fact that there were no meeting records did not affect the main function of these seven meetings, namely to review and announce the water sampling results immediately, and to coordinate and announce the follow-up actions immediately in respect of the estates with excess lead.

As shown in the document submitted to PAC on 22 December 2016 (see Annex (II)(v) of that document), the seven meetings held during 20 July to 7 August 2015 took place as follows generally -

- Before each meeting, members of the inter-departmental meeting were notified to attend the meetings by HD;
- The water sampling data of relevant estates were provided by WSD to members of the inter-departmental meeting before each meeting. At the inter-departmental meetings, WSD reported on the water sampling test results and

provided professional advice or other supplementary information on the water sampling data. Attendees reviewed the relevant data and discussed the follow-up actions;

- In order to keep the public and affected tenants abreast of the extent of the excess lead in drinking water in PRH estates, announcements were made shortly after the inter-departmental meetings through press conferences or press releases, providing information such as the number of samples taken for the relevant estates, and the number of non-compliant samples, as well as the follow-up actions to be taken. Such follow-up actions included the provision of bottled water, water tanks and standpipes, holding of residents' forums, distributing health information, requesting the contractor to follow up, etc.

(iii) Although there are no meeting records, departments have kept the primary records dealt with by these seven meetings, and they are available for examination. In respect of the five samples discarded by these seven meetings, the primary records are summarized in paragraph 3.13 of Part 3 of Chapter 1 of the Audit Report. As it can be seen, at the meeting at which the decision to discard two samples from Shek Kip Mei Estate Phase 2 and two samples from Hung Hom Estate Phase 2 was made, five non-compliant samples from Shek Kip Mei Estate Phase 2 and 16 non-compliant samples from Hung Hom Estate Phase 2 were adopted at the same time, and it was confirmed that Shek Kip Mei Estate Phase 2 and Hung Hom Estate Phase 2 were affected by excess lead in water.

PAC's letter dated 18 January 2017 has requested us to submit relevant documents pertaining to the seven meetings. The relevant documents pertaining to the seven meetings, apart from those already submitted to PAC on 22 December 2016 (see Annex (II)(v) of that document), are provided at **Annex (I)(a)**. The information is provided by meeting date for members' easy reference.

- (b) The list of representatives from the Housing Department, Water Supplies Department, Government Laboratory and Department of Health who attended the seven inter-departmental meetings held from 20 July to 7 August 2015 is at **Annex (I)(b)**.

***Note by Clerk, PAC:** *Annex (I)(a) not attached.*

- (c) As mentioned in part (a) above, the first inter-departmental meeting was held on 20 July 2015 to review water sampling test results and coordinate follow-up actions. The date of the meetings largely hinged on the progress of water sampling, and there were no hard and fast rules. After consolidating experiences, we considered that the water sampling tests could be reviewed in a more systematic and efficient manner. Starting from 6 and 7 August 2015, we held a Technical Review Meeting and a Final Conclusion Meeting on two consecutive days.

As stated in paragraph 3.10 of Part 3 of Chapter 1 of the Audit Report, the Technical Review Meeting and the Final Conclusion Meeting were held consecutively to discuss the same batch of water samples. The Technical Review Meeting held on 6 August 2015 discussed some water samples from PRH developments including Choi Tak Estate (Choi Chun House, Choi King House, Choi Leung House, Choi Yin House) and Choi Tak Shopping Centre, Shin Ming Estate (Shin Chi Estate, Shin Lai Estate), Shatin Pass Estate (Wo Tin House, Shun Tin House), Yau Lai Estate Phase 5 (Cheuk Lai House, Yung Lai House), Yau Lai Estate Phase 6 (Yau Lai Shopping Centre), Yan On Estate etc. At the meeting, some samples were considered doubtful and it was considered that further investigation should be conducted (such as taking additional samples from the same unit, as well as other units on the same floor and on floors above and below the unit etc.) in order to determine the water quality of that estate. In addition, water sampling from some locations within the estates had not been completed, and further sampling was required. After further investigation, we discussed and decided on the water sampling results of the developments concerned at the Final Conclusion Meeting on the following day (i.e. 7 August 2015), and announced at the press conference on the same day that Yan On Estate was affected by excess lead in water while samples taken from the other developments (i.e. Choi Tak Estate (Choi Chun House, Choi King House, Choi Leung House, Choi Yin House) and Choi Tak Shopping Centre, Shin Ming Estate (Shin Chi Estate, Shin Lai Estate), Shatin Pass Estate (Wo Tin House, Shun Tin House), Yau Lai Estate Phase 5 (Cheuk Lai House, Yung Lai House) and Yau Lai Estate Phase 6 (Yau Lai Shopping Centre)) did not exceed the World Health Organisation's limit.

From end-September 2015 onwards, we started conducting water sampling for PRH estates completed before 2005. As the "Task Force on Investigation of Excessive Lead Content in Drinking Water" found that leaded solder used on water pipe joints was the cause of

excess lead in drinking water, and as the water pipes in PRH estates completed before 2005 were connected mechanically and no soldering had been used in general, there would be one fewer risk factor leading to excessive lead in drinking water. Therefore, as mentioned previously, we conducted a water screening test for PRH estates completed before 2005. Since fewer samples were involved, as stated in paragraph 3.10 of Part 3 of Chapter 1 of the Audit Report, starting from the meeting on 30 September 2015, only Final Conclusion Meetings were held.

- (d) HA has distributed around 9.96 million bottles of bottled water to the 11 affected PRH developments, involving a total cost of around \$60 million. Details are as follows -

Bottle size	No. of bottles distributed	Total cost
4.5L	2,196,088	\$34,932,148
0.8L	7,766,232	\$25,627,703
	<hr/> 9,962,320	<hr/> \$60,559,851

- (e) The Government announced on 13 July 2015 to set up the Task Force on Excessive Lead Content in Drinking Water (the Task Force). The Task Force announced its preliminary findings on 25 September 2015 and submitted its final investigation report to the Secretary for Development on 31 October 2015. HA announced the establishment of the Review Committee on Quality Assurance Issues Relating to Fresh Water Supply of Public Housing Estates (the Review Committee) on 24 July 2015. The Review Committee submitted its interim report and final report to the HA Chairman on 6 October 2015 and 8 January 2016 respectively. In addition, the Commission of Inquiry into Excess Lead Found in Drinking Water (the Commission) was set up by the Government on 13 August 2015. The Commission submitted its report to the Chief Executive on 11 May 2016, and the Government published the report on 31 May 2016.
- (f) The Housing Department has developed and promulgated a Records Management Policy (see **Annex (I)(f)**) in accordance with the Records Management Manual and other relevant regulations and circulars promulgated by the Government Records Service.

Specifically, records should be prepared and maintained on matters relating to the work of the department, including officers' communication with external persons and bodies, minutes, and other records of deliberations pertinent to the decision-making process etc. In respect of the first seven inter-departmental meetings, we have kept the primary records of the data dealt with at these meetings, and have provided the relevant information to the Commission of Inquiry into Excess Lead Found in Drinking Water, the Audit Commission and PAC in response to their enquiries earlier. Nevertheless, we agree that it would be more satisfactory if we had maintained meeting records for the seven meetings in addition to the primary records. We will make improvements in accordance with the recommendation of the Audit Commission.

**Attendance for the inter-departmental meetings
from 20 July to 7 August 2015**

20 July 2015

Housing Department (HD)

Mr Stanley YING Yiu-hong	Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing)
Ms Ada FUNG Yin-suen	Deputy Director (Development & Construction)
Mr Albert LEE Kwok-wing	Deputy Director (Estate Management)
Ms Connie YEUNG Kwong-yim	Assistant Director (Estate Management) ³
Miss Rosaline WONG Lai-ping	Assistant Director (Estate Management) ² (Atg)
Miss Leanne MA Nian-en	Senior Administrative Officer (Private Housing) ²

Water Supplies Department (WSD)

Mr WONG Chung-leung	Deputy Director of Water Supplies
Mr CHAN Kin-man	Chief Waterworks Chemist
Mr William TAM Man-yiu	Chief Engineer/Customer Services (Atg)

Government Laboratory (GL)

Dr LAU Chau-ming	Government Chemist
Dr LEE Wai-on	Chief Chemist/Food Safety and Quality Group
Dr CHEUNG Tsz-chun	Senior Chemist/Chemical Safety Section
Dr FUNG Wai-hong	Senior Chemist/Trace Elements Section

Department of Health (DH)

Dr Regina CHING Cheuk-tuen	Head of Surveillance & Epidemiology Branch
----------------------------	--

23 July 2015

HD

Mr Stanley YING Yiu-hong	Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing)
Ms Ada FUNG Yin-suen	Deputy Director (Development & Construction)
Mr Albert LEE Kwok-wing	Deputy Director (Estate Management)
Mr LAM Sze-chuen	Assistant Director (Project)1
Ms Theresa YIM Siu-ling	Assistant Director (Project)2
Mrs Irene CHENG WAN	Assistant Director (Development & Procurement)
Mr LEUNG Sai-chi	Assistant Director (Estate Management)1
Ms Connie YEUNG Kwong-yim	Assistant Director (Estate Management)3
Miss Rosaline WONG Lai-ping	Assistant Director (Estate Management)2 (Atg)
Mrs Vicki KWOK WONG Wing-ki	Assistant Director (Private Housing)
Miss Leanne MA Nian-en	Senior Administrative Officer (Private Housing)2

WSD

Mr CHIN Chu-sum	Assistant Director/Customer Services
Mr Kelvin KWOK Yau-ting	Chief Waterworks Chemist/Task Force (Atg)
Mr William TAM Man-yiu	Chief Engineer/Customer Services (Atg)

GL

Dr LAU Chau-ming	Government Chemist
Dr SIN Wai-mei	Assistant Government Chemist/Analytical and Advisory Services Division
Dr CHOI Sik-man	Senior Chemist/Additives, Contaminants and Composition Section

DH

Dr Regina CHING Cheuk-tuen	Head of Surveillance & Epidemiology Branch
----------------------------	--

29 July 2015

HD

Mr Stanley YING Yiu-hong	Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing)
Ms Ada FUNG Yin-suen	Deputy Director (Development & Construction)
Mr Albert LEE Kwok-wing	Deputy Director (Estate Management)
Mr LAM Sze-chuen	Assistant Director (Project)1
Ms Theresa YIM Siu-ling	Assistant Director (Project)2
Mrs Irene CHENG WAN	Assistant Director (Development & Procurement)
Ms Connie YEUNG Kwong-yim	Assistant Director (Estate Management)3
Mrs Vicki KWOK WONG Wing-ki	Assistant Director (Private Housing)
Miss Rosaline WONG Lai-ping	Chief Estate Surveyor/Commercial Properties
Miss Leanne MA Nian-en	Senior Administrative Officer (Private Housing)2

WSD

Mr WONG Chung-leung	Deputy Director of Water Supplies
Mr CHAN Kin-man	Chief Waterworks Chemist
Mr William TAM Man-yiu	Chief Engineer/Customer Services (Atg)

GL

Dr LEE Wai-on	Chief Chemist/Food Safety and Quality Group
Dr CHOI Sik-man	Senior Chemist/Additives, Contaminants and Composition Section

DH

Dr Regina CHING Cheuk-tuen	Head of Surveillance & Epidemiology Branch
----------------------------	--

31 July 2015

HD

Mr Stanley YING Yiu-hong	Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing)
Ms Ada FUNG Yin-suen	Deputy Director (Development & Construction)
Mr Albert LEE Kwok-wing	Deputy Director (Estate Management)
Ms Theresa YIM Siu-ling	Assistant Director (Project) ²
Mrs Irene CHENG WAN	Assistant Director (Development & Procurement)
Ms Connie YEUNG Kwong-yim	Assistant Director (Estate Management) ³
Mrs Vicki KWOK WONG Wing-ki	Assistant Director (Private Housing)
Mr LEUNG Chi-kwong	Assistant Director (Project) ³ (Atg)
Miss Rosaline WONG Lai-ping	Chief Estate Surveyor/Commercial Properties
Miss Leanne MA Nian-en	Senior Administrative Officer (Private Housing) ²

WSD

Mr WONG Chung-leung	Deputy Director of Water Supplies
Mr Kelvin KWOK Yau-ting	Chief Waterworks Chemist/Task Force (Atg)
Mr William TAM Man-yiu	Chief Engineer/Customer Services (Atg)

GL

Dr LEE Wai-on	Chief Chemist/Food Safety and Quality Group
Dr CHOI Sik-man	Senior Chemist/Additives, Contaminants and Composition Section

DH

Dr Regina CHING Cheuk-tuen	Head of Surveillance & Epidemiology Branch
----------------------------	--

3 August 2015

HD

Mr Stanley YING Yiu-hong	Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing)
Ms Ada FUNG Yin-suen	Deputy Director (Development & Construction)
Mr Albert LEE Kwok-wing	Deputy Director (Estate Management)
Mr LAM Sze-chuen	Assistant Director (Project)1
Ms Theresa YIM Siu-ling	Assistant Director (Project)2
Mrs Irene CHENG WAN	Assistant Director (Development & Procurement)
Mr LEUNG Sai-chi	Assistant Director (Estate Management)1
Mr CHAN Siu-tack	Assistant Director (Estate Management)2
Ms Connie YEUNG Kwong-yim	Assistant Director (Estate Management)3
Mr LEUNG Chi-kwong	Assistant Director (Project)3 (Atg)
Mr CHIU Pbut-kay	Chief Architect 6
Miss Rosaline WONG Lai-ping	Chief Estate Surveyor/Commercial Properties
Miss Leanne MA Nian-en	Senior Administrative Officer (Private Housing)2

WSD

Mr WONG Chung-leung	Deputy Director of Water Supplies
Mr CHAN Kin-man	Chief Waterworks Chemist
Mr William TAM Man-yiu	Chief Engineer/Customer Services (Atg)

GL

Dr LEE Wai-on	Chief Chemist/Food Safety and Quality Group
---------------	---

DH

Dr Regina CHING Cheuk-tuen	Head of Surveillance & Epidemiology Branch
----------------------------	--

6 August 2015

HD

Mr Stanley YING Yiu-hong	Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing)
Ms Ada FUNG Yin-suen	Deputy Director (Development & Construction)
Mr Albert LEE Kwok-wing	Deputy Director (Estate Management)
Mr LEUNG Sai-chi	Assistant Director (Estate Management)1
Mr CHAN Siu-tack	Assistant Director (Estate Management)2
Ms Connie YEUNG Kwong-yim	Assistant Director (Estate Management)3
Mr Patrick LUK Kwong-wai	Chief Architect 1
Mr Alan HUI Bing-chiu	Chief Architect 3
Mrs Sonia WONG YUNG Tak-ling	Chief Architect 4
Mr CHIU Pbut-kay	Chief Architect 6
Mr WONG Mung-wan	Chief Architect 7
Miss Rosaline WONG Lai-ping	Chief Estate Surveyor/Commercial Properties
Miss Leanne MA Nian-en	Senior Administrative Officer (Private Housing)2

WSD

Mr WONG Chung-leung	Deputy Director of Water Supplies
Mr CHAN Kin-man	Chief Waterworks Chemist
Mr William TAM Man-yiu	Chief Engineer/Customer Services (Atg)

GL

Dr LEE Wai-on	Assistant Government Chemist/Analytical and Advisory Services Division (Atg)
Dr CHOI Sik-man	Chief Chemist/Food Safety and Quality Group (Atg)

7 August 2015

HD

Mr Stanley YING Yiu-hong	Permanent Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing)
Ms Ada FUNG Yin-suen	Deputy Director (Development & Construction)
Mr Albert LEE Kwok-wing	Deputy Director (Estate Management)
Mr LAM Sze-chuen	Assistant Director (Project)1
Mrs Irene CHENG WAN	Assistant Director (Development & Procurement)
Mr LEUNG Sai-chi	Assistant Director (Estate Management)1
Mr CHAN Siu-tack	Assistant Director (Estate Management)2
Ms Connie YEUNG Kwong-yim	Assistant Director (Estate Management)3
Mr Patrick LUK Kwong-wai	Chief Architect 1
Mr Alan HUI Bing-chiu	Chief Architect 3
Mr CHIU Pbut-kay	Chief Architect 6
Miss Rosaline WONG Lai-ping	Chief Estate Surveyor/Commercial Properties
Miss Leanne MA Nian-en	Senior Administrative Officer (Private Housing)2

WSD

Mr WONG Chung-leung	Deputy Director of Water Supplies
Mr CHAN Kin-man	Chief Waterworks Chemist
Mr William TAM Man-yiu	Chief Engineer/Customer Services (Atg)

GL

Dr CHOI Sik-man	Chief Chemist/Food Safety and Quality Group (Atg)
-----------------	---

DH

Dr Regina CHING Cheuk-tuen	Head of Surveillance & Epidemiology Branch
----------------------------	--

Ref.: HDGR 1-1/6-60/1

Housing Department
Hong Kong

25 April 2013

DEPARTMENTAL GENERAL CIRCULAR NO. 2/2013

Housing Department Records Management Policy

This Circular promulgates the Housing Department Records Management Policy (the Policy) to demonstrate the Department's commitment to practising good records management and facilitate orderly implementation of the mandatory records management requirements. It should be read in conjunction with General Circular (GC) Nos. 5/2006 entitled "Management of Government Records" and 2/2009 entitled "Mandatory Records Management Requirements" and Departmental General Circular (DGC) No. 4/2010 entitled "Mandatory Records Management Requirements".

Background

2. The Government has reiterated its records management policy and promulgated a list of mandatory and essential records management requirements through GC Nos. 5/2006 and 2/2009. Recognizing that records management is an important function of Bureaux/Departments (B/Ds), the Government Records Service has also issued a series of records management procedures and guidelines, including the Records Management Manual and a series of records management publications (accessible at <http://grs.host.ccgo.hksarg/index.htm#records>) to promote good practices for the management of government records in B/Ds. The Department has also issued the DGC No. 4/2010 to remind staff of the importance of proper records management and set out the level of responsible officers in meeting the mandatory requirements on management of government records.

Importance of a Departmental Records Management Policy

3. A departmental records management policy (the Policy) is a statement which offers an overview of how the B/Ds should create and manage its records to meet operational, policy, legal and financial purposes. It is a key component of good

corporate governance. Apart from serving as guidelines on records management for its staff, the Policy is also an effective way of cultivating and communicating records management culture within the Department.

Departmental Records Management Policy

4. The Policy has been drawn up at the **Appendix** to demonstrate our commitment to adopting and practising good records management. In the interests of promoting good records management, a set of additional guidelines in respect of the records management processes has also been developed and included as **Annexes A-D** to the Policy. The key components of the Policy comprise -

- (a) Purpose;
- (b) Policy statement;
- (c) Scope;
- (d) Regulatory environment;
- (e) Roles and responsibilities for records management;
- (f) Recordkeeping system;
- (g) Protecting vital records;
- (h) Monitoring and auditing; and
- (i) Training.

5. To ensure proper records management and smooth implementation of the Policy in the Department, Records Managers are appointed to oversee records management matters in their respective registries. A list of the Records Managers and their duties list are included as Annex to the Policy.

Monitoring and Review

6. Section/Unit Heads are required to monitor their staff's compliance with the Policy. To cope with changing circumstances, the Policy would be reviewed once every two years.

Re-circulation

7. The Policy should be re-circulated together with GC Nos. 5/2006 and 2/2009 and DGC No. 4/2010 at least once every six months to all staff.

Enquiries

8. Enquiries arising from this Circular should be addressed to Chief Executive Officer/Administration on 2761 6168 or Senior Executive Officer/General on 2761 6688.

Miss Stella WONG
for Permanent Secretary for
Transport and Housing (Housing)

Distribution

All Heads of Divisions/Sub-divisions/Sections/Units

Housing Department Records Management Policies

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish an overarching framework for the creation and management of records¹ through a comprehensive records management programme within the department to meet its business needs, accountability requirements and stakeholder expectations. The departmental records management policy and Circulars relating to records management (including General Circular Nos. 5/2006 and 2/2009 and Departmental General Circular No. 4/2010²) will be re-circulated to all staff at least once every six months.

Policy statement

2. Records are valuable resources of the Government to support evidence-based decision making, meet operational and regulatory requirements and are essential for an open and accountable government. Housing Department is committed to implementing the Government's records management policy through the establishment and implementation of a comprehensive records management programme for effective and efficient management of government records as well as identification and preservation of archival records.
3. The records management programme of this department aims to –
 - (a) make and keep authentic, reliable, complete and usable records;
 - (b) enhance operational effectiveness and efficiency;
 - (c) minimize the costs of managing records;

¹ A **record** is any recorded information or data in any physical format or media created or received by an organization during its course of official business and kept as evidence of policies, decisions, procedures, functions, activities and transactions.

² These General Circulars are accessible at HA > Adm Info > Circulars and Circular Memoranda > Other Circulars/Circular Memoranda and HA> Adm Info > Circulars and Circular Memoranda > Departmental General Circular respectively.

- (d) provide quality services to users;
- (e) provide necessary security for government information;
- (f) facilitate public access to records and information that encourage better understanding of government policies and operations; and
- (g) facilitate identification of records that have permanent value so that they may be preserved and made available to the public for research, educational, cultural and other related purposes.

Scope

4. This policy applies to all staff of the department for managing records created/collected in the course of business activities irrespective of the formats of the records. It also applies to all recordkeeping systems, including paper-based systems or electronic information systems (such as an electronic recordkeeping system (ERKS) and a business system with adequate records management functionality) which are used to keep and manage records of the department.

Regulatory environment

5. Housing Department acknowledges that the following laws and government policy/regulations have implications on the department's records management programme –

- (a) Evidence Ordinance (Cap.8) - e.g. proper keeping of records to ensure its legal admissibility;
- (b) Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance (Cap.486) - e.g. timely destruction of personal data in accordance with Privacy Commissioner Office's Code of Practice on Human Resource Management;
- (c) Limitation Ordinance (Cap.347) - e.g. retention of relevant records for the specified limitation periods to serve as evidence in possible legal proceedings;
- (d) Electronic Transactions Ordinance (Cap.553) - e.g. admissibility of electronic records in a court of law; and

- (e) Code on Access to Information - e.g. proper organization of records to facilitate their efficient retrieval for timely response to public access requests.
6. Records management programme has been established in accordance with its obligations under the above regulatory environment.

Roles and responsibilities

7. Records management is the responsibility of every staff of the Department. The following staff are assigned with specific roles and responsibilities –

- (a) Assistant Director (Administration) will oversee the records management in the Department.
 - (b) Chief Executive Officer/Administration is appointed as the Departmental Records Manager (DRM) and is responsible for assisting in establishing and implementing a comprehensive departmental records management programme.
 - (c) Assistant Departmental Records Managers (ADRM) are appointed to assist the DRM to monitor records management activities in the department. A list of ADRMs is attached in **Annex A**.
 - (d) Records Managers (RMs) are appointed to oversee records management matters in the registries of each section/office. A list of RMs is attached in **Annex B** and their duties list is in **Annex C**.
 - (e) Registry Staff are responsible for the day-to-day records management activities in their registries.
 - (f) Records Users (i.e. subject officers) are responsible for creation/collection of and defining the access control for records in their daily business.
8. Individual staff may play more than one of the above roles. The records management duties of staff assigned with specific records management roles and responsibilities, particularly those relating to paragraph 7 (a) to (e)

above, should be clearly reflected in their job descriptions to facilitate evaluation.

Recordkeeping system

9. A recordkeeping system is a manual or an automated information system in which records of the department are collected, organized and categorized to facilitate their retrieval, distribution, use, disposal or preservation. All records of the Department will be captured into official recordkeeping systems, e.g. authorized paper-based systems managed by confidential registries, general registries and personal secretaries, ERKS and business systems with adequate records management functionality, but not personal spaces/systems (e.g. personal folder, e-mail in-box).

10. The recordkeeping system will manage the following records management processes –

- (a) Creation/collection and capture of records;
- (b) Registration of records;
- (c) Records classification;
- (d) Records storage and preservation;
- (e) Access to records;
- (f) Tracking movement of records; and
- (g) Retention and disposal of records.

Operational and procedural guidelines for these processes are outlined in **Annex D**.

Protecting vital records

11. Vital records are records containing information essential to the continued and effective operation of an organization during and after an emergency or disaster. Housing Department is committed to protecting its

vital records through a vital records protection programme³. Completed vital records schedules⁴ prepared by sections and offices should be centrally retained by DRM.

Monitoring and auditing

12. Housing Department will keep the Policy under regular review. Sections and offices are responsible for monitoring, on a day-to-day basis, compliance with the departmental records management policy, procedures and guidelines as well as mandatory records management requirements set out in GCs and DGC(s). Sections and offices are required to fully cooperate with the DRM and the Government Records Service (GRS) to conduct records management studies/reviews in the Department.

Training

13. Housing Department will equip staff with adequate records management knowledge and skills, in particular staff who are responsible for records management or have to create and collect records during their work. In this regard, sections and offices will nominate their relevant staff to attend records management training courses and seminars organized by GRS⁵ or the Training and Development Centre.

* * * * *

³ Detailed guidelines and procedures for establishing, maintaining and reviewing a vital records protection programme are given in GRS Records Management Publication No.6 "Manual on Vital Records Protection" (accessible at <http://grs.host.ccgo.hksarg/pub6.htm>).

⁴ See Appendix D to GRS Records Management Publication No.6 "Manual on Vital Records Protection".

⁵ Information on GRS' training courses is available at <http://grs.host.ccgo.hksarg/index.htm#records>.

Annex A

Assistant Departmental Records Managers in Housing Department

Division	Post
Development & Construction Division	Senior Executive Officer/Construction
Estate Management Division	Senior Executive Officer/Estate Management
Corporate Services Division/ Strategy Division/Permanent Secretary (Housing)'s Office	Senior Executive Officer/General

Annex B

Records Managers in Housing Department

Corporate Services Division, Strategy Division and Permanent Secretary (Housing)'s Office

SCO/FSGR	EO/SM(1)	STSO	PTO(A)/ICU
HM/Pros	EO/Per(2)	HM/HS(Adm)	PTO(A)/ICU
SCO/ICR	EO/Per(4)	EO/PH	PTO(S)/ICU
API-27	EO/E(1)	EO(PS)	EO/ICU
MSOI-2	MHRD-G5	CEO/LTHS	BSE/LIFT
ACS/3	EO/CSP	Stat/2	AFMI/IA2
ACS/5	OLOI-31	SM/C	STO(A)/TAU
EO/GM(H)1	SCO/GR	A(CSU)2	
SCO/Appts	EO/SR(1)	EO/SD	
SEO/GM(W)2	PM/CE2	PTO(A)/ICU	

Development and Construction Division

PTO(A)/1	CTO(C)/G&QA	PTO(S)/3	PSO/Eng
PTO(A)/2	PTO(G)	PTO(S)/DC	SPSM
SA/20	SPO/5	STO(S)/41	PSM/GS
PTO(A)/3	PO/7	SE/MTM3	EO/C(G)
PTO(A)/4	SPO/DC	PTO/Lab	SCO/GR/P1
PTO(A)/D&S	PO/15	CTO/Audit(1)	SCO/GR/P2
CTO/P	SQS/CO	CTO(S)/QM	CO/GR/P3
CTO(BS)/C2	PSO(Q)/2	PTO/BT(C)	SCO/GR/DP
PTO(BS)/C2	PTO(S)/1	STO(A)/24	
SBSE/C9	PTO(S)/2	LS/C1	

Estate Management Division

AHM/M	AHM/T(TTI2)	AHM/CH-1	CW/TME1
AHM/M1	AHM/T(WTS3)3	AHM/T(KE10)	CW/TMW2
AHM/MOU(2)	AHM/TTI3	AHM/M(2)	CW/YLG1-1
AHM/KWH	AHM/TTI4	MS/SD1	SCW/YLG2
AHM/HWII(1)	AHM/T(TTI3)2	MS/CAT1	BSI/TME1
AHM/WT1	AHM/LMS(II)1	GE/M	BSI/TME1
AHM/YW	AHM/T(TTI1)1	AHM/M(SS1)	BSI/YLG12
AHM/T(HK2)2	AHM/FL(2)	MS/PD1	SBSI/YLG2
AHM/YTG2	AHM/WTI	PSO(Q)/MG	SBSI/TMW
AHM/HM	CW/TTI 1	CE21/M	BSE/YLG2
AHM/SPW4	CW/TWS2	AHM/SA(3)	MS/TME

AHM/SPW2	AHM/T(WTS4)1	STO(BS)/BSM2	STO(S)/T&Y
AHM2/ALC	AHM/LF1	STO(BS)/SS2	AHM/S(T&Y3)
AHM/T(HK5)	AHM/T(WTS1)	AHM/CNS(1)	AHM/T&Y
AHM/T(HK6)	SCW/TW	AHM/LEO(1)	AHM/KC
AHM/WF1(2)	AHM/TC 4	AHM/LY(1)	AHM/KC(1)2
AHM/T(HK7)1	AHM/TC 3	AHM/LH(1)	AHM/KC(II)3
AHM/T(KW1)	AHM/KE	AHM/SK(2)	AHM/TWH5
AHM/FCH3	STO(A)/KE4	AHM/SC(3)	AHM/T(KC3)
AHM/HIL(1)	HO/S(KE3)2	AHM/STW(1)	AHM/KSW1
AHM/T(KW2)	STOBS/KE	AHM/WC(2)	AHM/T(KC4)
AHM/WAL	STO(S)/KE1	AHM/T(S&M1)1	AHM/LK1
AHM/T(KW3)1	HO/SHM/KE1	AHM/LY(1)	AHM/T(KC5)2
AHM/LKK1	HO/SHM/KE2	AHM/T(S&M5)2	AHM/OY(2)
AHM/LKK2+LAO	HO/SPSM/KE	AHM/T(S&M3)2	AHM/T(KC6)1
AHM/T(KW3)2	SCW/KLE	AHM/T(TPO)2	AHM/T(KC6)2
AHM/SKM(1)	SBSI/KLE	AHM/T(NTH)2	AHM/SYE
AHM/OM4	CW/KWG2	AHM/T(TKO1)2	AHM/T(KC7)3
AHM/PT(4)	BSI/KWG2	AHM/T(NTT)5	CW/SKC1
AHM/CO	CW/NCW1	AHM/T(NTT)1	CW/HKC2
AHM/NS1	BSI/NCW1	AHM/TNS	SCW/RD
AHM/T(KW7)1	CW/KLC1	MS-DM1	MS/TMS7
AHM/T(KW7)1	BSI/KLC1	SCW/MSN	MS/TMS7
AHM/T(KW7)2	AHM/KY1	SCW/TSC	MS/TMS7
CW/KLS1	AHM/T(KE1)1	SCW/NSS	ACW/SC1
BSI/KLS1	AHM/LYM-1	SCW/TKO	AHM/M(3)
CW/SSP2	AHM/KYE	AHM-BE2	AHM/M(SS2)
BSI/SSP2	AHM/T(KE2)2	AHM-TTM4	AHM/Rent
CW/CHK2	AHM/SO2	AHM-TTM4	AHM/QA
BSI/CHK1	AHM/T(KE3)1	AHM/T(YLG3)2	AHM/AS(1)
CW/HW2	AHM/T(KE3)2	AHM/TS(2)1	HO/BPS
BSI/HW1	AHM/LWS	AHM/TH4	AHM/CSS3
CW/HE2	AHM/SE(1)	AHM/TTM2	AHM/TMP(2)
BSI/HE1	AHM/T(KE5)	AHM/SS(1)	AHM/PHRM2
ALMI/GN	AHM/WL	AHM/TIA(2)	AHM/ND(HQ)6
LM/TM1	AHM/LWN2	AHM/T(YLG2)1	SES/P2
AHM/ES(5)	AHM/LWN3	AHM/SS2	HM/CP(5)
DS(1)	AHM/T(KE7)	AHM/OT2	ES/CP(3)
AHM/T(WTS5)1	AHM/T(KE7)	AHM/T(TM3)2	ES/ND(4)
AHM/MT	AHM/PS3	AHM/YO3	PTO(S)/EM
AHM/TT1	AHM/T(KE8)+F(WC)	AHM/TTM1	STO(S)/SIS1
AHM/CG(2)	AHM/F(YO)	AHM/TNH2	STO(S)/SES2
AHM/CWN1-2	AHM/T(KE8)+F(WC)	AHM/T(YLG4)	STO(S)/SCM(1)1
AHM/SWK(2)	AHM/LAT(1)	AHM/TYT2	STO(S)/SCM(2)2
AHM/WTI	AHM/T(KE9)1	AHM/TYLG1(4)	EO/EM(3)

Major Duties of Records Managers

- (a) To oversee records management matters in their registries;
- (b) To ensure proper filing practices and all administrative and programme records covered by classification schemes in their registries;
- (c) To ensure proper records storage and preservation and to review records storage regularly in their registries;
- (d) To assist in reviewing and implementing records management practices and ensuring compliance with record management requirements;
- (e) To assist in establishing business rules for creation/collection of records and conducting a self assessment pending completion of the business rules;
- (f) To assist in drawing up and implementing the vital records protection programme;
- (g) To assist in reviewing records classification schemes for both administrative and programme records every two to three years;
- (h) To review/arrange time-expired records for disposal at least once every two years in accordance with General Administrative Records Disposal Schedules for administrative records and approved disposal schedules for programme records; and
- (i) To review approved disposal schedules at least once every five years with reference to the checklist issued by Government Records Service.

**Operational and Procedural Guidelines for
Records Management Processes**

All sections and offices in the department should ensure that the following records management processes are properly established and managed to support a comprehensive departmental records management programme.

Creation/collection and capture of records

2. Complete and reliable records should be created/collected to meet operational, policy, legal and financial purposes and document accurately and adequately government functions, policies, procedures, decisions and transactions to serve as reliable evidence. Some general examples of what records should be created or collected are provided below –

- (a) inward and outward communication with external persons and bodies directly relating to the functions and activities of an organization;
- (b) minutes and other records of meetings, consultations and deliberations pertinent to the decision-making process, formulation of policies and procedures or transaction of business;
- (c) major oral decisions and commitments;
- (d) individual exercise of a discretionary judgement which has a major effect on the functions and activities of the organization;
- (e) departmental/government forms, registers and information (in electronic/non-electronic forms) which document business transactions/procedures; and
- (f) draft documents (e.g. amendments to minutes of meetings) for a complete documentation of the relevant issue, as appropriate.

3. The creation/collection of records should be adequate but not

excessive.

4. Records should be created/collected to document the actions and decisions as soon as possible in order to ensure that the reliability and completeness of records will not be adversely affected due to passage of time.

5. E-mail records should be printed and filed in a paper-based recordkeeping system in accordance with the “Guideline on the Management of Electronic Mail” (accessible at <http://grs.host.ccgo.hksarg/doc/emailguideline.pdf>) issued by the Government Records Service (GRS) pending implementation of an electronic recordkeeping system (ERKS) in the department.

6. Records created/collected should be captured into official recordkeeping systems.

7. Decisions as to what records are to be kept should be documented in a way that can be used by staff in their daily work. Such decisions can serve as evidence of the department’s intentions.

Registration of records

8. A record is registered when it is captured into the recordkeeping system, providing evidence that it has been created/collected. In a paper-based system, a record captured into a file should be registered through entering such contextual information as the type of record (e.g. memo), date of record, and name of originator/addressee(s) of the record on the file in accordance with Chapter 12 of GRS Records Management Publication No.2 “Managing Active Records: File Management” (accessible at <http://grs.host.ccgo.hksarg/pub2.htm>).

Records classification

Establishment of records classification schemes

9. To facilitate a wide range of records management activities, including identification, capturing and retrieval of records, security and access control, records should be systematically organized according to a records classification scheme (also called a file plan), which is a plan for logical arrangement of both

administrative records⁶ and programme records⁷ according to one or more of the following: business functions, activities and contents of the records.

10. The standard subject classification scheme for administrative records as set out in GRS Records Management Publication No.3 “Subject Filing” (accessible at <http://grs.host.ccgo.hksarg/pub3.htm>) will continue to be adopted for the classification of administrative records in the department.

11. All programme records should also be covered by classification schemes. For those programme records not yet covered, relevant sections and offices should develop classification schemes for them not later than April 2013 in accordance with the procedures set out in the “Subject Filing” and Chapters 3-5 of “Managing Active Records: File Management”.

12. All sections and offices should ensure that proper filing practices are implemented in their registries with reference to the procedures set out in Chapters 8-16 of the “Managing Active Records: File Management”.

13. A Records Manager or Registry in-charge should be designated to control the creation, naming and coding of new files to facilitate accurate capturing and ready retrieval of records.

14. As a requirement to ensure quality, new records classification schemes of the department such as those necessitated by re-organisation should be approved by the Departmental Records Manager (DRM). The DRM’s approval is also required for records classification schemes to be adopted for a new office, irrespective of whether this is by way of creating new schemes or extending existing schemes. Before giving approval, the DRM should have regard to the principles set out in Appendix II to General Circular (GC) No. 2/2009.

Review of records classification schemes

15. To ensure that each records classification scheme remains effective to cope with changes over time and to identify scope for improvement, sections

⁶ Administrative records are records created or received during the course of day-to-day administrative activities that deal with finance, accommodation, procurement and supply, establishment, personnel and other general administrative activities. Records of this nature are common to B/Ds.

⁷ Programme records are records created or received by a B/D whilst carrying out the primary functions, activities or mission for which the B/D was established. Records of this nature are unique to each B/D.

and offices are required to review the records classification schemes for both administrative and programme records every two to three years and seek the DRM's endorsement, having regard to the principles set out in Appendix II to GC No. 2/2009. Staff not below the rank of Senior Executive Officer or equivalent (i.e. an officer whose rank's maximum pay point is not lower than Master Pay Scale (MPS) Point 44 or equivalent) may be designated to assist the DRM in the review, but the DRM will remain responsible for the overall co-ordination and effectiveness of the review.

16. Each review should be completed within a reasonable period (say three to six months) and a clear target completion date should be set for each review. The results of the review and any follow-up action taken should be documented. The first round of review should be completed not later than April 2013.

Records storage and preservation

Proper storage of records

17. Records should be stored in such a manner so as to facilitate user access and ensure that they are protected from unauthorized access, use, disclosure, removal, deterioration, loss or destruction. The Security Regulations (accessible at <http://sb.host.ccgo.hksarg/sr/sr.pdf>) should be complied with for handling and storing classified records and information. To ensure security of electronic records and information stored in computer systems (e.g. an ERKS or a business system), the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer's information technology security policy and guidelines should be followed.

18. For proper preservation, paper records should not be stored in an environment with high temperature and humidity, or exposed to significant risk of water damage (e.g. near unblocked window, under/near water/sewage pipe, water drain, manhole, water permeable wall or ceiling, water tank). Records should also be stored in proper facilities (e.g. filing cabinets and filing racks) instead of stacking them on the floor.

19. Paper records having long-term (i.e. 30 years or over) value should be stored in a clean environment with round-the-clock control of temperature and relative humidity at 20°C +/- 2°C and RH 50 % +/- 5% respectively to ensure their preservation to meet operational needs and reduce the risk of mould

growth which is a health hazard as far as practicable. Alternatively, sections and offices should critically review and shorten the retention periods of such records or preserve them through microfilming by utilising the service of GRS' Government Microfilm Centre.

20. For preservation of records stored in other media (e.g. optical discs), professional advice should be obtained as appropriate.

Review of records storage

21. Reviews on records storage should be conducted regularly (say once every two to three years) and after events such as typhoon or rainstorm. Each review should be completed within a reasonable period (say two to three months) and a clear target completion date should be set for each review. The results of the review and any follow-up action taken should be documented. The first review should be completed not later than April 2013.

Access to records

22. Timely access to records should be provided to authorized users for conducting business and other authorized purposes.

23. To provide sensitive information with adequate protection, records should be classified according to their level of sensitivity at a particular time. Classified records should be managed in accordance with the Security Regulations.

24. Access to records containing personal data should be arranged according to the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance.

25. Requests for access to records of the department by the public should be arranged according to the Code on Access to Information.

Tracking movement of records

Accurate and updated inventory of records

26. An accurate and updated inventory of records including at least (i) file title; (ii) file reference number; (iii) date opened and date closed; and (iv) storage location (e.g. room/floor) should be maintained.

27. Movements of records should be registered by the Bar-Coding File Management System (BCFMS), file movement card (GF448) or other effective means. Files should be passed through general registries or responsible staff so that their movement can be properly kept track.

28. Records management staff should take stocks of records and check the completeness of files regularly to minimize missing of records.

Transit and bulk relocation of records

29. To ensure safe custody of records during transit, effective measures (e.g. registering the records, putting records in locked/properly sealed containers, checking records before and after transit etc.) should be adopted. For bulk relocation of records, the following arrangements should be put in place: (i) designating an officer not below the rank of Executive Officer II or equivalent (i.e. an officer whose rank's maximum pay point is not lower than MPS Point 27 or equivalent) to oversee the task; (ii) taking stock before the relocation exercise; (iii) conducting a file inventory check after relocation; (iv) documenting the inventory check; and (v) updating the new storage location immediately afterwards.

Loss or unauthorized destruction of records

30. Any loss or unauthorized destruction of records should be immediately reported to the DRM and a copy of such report sent to GRS simultaneously. Upon receipt of such report, the DRM, with the assistance of the section or office concerned should (i) ascertain the facts and identify the circumstances leading to the loss or unauthorized destruction; (ii) reconstruct the records where necessary; (iii) take steps to prevent recurrence; (iv) consider whether any disciplinary action or other administrative action is necessary; and (v) report his findings and actions on (i) to (iv) above to GRS within three months.

31. The reporting requirements in other codes and regulations (e.g. Security Regulations) should be followed for loss of records containing classified information or personal data.

Retention and disposal of records

Establishment of records disposal schedules

32. All records irrespective of formats should be covered by approved

disposal schedules, which specify the arrangements to be made for custody (e.g. the department, GRS' records centres), retention period (e.g. three years) and disposal action (e.g. destruction or transfer to the Public Records Office (PRO) of GRS for permanent retention as archival records) of the records concerned to facilitate systematic disposal of records.

33. To dispose of administrative records, the set of disposal schedules developed by GRS and detailed in GRS Records Management Publication No. 4 "General Administrative Records Disposal Schedules (GARDS)" (accessible at <http://grs.host.ccgo.hksarg/pub4.htm>) should be adopted.

34. Programme records should be disposed of according to the disposal schedules established by the department and approved by GRS. To ensure that records are not retained for unduly long period without genuine business needs, sections and offices should critically assess their business requirements when setting a records retention period of seven years or more in disposal schedules. A copy of approved disposal schedules should be forwarded to the DRM.

35. For new series of programme records created after April 2012 and not yet covered by draft or approved disposal schedules, draft disposal schedules should be established in accordance with the procedures set out in GRS Records Management Publication No.1 "A Practical Guide to Records Scheduling and Disposal" (accessible at http://grs.host.ccgo.hksarg/sch_disp.htm) and forward to GRS within a period of two years upon creation of the series. Draft and finalized disposal schedules should be endorsed and signed respectively by an officer not below the rank of Senior Executive Officer or equivalent.

Regular disposal of time-expired records

36. Regular disposal of records facilitates easy retrieval of records in active use, and minimize costs for maintaining and storing records. Accordingly, time-expired records should be reviewed for disposal at least once every two years in accordance with General Administrative Records Disposal Schedules for administrative records and approved disposal schedules for programme records. The results of the review on retention and disposal of time-expired records should be considered and endorsed in writing by an officer not below the rank of Senior Executive Officer or equivalent and properly documented. Each review should be completed within a reasonable

period (say one to two months) and a clear target completion date should be set for each review. The first review should be completed not later than April 2013.

37. Records having archival value should be transferred to PRO of GRS according to the respective disposal schedules. If there are valid reasons to defer the transfer of time-expired records having archival value or potential archival value to PRO for retention or appraisal by more than two years, a directorate officer's written approval should be obtained. Such cases have to be brought up to the directorate officer for direction during the next disposal exercise.

38. In disposal exercises, particular attention should be paid to those files which have been opened over 30 years but remain unclosed to see whether they should be closed and then disposed of.

39. GRS Director's prior agreement must be obtained for any disposal or destruction of records using the memo templates provided by GRS (accessible at http://grs.host.ccgo.hksarg/sch_disp.htm).

40. To minimize unauthorized destruction of records, records ready for disposal should be handled in accordance with the records disposal procedures set out in Appendix IV to GC No. 2/2009.

41. All records relevant to records disposal, including internal endorsement, GRS Director's agreement and a list of records approved for disposal should be kept permanently in the department for future reference.

Transfer of records to non-government bodies

42. In case records have to be transferred to non-government bodies, the sections and offices concerned should send a list of records pending transfer to the DRM for seeking GRS Director's prior agreement so that appropriate arrangements can be made for records having archival value. No government records should be transferred outside the Government unless with the prior agreement of the GRS Director.

43. The list of records should group the records by disposal schedule and include the following information: (i) file title; (ii) file reference number; and (iii) date opened and date closed.

Review of disposal schedules

44. To cope with changing circumstances, approved disposal schedules should be reviewed at least once every five years with reference to the checklist issued by GRS (accessible at http://grs.host.ccgo.hksarg/doc/Checklist_v1R.pdf). The review and any amendments should be endorsed by an officer not below the rank of Senior Executive Officer or equivalent. Proposed amendments to disposal schedules should be forwarded to GRS for approval.

45. Each review should be completed within a reasonable period (say two to three months) and a clear target completion date should be set for each review. The results of the review and any follow-up action taken should be documented. The first review should be completed not later than April 2013.

Documenting records management processes

46. Documentation describing records management policy and processes as well as recordkeeping systems should address legal, regulatory, operational and technical requirements. The following records management activities should be documented among others –

- (a) establishment and review of records management policy, procedures and guidelines;
- (b) designation of records management roles and responsibilities;
- (c) decisions on records creation/collection;
- (d) records inventory;
- (e) establishment, adoption and review of classification schemes;
- (f) review of records storage;
- (g) arrangements of records access;
- (h) movement of records;
- (i) establishment and review of disposal schedules;
- (j) internal endorsement on and GRS' approval for disposal of records;
- (k) deferment of transfer of records having archival value or potential

archival value to PRO of GRS;

- (l) records disposal procedures;
- (m) bulk relocation of records procedures;
- (n) transfer of records to other sections and offices of the department, other departments or outside the Government;
- (o) investigation and follow-up action on loss or unauthorized destruction of records;
- (p) vital records protection programme; and
- (q) monitoring and auditing of records management.

47. Sections and offices are required to document other records management activities not listed above as appropriate.

Managing records for administrative changes

48. From time to time, there are such administrative changes as reorganization of business functions and activities which necessitate transfer of records between sections and offices of the department, or to/from other departments. Such transfers should be properly managed in accordance with the procedures set out in Chapter 8 of Records Management Manual (accessible at http://grs.host.ccgo.hksarg/doc/RM_Manual.pdf), including preparing an accurate list of records to be transferred, updating of records inventory/classification scheme(s)/disposal schedules, adopting the procedures on bulk relocation of records etc. To ensure effective coordination, the DRM should be informed of transfer of records between departments.

* * * * *

5 October 2010

DEPARTMENTAL GENERAL CIRCULAR NO. 4/2010
Mandatory Records Management Requirements

This Circular reminds staff of the importance of proper records management and sets out the level of responsible officers in meeting the mandatory requirements on management of government records in accordance with General Circular (GC) No. 2/2009.

Background

2. Proper records¹ management not only enhances operational efficiency and effectiveness while minimizing costs, but also ensures proper preservation of records and materials with archival value. To promote best practices for the management of government records in bureaux/departments (B/Ds), the Government Records Service (GRS) published the Records Management Manual, Guideline on the Management of Electronic Mail and a series of records management publications, which can be browsed via the following website: <http://grs.host.ccgo.hksarg/index.htm>. To demonstrate Government's commitment to practise good records management and preserve archival records, the GRS has introduced a number of mandatory and essential records management requirements for B/Ds to follow. A pre-requisite for good records management is to maintain an accurate inventory of records.

Categorization of Records

3. Government records can broadly be categorized into administrative records and programme records. Administrative records are those created or received during the course of day-to-day administrative activities that deal with finance, accommodation, procurement and supply, establishment, personnel and other general administrative activities. Records of this nature are common to B/Ds. Programme records are those created or received by a B/D whilst carrying out the primary functions, activities or mission for which the B/D was established. Records of this

¹ A record is any recorded information or data in any physical format or media created or received by an organization during its course of official business and kept as evidence of policies, decisions, procedures, functions, activities and transactions. This includes e-mail correspondence which should be "printed-and-filed" for record purposes.

nature are unique to each B/D.

4. For administrative records, the Department has obtained approval from the GRS for adopting a standard classification scheme, the skeleton of which is provided at **Annex A**. Given the common nature of general administrative records, the GRS has developed a common set of disposal schedules for these records in Records Management Publication No. 4 “General Administrative Records Disposal Schedules” (GARDS). For programme records, reference is made to the procedures set out in GRS’ Records Management Publication No. 3 “Subject Filing” for developing individual classification scheme. Procedures on drafting disposal schedules for programme records are set out in Chapter 4 of GRS’ Records Management Publication No. 1 “A Practical Guide to Records Schedules and Disposal”. These publications are available on GRS’ website: <http://grs.host.ccg.hksarg/index.htm>.

Duties of Responsible Officers

5. Records management is a joint effort. Staff should understand their respective roles and responsibilities in ensuring the Department’s compliance with the mandatory records management requirements as set out by the GRS. Three levels of responsible officers and their respective duties are detailed as follows:

- (i) Assistant Departmental Records Managers [at the rank of Senior Executive Officer or equivalent or above]

In order to ensure the mandatory records management requirements are properly attended to in all offices of this Department, Assistant Departmental Records Managers (ADRM) have been appointed in respective Divisions to coordinate and monitor the records management routines within their purview. Senior Executive Officer/General is the ADRM for records registries under Corporate Services Division, Strategy Division and Permanent Secretary (Housing)’s Office. Senior Executive Officer/Construction and Senior Executive Officer/Estate Management are the ADRMs for records registries under Development and Construction Division and Estate Management Division respectively. They may seek further assistance of relevant officers in their Divisions for records management matters as appropriate. The ADRMs will be responsible for the following in accordance with GC No. 2/2009:

- (a) To ensure the standard classification scheme for administrative records (**Annex A**) is adopted by all offices under the respective Division(s) **not later than April 2012**.
- (b) To vet and submit new classification schemes for approval by the Departmental Records Manager (DRM), i.e. Chief Executive Officer/Administration.
- (c) To review the records classification schemes for the respective Divisions(s)

every two to three years with a view to ensuring that the classification schemes remain effective to cope with changes over time and to identify scope for improvement. The review should be conducted having regard to the principles set out in **Annex B**, and the results of the review and any follow-up action taken should be documented.

- (d) To ensure draft disposal schedules covering all programme records for the respective Division(s) would be forwarded to the GRS for approval **not later than April 2012 for existing records** and within a period of two years for new records created after April 2012.
- (e) To ensure safe custody of records and to compile a report to DRM in case of loss or unauthorized destruction of records in the respective Division(s).
- (f) To assist in identifying vital records within the purview of respective Division(s) and recommending an action plan for protecting such records **not later than April 2012**. Vital records are those records containing information essential to the continued and effective operation of an organization during and after an emergency or disaster. ADRMs should arrange to identify and protect vital records by way of duplication or off-site storage to ensure uninterrupted operation of major business functions.
- (g) To assist in co-ordinating regular reviews of records management practices in respective Division(s) to ensure that the records management programme is functioning effectively. The review should include (i) assessment of compliance with the mandatory records management requirements set out in this Circular (e.g. progress in implementing the standard classification scheme for administrative records, establishing draft disposal schedules for programme records etc.); and (ii) identification of areas requiring improvement with regard to desirable best practices and formulation of plans to implement improvement measures. To assist B/Ds in this task, GRS will issue guidelines setting out the scope and issues for review. The Department's completed review will be endorsed by a directorate officer and returned to GRS.

(ii) Section/Unit Heads

While ADRMs are tasked to coordinate and monitor the records management routines at Divisional level, Section/Unit Heads of respective Sub-divisions will be responsible for overseeing the day-to-day management of registries within their purview including the following in accordance with GC No. 2/2009:

- (a) To implement the standard classification scheme for administrative records (**Annex A**) **not later than April 2012** and to make reference to the procedures set out in GRS' Records Management Publication No. 3 to develop classification scheme for their programme records.

- (b) To seek approval from DRM via ADRM for new classification schemes. To facilitate a wide range of records management activities, including identification, capturing and retrieval of records, security and access control, records should be systematically organized according to a records classification scheme, which is a plan for logical arrangement of records according to one or more of the business functions, activities and contents of the records. New classification schemes include those necessitated by re-organisation and those adopted for a new office, irrespective of whether this is by way of creating new schemes or extending existing schemes. In developing a new classification scheme, reference should be made to the principles set out in **Annex B**.
- (c) To adopt the set of disposal schedules developed by the GRS and detailed in GARDS for disposing of administrative records².
- (d) To establish draft disposal schedules covering all their programme records and forward them to the GRS for consideration via respective ADRMs **not later than April 2012 for existing records** and within a period of two years for new records created after April 2012. The disposal schedules stipulate the length of time that records should be retained and the ways of disposal (e.g. destruction; intermediate storage at records centre and then destruction; microfilming and then destruction; permanent retention) having regard to the administrative, operational, fiscal and legal requirements and archival values of the records. The draft disposal schedules should be endorsed by an officer not below the rank of Senior Executive Officer or equivalent. The GRS will discuss with the officers concerned regarding the proposed retention period and disposal action with a view to finalizing the disposal schedules, and the finalized disposal schedules should be signed by an officer not below the rank of Senior Executive Officer or equivalent in the respective registries.
- (e) To transfer records having archival value to the Public Records Office (PRO) of the GRS according to the respective disposal schedules. Some records may contain information having archival value (as appraised by the PRO and indicated in approved disposal schedules) which forms part of the memory of the community.
- (f) To arrange disposal of time-expired records at least once every two years. It is necessary to arrange prompt disposal of time-expired records, i.e. inactive records which have been retained for the period specified in the GARDS for administrative records or in the approved disposal schedules for programme records and are ready for disposal. In the interest of proper internal control, disposal of records, including destruction of records, should

² For retention and destruction of personnel-related files and records, departmental guidelines are set out in AD(Adm)'s memo ref. HD 1/711/83 II dated 16 January 2007.

be considered and endorsed in writing by an officer not below the rank of Senior Executive Officer or equivalent in respective records registries. For ease of reference, the records disposal process in respect of administrative records and programme records is shown at **Annex C**. If there are valid reasons to defer the transfer of time-expired records having archival value or potential archival value to the PRO for retention or appraisal by more than two years, they should be set out in writing for agreement by a directorate officer in the concerned registries. Such cases have to be brought up to the directorate officer for direction during the next disposal exercise.

- (g) To obtain prior agreement from the GRS Director before destruction of any government records. This is to safeguard against premature disposal of records and destruction of records having archival value. To minimize the risk of inadvertent unauthorized destruction of records during the disposal process, Section/Unit Heads should designate an officer not below the rank of Executive Officer II or equivalent to ensure that the disposal process is properly supervised and the records disposal procedures set out in **Annex D** are complied with.
- (h) To submit to DRM via ADRM a list of records pending transfer to non-government bodies for prior agreement from the GRS Director, in cases such as corporatization, privatization or outsourcing.
- (i) To put in place appropriate arrangements to ensure safe custody of records. Records should be stored in proper facilities (e.g. filing cabinets, filing racks) in a clean and dry environment. Consideration may be given to making use of GRS' records centres as an intermediate storage for inactive records not requiring frequent retrieval. To minimize the risk of losing records during bulk relocation of files, appropriate arrangement should be made during the process. These include: designating an officer not below the rank of Executive Officer II or equivalent to oversee the task; taking stock before the relocation exercise; conducting a file inventory check after relocation; documenting the inventory check and updating the new storage location immediately afterwards. Any loss or unauthorized destruction of records should be immediately reported to the DRM via ADRM and a copy of such report sent to the GRS simultaneously.
- (j) To identify vital records within their purview and propose to ADRM an action plan to protect them by making reference to the guidelines and procedures set out in GRS' Records Management Publication No. 6 "Manual on Vital Records Protection" **not later than April 2012**.
- (k) To review their records management practices regularly with a view to assess their compliance with the mandatory records management requirements and identifying areas requiring improvement. GRS will issue guidelines in this regard.

(iii) Officer-in-charge (Oi/c) of Records Registries

Oi/c of respective records registries shall execute routine mandatory records management requirements listed below in accordance with GC No. 2/2009:

- (a) To prepare and maintain an accurate inventory of records which should at least include file title, file reference number, date opened and date closed, and storage location. Such records inventory should be regularly updated to cater for change.
- (b) To apply the standard classification scheme to all their administrative records (**Annex A**) **not later than April 2012**.
- (c) To bring up and promptly dispose of time-expired records at least once every two years for all their administrative records which are covered by GARDS and for all their programme records with approved disposal schedules.
- (d) To ensure that records are stored in such a manner so as to facilitate user access and protected from unauthorized access, use, disclosure, removal, deterioration, loss or destruction.

Assistance from the GRS

6. The GRS arranges regular seminars / briefings to assist the Department in meeting the mandatory records management requirements. Staff will be informed of the details of such courses via HA e-Learning Portal when they are open for enrolment. Staff could also refer to the detailed guidelines set out in the GRS publications which are available at <http://grs.host.cgo.hksarg/index.htm#records>. Staff may also contact Senior Executive Officer (Records Management) of the GRS on 2195 7789 for matters and assistance pertaining to the mandatory records management requirements.

Enquiries

7. Enquiries arising from this Circular may be addressed to Senior Executive Officer (General) on 2761 6688 or Executive Officer (General)1 on 2761 6028.

Miss Stella WONG
for Permanent Secretary for
Transport and Housing (Housing)

Distribution

All Heads of Divisions/Sub-divisions/Sections/Units

Annex A

Standard Classification for Administrative Records in Housing Department

Tier 1				Tier 2		Tier 3	
Prefix	Division Code	Sub-division/Office Code	Section/Sub-section/Unit Code (3-5 alpha and/or numeric characters)	Schedule No. *	Classification No. *	General Subject No. #	Specific Subject No. #
HD	1- Corporate Services Division	1/ Administration Sub-division 2/ Finance Sub-division 3/ Legal Services Sub-division 4/ Information and Community Relations Sub-division 5/ Information and Technology Sub-division 6/ Management Services Sub-division 7/ Committees' Section	e.g. GADM1, HRM1, HRM2, T&DC, APPT1, GMW, TRAN FMSS, IRMSS, IBSS, FOSS CACs, CLS, LCS, PROS CCR, NEWS SS1, SYS1, SYS2 MSD1, MSD2, MSD3 COMM1, COMM2	1- Administration 2- Accommodation and Facilities 3- Equipment and Supplies 4- Finance 5- Personnel 6- Information Systems and Services	5-200/ 5-60/ 5-75/ 5-85/ 5-95/ 5-60/	1-999/	1-999
	2- Development and Construction Division (DCD)	1/ Division Administration Secretariat/DCD 2/ Project Sub-division 1 3/ Project Sub-division 2 4/ Development and Procurement Sub-division 5/ Planning Section 6/ Audit Unit	e.g. DAS A1, CE, GE, SE2, LSU, LA1 A2, A3, BS, SE1, QMU, BITU, LA2 PTSS, SHU, EMU, DS, QS, SE3, CMT, MTL, MTMU PLAN AUD	1- Administration 2- Accommodation and Facilities 3- Equipment and Supplies 4- Finance 5- Personnel 6- Information Systems and Services	5-200/ 5-60/ 5-75/ 5-85/ 5-95/ 5-60/	1-999/	1-999
	3- Estate Management Division (EMD)	1/ Division Administration Secretariat/EMD 2/ Deputy Director (Estate Management)'s Office 3/ Estate Management Sub-division 1 4/ Estate Management Sub-division 2 8/ Estate Management Sub-division 3	e.g. DAS M EM1, KE, KWH, SS4, MOU EM2, KC, TNS, T&Y, SS1, GE, SD, RD EM3, WTI, SS2, SS5, CPSS, PHRM	1- Administration 2- Accommodation and Facilities 3- Equipment and Supplies 4- Finance 5- Personnel 6- Information Systems and Services	5-200/ 5-60/ 5-75/ 5-85/ 5-95/ 5-60/	1-999/	1-999
	4- Strategy Division	1/ Housing Subsidies Sub-division 2/ Policy Support Sub-division 3/ Private Housing Sub-division 4/ Strategic Planning Sub-division	e.g. EST2, LAS, BCU, ALLO PS1, PS2 PH1, PH2 SP1, SP2, STAT1, STAT2	1- Administration 2- Accommodation and Facilities 3- Equipment and Supplies 4- Finance 5- Personnel 6- Information Systems and Services	5-200/ 5-60/ 5-75/ 5-85/ 5-95/ 5-60/	1-999/	1-999
	5- PS(H)'s Office	1/ Central Support Unit 2/ Independent Checking Unit	e.g. CSU1, CSU2 NBT, BCT, EBT, SVT, LOEU, TAU, IAU	1- Administration 2- Accommodation and Facilities 3- Equipment and Supplies 4- Finance 5- Personnel 6- Information Systems and Services	5-200/ 5-60/ 5-75/ 5-85/ 5-95/ 5-60/	1-999/	1-999

e.g. HD	1-	1/	GADM1/	5-	80/	2/	2
File Name: Meeting with Departmental Consultative Committees							
HD	2-	3/	QMU1/	4-	10/	101/	101
File Name: Accounts and Payment Records for New Works Project							
HD	3-	2/	KWH/	2-	40/	11/	11
File Name: Communication System for PSA Office							
HD	4-	4/	STAT1/	6-	15/	1/	1
File Name: Procurement of Electronic Survey System							
HD	5-	2/	LOEU/	3-	45/	1/	1
File Name: Maintenance of Photocopier							

* The classification numbers are in accordance with GRS and controlled by GRS Publication No. 3
Tier 3 of the classification is assigned and maintained by individual registry in Housing Department

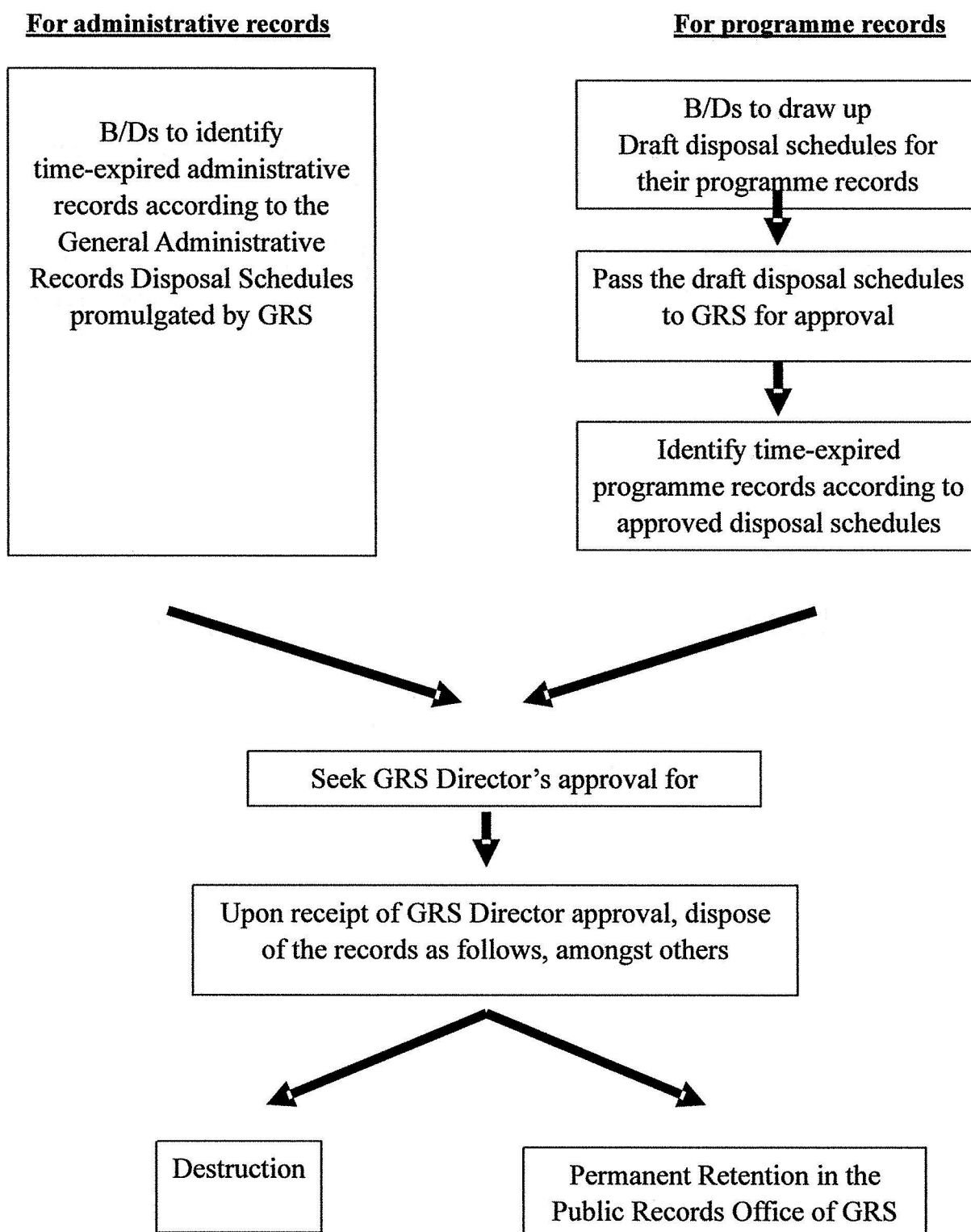
Principles in Establishing / Reviewing Records Classification Schemes

In developing a new records classification scheme or reviewing such schemes, the following principles should be taking into account -

- (a) whether programme records are separated from administrative records;
- (b) whether the scheme is systematic, logical, consistent and scalable to facilitate accurate and complete documentation of policies, procedures and decisions for the efficient carrying out of the Department's functions, activities and transactions;
- (c) whether the scheme can be used easily and the file titles are clear and unique (e.g. avoid the use of "general"/"miscellaneous") to facilitate accurate capturing and ready retrieval of records; and
- (d) whether the scheme facilitates segregation of vital records for protection and establishment of disposal schedules to satisfy retention requirement stipulated by legislation (e.g. Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance) and to separate records which need to be kept for a long period (e.g. those on policy) from those which need to be kept briefly (e.g. routine correspondence).

(Notes: The principles in this Annex are derived from paragraphs 414-420 of the Records Management Manual and paragraphs 3.9-3.12 and 3.16 of GRS' Records Management Publication No. 2 "Managing Active Records: File Management".)

Flow Chart Showing Major Steps to Dispose of Records



Procedures on Records Disposal

(a) Preparing an accurate list of files to be disposed of

For records under the custody of the Department, files to be disposed of should be physically checked against the list to ensure its accuracy. For records stored in GRS' records centres, the Department may make use of the records transfer list for the purpose of seeking GRS' agreement for disposal. The list should be updated to exclude files already retrieved from the records centres;

(b) Ensuring the completeness of files having archival value

For records kept by the Department where the relevant disposal schedule stipulates that the files should be transferred to the Public Records Office of GRS for appraisal of archival value or for permanent retention, the contents of the files should be checked to ensure that no enclosures or minute sheets are missing;

(c) Segregation of records approved for destruction

For records kept by the Department, upon receipt of GRS' approval for destruction, the subject officer should be tasked to identify the relevant records and check to ensure that records approved for destruction do not mix up with those pending approval;

(d) Documentation for accountability

The checks in (a), (b) and (c) above should be documented for accountability.

(Notes: Bureaux/departments were advised of these procedures among other measures to minimize loss and inadvertent destruction of government records in GRS' memo (1) in LM (2) in GRS RC 30/0 dated 13 May 2008.)

Government of the Hong Kong
Special Administrative Region

28 December 2006

General Circular No. 5/2006

Management of Government Records

(Note: Distribution of this Circular is Scale C. It should be brought to the attention of officers who, because of the functions of their posts, are required to take action on, or to be informed of, the Circular.)

This Circular reminds heads of bureaux and departments the importance of proper management of government records and draws their attention to good records management practices.

Proper Records Management

2. Records are valuable resources of the Government to support evidence-based decision-making, meet operational and regulatory requirements and are essential for an open and accountable government.. Good records management enhances operational efficiency and effectiveness while minimizing costs.

3. A service-wide Records Management Strategy was devised in the late 90s to help bureaux and departments improve the quality and efficiency of records service, control growth of paper records, reduce records stock and improve cost effectiveness in records management. Building on that strategy, we issued the Records Management Manual in 2001 to set out the code of best practices for the proper management of government records. After a lapse of five years, we see a need to remind colleagues of the key principles and features in our records management strategy and manual, as highlighted below –

- (a) each bureau and department should designate a **Departmental Records Manager** to oversee its records management programme. Staff members should understand their respective records management responsibilities;

- (b) records should be systematically organized by way of a logical **filing scheme** to facilitate access and retrieval. While bureaux and departments can compile their own filing schemes for their unique programme records, they should organize common administrative records in line with the standard classification scheme designed by the Government Records Service (GRS);
- (c) **records retention and disposal schedules** should be drawn up and reviewed every five years to assist timely disposal of unwanted records;
- (d) bureaux and departments are reminded to seek the **prior consent** of the Government Records Service Director before they destroy and dispose of any government records;
- (e) records appraised to have **archival value** should be transferred to the Public Records Office of GRS;
- (f) **inactive records** (i.e. those with a low retrieval rate) should be stored off-site in low rental premises such as the records centres operated by GRS or microfilmed with the assistance of GRS; and
- (g) vital records should be **protected** by way of duplication or off-site storage to ensure uninterrupted operation of major business functions.

— A gist of the good records management practices is at **Appendix I**. The Records Management Manual and relevant records management publications (as listed in **Appendix II**) can be accessed at CCGO website: <http://grs.host.ccgo.hksarg/>.

Management of Electronic Mail

4. We promulgated on 10 October 2001 the Guideline on the Management of Electronic Mail to help bureaux and departments identify, create, file and manage e-mail records so that sufficient and accurate evidence of official business and activities will be retained for legal, operational, accountability and archival purposes. Colleagues are reminded to adhere to the Guideline, also available at the afore-mentioned CCGO website.

Support Services on Records Management

5. GRS provides a range of services to assist bureaux and departments to improve records management. These include –

- (a) guidelines and procedures on records management;
- (b) records management training and advice;
- (c) records appraisal to determine retention requirements;
- (d) services and facilities for the intermediate storage of inactive records and permanent storage of records of archival value;
- (e) microfilming services including advice on microfilming, microfilming of source documents, microfilm storage facilities and disposal of filmed source documents and microfilm; and
- (f) study on electronic records management through a pilot project on electronic record-keeping system.

— The responsible officers for these services are listed at **Appendix III**.

Enquiries

6. Enquiries on this Circular may be addressed to the Government Records Service Director at 2195 7781 or to relevant officers covered in Appendix 'III.

(Miss Elizabeth Tse)
Director of Administration

c.c. Judiciary Administrator

Good Records Management Practices
(summarized from the Records Management Manual (RMM)
and records management publications)

Benefits of good records management [para. 101 of RMM]

1. Good records management under a comprehensive records management programme can bring the following benefits -
 - (a) accurate and complete documentation of the policies, procedures, decisions, functions, activities and transactions of the Government;
 - (b) effective control of the quality and quantity of government records;
 - (c) streamlining activities, systems and processes of the creation, distribution, use, maintenance and disposal of records for efficient and cost-effective operation of the Government; and
 - (d) adequate and proper identification, protection and preservation of records valuable to the Government and the community.

Definition of records, records management and record-keeping system [paras. 105, 115 and 402 of RMM]

2. A record is any recorded information or data in any physical format or media created or received by an organization during its course of official business and kept as **evidence** of policies, decisions, procedures, functions, activities and transactions.
3. Records management refers to the planning, directing, organizing, controlling, reviewing, training and other managerial activities involved with respect to the creation, classification and indexing, distribution, handling, use, tracking, storage, retrieval, protection and disposal of records to achieve adequate and proper documentation of an organization's policies, decisions and transactions as well as its efficient and cost-effective operation.

4. A record-keeping system is a manual or automated information system in which records are captured and organized to facilitate their access and use, disposal and preservation.

Departmental Records Manager [paras. 210-219 of RMM]

5. To assist the head of a bureau or department to establish and implement a proper departmental records management programme, a Departmental Records Manager, who is normally expected to be the Departmental Secretary or an officer holding equivalent position, should be appointed.

6. He/She should oversee the departmental records management programme according to established government policies and procedures, encourage the cooperation of personnel in daily handling and use of records across the organization, and coordinate with GRS and other bureaux and departments on records management matters.

Records creation [paras. 300-318 of RMM]

7. Records are created and captured to meet policy, operational, legal and financial purposes. Bureaux and departments should identify their business functions and assess their information needs so as to create and capture adequate but not excessive records.

8. The captured records should be complete: a record contains not only the content but also the structure (e.g. the structure of an e-mail record covers its header, body, attachments and corresponding reply) and contextual information (e.g. the name of the organization and the person who prepared and transmitted the record, the date and/or time it was received) necessary to document an official activity or transaction. It should be possible to understand a record in the context of the organizational processes that produced it and of other linked records.

Records classification [paras. 400-449 of RMM]

9. To facilitate the identification and retrieval of records, records should be systematically organized according to a records classification or

filing scheme, which is a plan for logical arrangement of records according to the subject (e.g. procurement of cleansing service) or functions/activities (e.g. human resource management, financial management) for which they were created. GRS has developed a subject filing scheme for common administrative records¹ for adoption by bureaux and departments (see **Records Management Publication No. 3** for details). For programme records² which are unique to each bureau or department, the latter should make reference to the procedures set out in **Publication No. 3** to develop its own filing scheme.

10. According to Security Regulations, records have to be classified according to their level of sensitivity. Different protection measures have to be adopted to handle records of different security classifications.

Records retrieval and access [paras. 450-482 of RMM]

11. Records should be accessed and used by authorized users taking into account their information need and security classification of the records.

Records storage [paras. 500-523 of RMM]

12. Records should be stored in such a manner so as to facilitate user access and protected from unauthorized access, use, disclosure, removal, deterioration, loss or destruction. They should be stored in a secure environment protected from dirt, water, insects and rodents, smoke, chemical exhausts, and away from direct sunlight.

Records disposal [paras. 600-635 of RMM]

13. Records accumulate and grow in the course of business. If records are not properly and systematically disposed of, useful and unwanted records will mix together making records retrieval difficult and time-consuming and

¹ Administrative records are those records created or received during the course of administrative activities that deal with finance, accommodation, procurement and supply, establishment, personnel and other general administrative activities. Records of this nature are common to all bureaux and departments.

² Programme records (operational or functional records) are records created or received by a bureau or department whilst carrying out the primary functions, activities or missions for which the agency was established. Records of this nature are unique to each bureau and department.

hence affect operational efficiency. Furthermore, as records continue to build up, more resources will have to be set aside to meet storage needs.

14. In this regard, bureaux and departments should plan to dispose of their unwanted records in a systematic manner. To dispose of administrative records, bureaux and departments should adopt the set of general administrative records disposal schedules developed by GRS (see **Records Management Publication No. 4** for details). For programme records, bureaux and departments should develop records retention and disposal schedules which stipulate the length of time that records should be retained and the ways of disposal (e.g. destruction, intermediate storage at records centre and then destruction, microfilming and then destruction, permanent retention) having regard to the administrative, operational, fiscal and legal requirements and archival values of the records. Please refer to **Records Management Publication No. 1** on development of records retention and disposal schedules.

Records having archival value [paras. 636-639 of RMM]

15. Some records may contain information having archival value which forms part of the memory of the community. GRS is committed to preserving such records and material of enduring value for the benefit of the people of Hong Kong. Bureaux and departments should transfer their records having archival value to GRS according to the respective disposal schedules. To avoid destruction of records having archival value, bureaux and departments should **not** dispose of their records without prior consent of GRS.

Managing inactive records [Records Management Publications Nos. 1 and 5]

16. Inactive records with low retrieval rate (e.g. those not retrieved in the last two years or only referred to at a frequency of not higher than three references per linear metre per month) are recommended to be stored off-site (e.g. in records centres operated by GRS) before final disposal to minimize storage cost. Bureaux and departments may also consider seeking the assistance of GRS to microfilm inactive records which have to be retained for not less than seven years to save storage space. Records centres providing low cost intermediate storage of inactive records are popular among bureaux and departments and are reaching their full capacity. Records for transfer to the records centres should be covered by updated disposal schedules. To maximize

the utilization of records centres, bureaux and departments should arrange timely disposal of the records stored therein in accordance with the relevant disposal schedules.

Vital records protection [paras. 700-730 of RMM]

17. Vital records are those records containing information essential to the continued and effective operation of an organization during and after an emergency or disaster. Bureaux and departments should identify and protect (e.g. through duplication and/or off-site storage) their vital records to improve their ability in managing crisis situations, ensure uninterrupted operation of major business functions during and after an emergency or a disaster, mitigate loss and damage, and protect the legal and financial rights and the interests of the clients they serve.

Managing records for administrative changes [paras. 800-838 of RMM]

18. Bureaux and departments may need to transfer the custody or ownership of their records due to administrative changes (e.g. establishment, transfer, deletion or outsourcing of functions). The bureaux and departments concerned should make preparation for such transfer (e.g. disposal of unwanted records, updating the filing scheme, and compilation of a list of records to be transferred). Prior concurrence of GRS should be obtained for any transfer of records outside the Government.

Monitoring records management [paras. 900-917 of RMM]

19. Bureaux and departments should monitor and review their records management function, including the operation of the record-keeping system and implementation of good records management practices regularly every five years or more often.

Source

20. The RMM is available at CCGO website:
<http://grs.host.ccgo.hksarg./>

**Records Management Publications
to be used in conjunction with the Records Management Manual**

Publication No. 1 – A Practical Guide to Records Scheduling and Disposal

1. This publication provides a detailed procedural guide on the drawing up of retention and disposal schedules and explains the operation and services of the records centres operated by the Government Records Service (GRS).

Publication No. 2 – Managing Active Records: File Management

2. This publication details the principles, standards and procedures in the management of active records kept in a paper-based record-keeping system. Major topics include the roles of registries and records officers, records grouping, file coding, handling of incoming and outgoing correspondence, file movement control, making up and closing of files.

Publication No. 3 – Subject Filing

3. This publication establishes a comprehensive classification scheme for administrative records, which are grouped into six schedules viz. Administration, Accommodation and Facilities, Equipment and Supplies, Finance, Personnel as well as Information Systems and Services. It also provides guidelines on the development of a classification scheme for programme records.

Publication No. 4 – General Administrative Records Disposal Schedules

4. As a sequel to Publication No. 3 and using the same classification scheme of administrative records, this publication sets out retention and disposal schedules of administrative records for adoption by bureaux and departments.

Publication No. 5 – The Microfilming User Manual

5. This publication provides guidelines, standards and procedures for microfilming government records and the retrieval and maintenance of microfilm, as well as information on the service of the Government Microfilming Centre of GRS.

Publication No. 6 – Manual on Vital Records Protection

6. This publication identifies common hazards to records, explains the importance of vital records protection, provides guidelines on selection of appropriate protection methods, and enumerates the steps in establishing a vital records protection programme.

Publication No. 7 – Checklist for Proper Records Management Practices

7. Structured in a simple self-assessment format, this publication aims to provide a useful tool for planning, conducting and evaluating records management activities.

Publication No. 8 – 中文檔案管理指引

8. This publication provides a practical guide on the proper handling and filing of Chinese documents in a bilingual environment. Major topics include the convention of writing Chinese documents, their formats and recording of Chinese documents onto minute sheets.

Guideline on the Management of Electronic Mail

9. This publication provides guidance and instructions to help bureaux and departments identify and manage e-mail records so that sufficient and accurate evidence of official business will be retained. It also standardizes the “print-and-file” practice to ensure the appropriate capturing of e-mail records in the paper-based record-keeping environment.

Handbook on Records Management

10. The handbook aims to provide Departmental Records Managers and their assistants with a total records management concept, together with the principles and good practices for improving the quality and cost-effectiveness of records management systems.

Source

11. Full details on the publications are available at CCGO website:
<http://grs.host.ccgo.hksarg/>.

Appendix III

Records Management Services provided by GRS

Service	Responsible Officer	Tel No.
Records Management Advice & Training	CEO (Records Management and Administration)	2195 7818
	SEO (Records Management)	2195 7789
Records Disposal and Records Centres	SEO (Records Management)	2460 3760
Records Appraisal and Transfer	Archivist (Public Records)	2195 7782
Government Microfilming Centre	Curator (Preservation Service)	2195 7808
Electronic Records Management	CEO (Record Systems Development)	2195 7790

22 April 2009

General Circular No. 2/2009

Mandatory Records Management Requirements

(Note: Distribution of this Circular is Scale C. It should be brought to the attention of officers who, because of the functions of their posts, are required to take action on, or to be informed of, the Circular.)

This Circular sets out mandatory requirements on the management of government records. It should be read in conjunction with General Circular No. 5/2006 entitled "Management of Government Records" which contains comprehensive advice on good records management.

Introduction of Mandatory Records Management Requirements

2. Records¹ are valuable resources of the Government to support evidence-based decision-making, meet operational and regulatory requirements and are essential for an open and accountable government. Good records management enhances operational efficiency and effectiveness while minimizing costs. Records management is therefore an important function of bureaux and departments (B/Ds). In addition, the Government is committed to identifying and preserving government records having archival value so as to enhance public awareness of Hong Kong's documentary heritage. Heads of B/Ds should accord appropriate priority and resources to implement a proper records management programme throughout their organizations. B/Ds should also cooperate with the Government Records Service (GRS) to ensure proper preservation of records and materials with archival value.

3. To promote best practices for the management of government records in B/Ds, we published the **Records Management Manual (RMM)** and the

¹ A record is any recorded information or data in any physical format or media created or received by an organization during its course of official business and kept as evidence of policies, decisions, procedures, functions, activities and transactions.

Guideline on the Management of Electronic Mail in 2001 and a series of records management publications².

4. Since then most B/Ds have already established a records management programme. It is now an opportune time to introduce a number of mandatory and essential records management requirements in order to demonstrate Government's commitment to practise good records management and preserve archival records. Opportunity is also taken to specify the level of responsible officers in important record management activities to ensure that these activities are properly attended to in B/Ds.

Designation of Departmental Records Manager

5. The **Departmental Records Manager (DRM)** of each B/D has a key role to play in records management and a sufficiently senior officer should be designated to take up the responsibility. The normal practice is for the Departmental Secretary to serve as DRM. As a general guideline, an officer not below the rank of Senior Executive Officer or equivalent should be designated as the DRM to ensure that there is adequate attention from senior management on records management. B/Ds with their DRMs assumed by officers below the rank of Senior Executive Officer or equivalent should designate another officer at the appropriate rank as DRM and advise the GRS of the change within two months. The GRS should also be informed of any replacement of their DRM as soon as this takes place, and in any case not later than two weeks after the replacement. A list of major duties of the DRM is at **Appendix I**. As records management is a joint effort, all officers in a B/D should cooperate with their DRM, particularly in complying with the mandatory requirements set out in this Circular.

Maintaining an Accurate Records Inventory

6. An accurate inventory of records is a prerequisite for good records management because it facilitates efficient control and retrieval of records and provides basic information to support records management activities (e.g. establishing records disposal schedules). Accordingly, it is incumbent upon all B/Ds to **prepare and maintain an accurate inventory of records** if they have not already done so. Such records inventory should be regularly updated to cater for changes. A records inventory on files should at least include the following information –

² The Records Management Manual, the Guideline on the Management of Electronic Mail and other records management publications, such as Publication No. 1 "A Practical Guide to Records Scheduling and Disposal", Publication No. 2 "Managing Active Records: File Management", Publication No. 3 "Subject Filing" and Publication No. 4 "General Administrative Records Disposal Schedules" can be accessed at <http://grs.host.cgo.hksarg/>.

- (a) file title;
- (b) file reference number;
- (c) date opened and date closed; and
- (d) storage location (e.g. room/ floor).

Proper Management of Electronic Mail Records

7. Apart from paper records, e-mails created or received in the course of official business should be kept as records to serve as evidence of such business. E-mail records include, for example, internal and external communication relating to the functions and activities of the B/D, information pertinent to the decision making process, formulation of policies and procedures and transaction of business. In case of doubt as to whether a particular e-mail should be kept as record, an officer should seek guidance from his supervisor. The use of electronic recordkeeping system for keeping electronic records is being studied by GRS together with the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer and the Efficiency Unit. In the meantime and unless otherwise agreed by GRS, e-mail correspondence should be **“printed-and-filed”** for record purposes, i.e. subject officers should arrange to print an e-mail record directly from the e-mail software³ for filing in an appropriate paper-based file similar to other records.

Records Classification

Establishment of new records classification schemes

8. To facilitate a wide range of records management activities, including identification, capturing and retrieval of records, security and access control, records should be systematically organized according to a **records classification scheme** (also called a file plan), which is a plan for logical arrangement of records according to one or more of the following: business functions, activities and contents of the records. It includes a coding system expressed in symbols (e.g. alphabetical, numerical and alpha-numerical) to show the logical relationship amongst the records. An effective records classification scheme is conducive to effective records management. As a requirement to ensure quality, **new classification schemes for a B/D** such as those necessitated by re-organisation **should from now on be approved by its DRM**. The DRM's approval is also required for records classification schemes to be adopted for a new office, irrespective of whether this is by way of creating new schemes or extending existing schemes. Before giving approval, the DRM should have regard to the principles set out in **Appendix II** which are derived from existing guidelines on content classification contained in paragraphs 414-420 of the RMM and guidelines on records classification contained in paragraphs 3.9-3.12 and

³ If an e-mail record is exported or copied to other software for printing, its structure (e.g. e-mail header and body) which affects understanding of the information contained therein may not be accurately presented.

3.16 of GRS' Records Management Publication No. 2 "Managing Active Records: File Management".

Administrative records

9. Administrative records are records created or received during the course of day-to-day administrative activities that deal with finance, accommodation, procurement and supply, establishment, personnel and other general administrative activities. Records of this nature are common to B/Ds. The GRS has promulgated a standard classification scheme for administrative records, which provides standard primary subject terms on administrative activities to help B/Ds achieve a higher efficiency and accuracy in organizing common administrative records and in disposing of such records. The standard classification scheme and the standard disposal schedules for administrative records are detailed respectively in GRS' Records Management Publication No. 3 "Subject Filing" and Publication No. 4 "General Administrative Records Disposal Schedules". While B/Ds may add secondary, tertiary and other lower level terms under the primary terms to suit their circumstances, they are required to seek GRS' prior agreement for addition of a new primary term to the standard classification scheme, so that timely action can be taken to establish a corresponding disposal schedule.

10. Since the introduction of the standard classification scheme in 1994, B/Ds have been adopting the standard scheme gradually to manage their administrative records. To reap the full benefits set out in paragraphs 8 and 9 above, B/Ds which have yet to **adopt the standard classification scheme for all their administrative records** are required to do so without further delay and, in any event, **not later than April 2012**. For the few B/Ds which have yet to be covered by GRS' records management studies, they should comply with this requirement three years after completion of the studies.

Programme records

11. Programme records are records created or received by a B/D whilst carrying out the primary functions, activities or mission for which the B/D was established. Records of this nature are unique to each B/D. B/Ds should make reference to the procedures set out in GRS' Records Management Publication No. 3 to develop its own classification scheme for programme records.

Regular review of records classification schemes

12. A records classification scheme allows modifications such as addition of new records series to cater for changing circumstances. To ensure that each scheme remains effective to cope with changes over time and to identify scope for improvement, the DRM is required to **review the records classification**

— schemes every two to three years, having regard to the principles set out in **Appendix II**. The results of the review and any follow-up action taken should be documented. Some large departments may need to designate staff at regional/district level to conduct such reviews. In such cases, the designated staff should not be below the rank of Senior Executive Officer or equivalent, and the DRM will remain responsible for the overall co-ordination and effectiveness of the review.

Records Disposal

Establishing disposal schedules for all programme records

13. It is important to establish **disposal schedules** to ensure systematic planning and orderly implementation of records disposal after records have been kept the right length of time to meet the purposes they are created and in compliance with legal or statutory requirements. This will facilitate subsequent transfer of inactive records to GRS' records centres for intermediate storage, transfer of archival records to the Public Records Office of GRS for permanent retention or destruction of unwanted records.

14. To dispose of **administrative records**, B/Ds should adopt the set of disposal schedules developed by GRS and detailed in GRS' Records Management Publication No. 4 "General Administrative Records Disposal Schedules". For **programme records**, B/Ds should, in consultation with GRS, develop **disposal schedules** which stipulate the length of time that records should be retained and the ways of disposal (e.g. destruction; intermediate storage at records centre and then destruction; microfilming and then destruction; permanent retention) having regard to the administrative, operational, fiscal and legal requirements and archival values of the records⁴.

15. With experience gained in the disposal of their administrative and programme records and in establishing disposal schedules for many of their programme records, B/Ds should now be in a position to establish disposal schedules for all their programme records. Accordingly, **B/Ds are required to prepare and forward to GRS draft disposal schedules covering all their programme records not later than April 2012**. These draft disposal schedules should be endorsed by an officer not below the rank of Senior Executive Officer or equivalent. GRS will consider the draft disposal schedules and discuss with the B/D concerned regarding the proposed retention period and disposal action with a view to finalizing the disposal schedules. Finalized disposal schedules should be signed by an officer not below the rank of Senior Executive Officer or equivalent in the B/D concerned. For new series of programme records created

⁴ Chapter 4 of GRS' Records Management Publication No. 1 "A Practical Guide to Records Scheduling and Disposal" sets out procedures on drafting disposal schedules for programme records.

after April 2012, B/Ds should forward draft disposal schedules to GRS within a period of two years.

Transferring records having archival value to GRS

16. Some records may contain information having archival value (as appraised by the Public Records Office of GRS and indicated in approved disposal schedules) which forms part of the memory of the community. **B/Ds should transfer their records having archival value to the Public Records Office of GRS according to the respective disposal schedules.**

Disposal of time-expired records

17. Regular disposal of records facilitates easy retrieval of records in active use, and minimizes costs for maintaining and storing records. Accordingly, it is necessary to arrange prompt disposal of time-expired records, i.e. inactive records which have been retained for the period specified in the "General Administrative Records Disposal Schedules (GARDS)" for *administrative records* or the approved disposal schedules for *programme records* and are ready for disposal. As a requirement, B/Ds should from now on **dispose of time-expired records at least once every two years** for all their administrative records, which are covered by GARDS, and for all their programme records with approved disposal schedules. In the interest of proper internal control, disposal of records, including destruction of records, should be considered and endorsed in writing by a senior officer not below the rank of Senior Executive Officer or equivalent in the B/D. The records disposal process in respect of administrative records and programme records is shown in the flow chart at **Appendix III** for reference. If there are valid reasons to defer the transfer of time-expired records having archival value or potential archival value to the Public Records Office of GRS for retention or appraisal by more than two years, they should be set out in writing for agreement by a directorate officer in the concerned B/D. Such cases have to be brought up to the directorate officer for direction during the next disposal exercise.

Prior consent before destruction of records

18. **B/Ds must obtain the prior agreement of the GRS Director before they destroy any government records.** This is to safeguard against premature disposal of records and destruction of records having archival value. GRS will process B/Ds' requests as soon as possible.

19. To minimize the risk of inadvertent unauthorized destruction of records during the disposal process, B/Ds should designate an officer not below the rank of Executive Officer II or equivalent to **ensure that the disposal process is**

— properly supervised and the records disposal procedures as set out in Appendix IV are complied with.

Transferring government records to non-government bodies

20. In case a B/D needs to transfer its records to non-government bodies due to such reasons as corporatization, privatization or outsourcing, the DRM should send a list of records pending transfer to the GRS Director for prior agreement so that appropriate arrangements can be made for records having archival value. The list should group the records by disposal schedule and include the information set out in paragraph 6(a) to (c) above, i.e. file title, file reference number, date opened and date closed. **No government records should be transferred outside the Government unless with the prior agreement of the GRS Director.**

Proper Custody and Storage of Records

21. B/Ds should **put in place appropriate arrangements to ensure the safe custody of records.** To minimize the risk of losing records during bulk relocation of files, appropriate arrangement should be made during the process. These include: designating an officer not below the rank of Executive Officer II or equivalent to oversee the task; taking stock before the relocation exercise; conducting a file inventory check after relocation; documenting the inventory check and updating the new storage location immediately afterwards.

22. Any loss or unauthorized destruction of records should be immediately reported to the DRM and a copy of such report sent to GRS simultaneously. Upon receipt of such report, the DRM should –

- (a) ascertain the facts and identify the circumstances leading to the loss/ unauthorized destruction;
- (b) reconstruct the records where necessary;
- (c) take steps to prevent recurrence;
- (d) consider whether any disciplinary action or other administrative action is necessary; and
- (e) report his findings and actions on (a) to (d) above to GRS within three months.

23. Records should be stored in such a manner so as to facilitate user access and protected from unauthorized access, use, disclosure, removal, deterioration,

loss or destruction. At present, most government records are in paper form. Paper deteriorates rapidly in an environment of high temperature and high humidity. Furthermore, mould growth on paper is a health hazard to staff. Records should therefore be stored in proper facilities (e.g. filing cabinets, filing racks) in a clean and dry environment. Consideration may be given to making use of GRS' records centres as an intermediate storage for inactive records not requiring frequent retrieval.

Protecting Vital Records

24. Vital records are those records containing information essential to the continued and effective operation of an organization during and after an emergency or disaster. B/Ds should **identify and protect their vital records** by way of duplication or off-site storage to ensure uninterrupted operation of major business functions. For B/Ds who have yet to take action in this regard, they are required to **draw up an action plan not later than April 2012** to establish and implement a vital records protection programme⁵.

Regular Review of Records Management Practices

25. To ensure that their records management programme is functioning effectively, B/Ds should review their records management practices regularly. The review should include -

- (a) assessment of compliance with the mandatory records management requirements set out in this Circular (e.g. progress in implementing the standard classification scheme for administrative records, establishing draft disposal schedules for programme records etc.); and
- (b) identification of areas requiring improvement with regard to desirable best practices and formulation of plans to implement improvement measures.

26. To assist B/Ds in this task, GRS will issue a further guideline setting out the scope and issues for review. The completed review should be endorsed by a directorate officer and returned to GRS.

Summary of Requirements

27. In sum, B/Ds are required to -

⁵ Detailed guidelines and procedures for establishing a vital records protection programme are given in GRS' Records Management Publication No. 6 "Manual on Vital Records Protection".

- (a) review whether there should be any change to staff designated as the DRM and inform GRS of any replacement of the DRM (para. 5);
- (b) prepare and maintain an accurate records inventory (para. 6);
- (c) print-and-file e-mail records (para. 7);
- (d) ensure that any new records classification scheme is approved by the DRM (para. 8);
- (e) adopt the standard classification scheme designed by GRS for all administrative records not later than April 2012 (para. 10);
- (f) review records classification schemes every two to three years (para. 12);
- (g) establish draft disposal schedules for all existing programme records not later than April 2012 (para. 15);
- (h) transfer records having archival value to GRS according to the respective disposal schedules (para. 16);
- (i) dispose of time-expired records at least once every two years, with disposal of records considered and endorsed in writing by a senior officer (para. 17);
- (j) obtain prior agreement from the GRS Director before destruction of records (para. 18);
- (k) ensure that the records disposal process is properly supervised (para. 19);
- (l) obtain prior agreement from the GRS Director before transferring government records to non-government bodies (para. 20);
- (m) put in place arrangements to ensure proper custody and storage of records, and investigate any loss or unauthorized destruction of records (paras. 21-23);
- (n) draw up an action plan not later than April 2012 to identify and protect vital records (para. 24); and
- (o) review records management practices regularly (paras. 25-26).

28. In addition to the DRM, B/Ds may consider designating appropriate staff to ensure the compliance of the mandatory records management requirements set out in this Circular.

Assistance from GRS

29. Enquiries arising from this Circular may be addressed to Chief Executive Officer (Records Management and Administration) on 2195 7818 or Senior Executive Officer (Records Management) on 2195 7789. GRS will arrange seminars / briefings to assist B/Ds in meeting the requirements set out in this Circular.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jennifer Mak', with a stylized, cursive script.

(Miss Jennifer Mak)
Director of Administration

c.c. Judiciary Administrator

Appendix I

Major Duties of Departmental Records Manager

- (a) Ensure that the design of the recordkeeping system, the choice of equipment and the use of resources and space are as efficient and cost-effective as possible;
- (b) Establish, implement and document departmental records management practices and procedures according to the guidelines and instructions of the GRS;
- (c) Provide records management staff with appropriate training and guidance to supplement those provided by GRS, having regard to the operational needs of the B/D;
- (d) Appoint Assistant Departmental Records Manager(s), where necessary, to monitor records management routines;
- (e) Introduce the use of technology in a cost-beneficial manner to any aspect of the records management function that improves operation of the organization and helps achieve the records management policy of the government;
- (f) Use GRS' records centres as far as practicable to store, service and dispose of inactive records;
- (g) Facilitate records appraisal and records access review conducted by the Public Records Office of GRS and ensure prompt and systematic transfer of archival records to the Public Records Office for preservation;
- (h) Identify and protect vital records so as to ensure their availability in the event of any emergency or disaster;
- (i) Foster cooperation between records management personnel and other staff to facilitate the most effective management of departmental records;
- (j) Cooperate with GRS in evaluating and improving the effectiveness of the records management programme on a regular basis;
- (k) Approve new records classification schemes and review records classification schemes every two to three years;

- (l) Conduct investigation into cases involving loss or unauthorized destruction of records, take appropriate follow-up action, and report findings to GRS; and
- (m) Consult GRS when records management advice is required.

(Notes: This list is adapted from Appendix C to the Records Management Manual, with items (k) and (l) added to reflect the new duties arising from this Circular.)

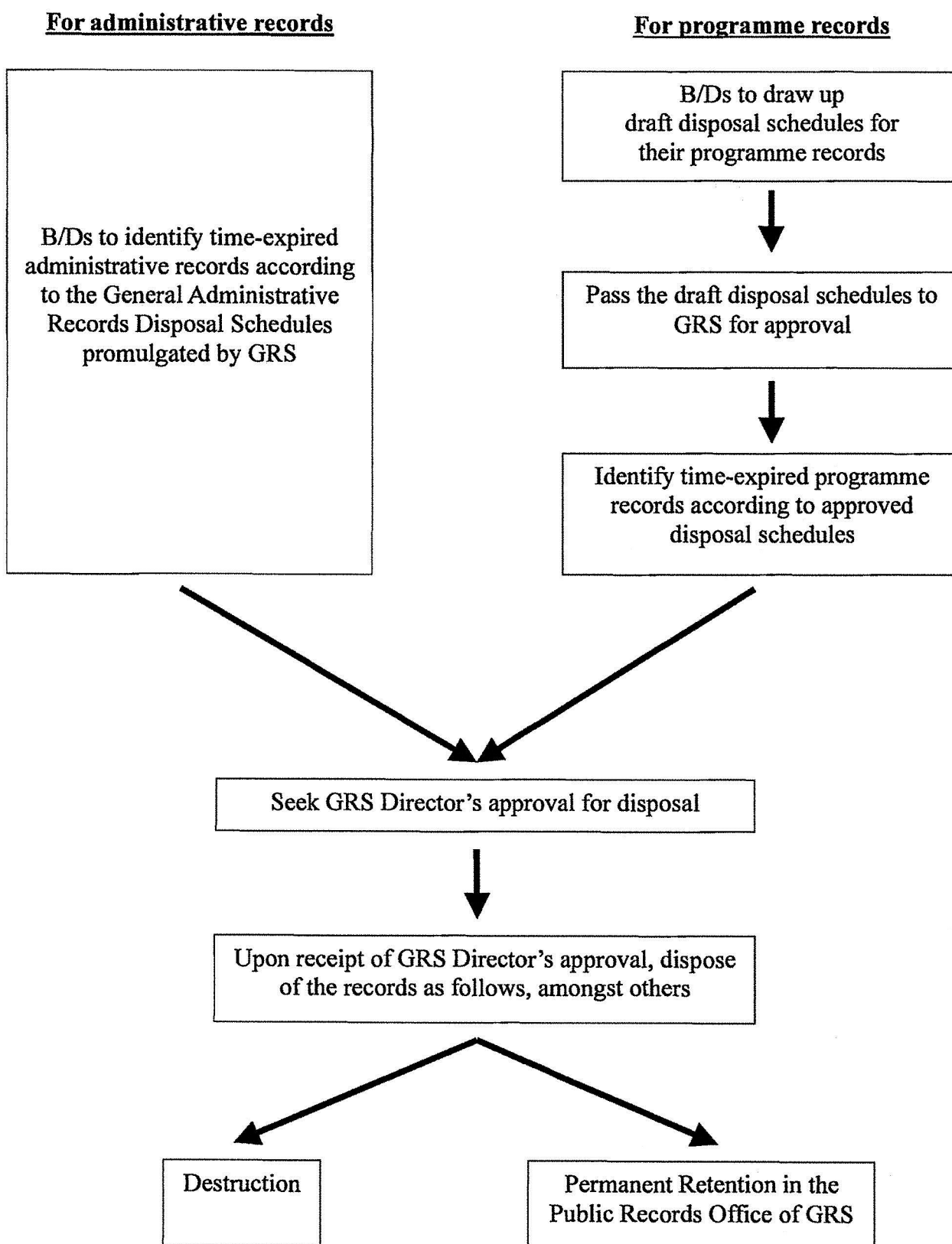
Principles in Establishing / Reviewing Records Classification Schemes

The Departmental Records Manager is required to have regard to the following in approving a new records classification scheme or reviewing records classification schemes -

- (a) whether programme records are separated from administrative records;
- (b) whether the scheme is systematic, logical, consistent and scalable to facilitate accurate and complete documentation of policies, procedures and decisions for the efficient carrying out of the B/D's functions, activities and transactions;
- (c) whether the scheme can be used easily and the file titles are clear and unique (e.g. avoid the use of "general"/"miscellaneous") to facilitate accurate capturing and ready retrieval of records; and
- (d) whether the scheme facilitates segregation of vital records for protection and establishment of disposal schedules to satisfy retention requirement stipulated by legislation (e.g. Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance) and to separate records which need to be kept for a long period (e.g. those on policy) from those which need to be kept briefly (e.g. routine correspondence).

(Notes: The principles in this Appendix are derived from paragraphs 414-420 of the Records Management Manual and paragraphs 3.9-3.12 and 3.16 of GRS' Records Management Publication No. 2 "Managing Active Records: File Management".)

Flow Chart Showing Major Steps to Dispose of Records



Procedures on Records Disposal

(a) Preparing an accurate list of files to be disposed of

For records under the custody of B/Ds, files to be disposed of should be physically checked against the list to ensure its accuracy. For records stored in GRS' records centres, B/Ds may make use of the records transfer list for the purpose of seeking GRS' agreement for disposal. The list should be updated to exclude files already retrieved from the records centres.

(b) Ensuring the completeness of files having archival value

For records kept by B/Ds where the relevant disposal schedule stipulates that the files should be transferred to the Public Records Office of GRS for appraisal of archival value or for permanent retention, the contents of the files should be checked to ensure that no enclosures or minute sheets are missing.

(c) Segregation of records approved for destruction

For records kept by B/Ds, upon receipt of GRS' approval for destruction, an officer should be tasked to identify the relevant records and check to ensure that records approved for destruction do not mix up with those pending approval.

(d) Documentation for accountability

The checks in (a), (b) and (c) above should be documented for accountability.

(Notes: Bureaux/departments were advised of these procedures among other measures to minimize loss and inadvertent destruction of government records in GRS' memo (1) in LM (2) in GRS RC 30/0 dated 13 May 2008.)

At the public hearing of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) held on 13 January 2017, we provided members with further information in relation to Part 5 of Chapter 1 of the Director of Audit's Report (the Audit Report) on the "Replacement of Laundry Pole-holders". In response to enquiries raised by the PAC in its letter dated 13 January 2017, we provide our reply as follows:

(II) Replacement of laundry pole-holders

- (g) The laundry racks under the 2004-2005 Subsidy Scheme (the Scheme) were installed more than 10 years ago. All applications and records of laundry rack installation under the Scheme were kept in respective Estate Management Offices (EMOs).

In order to project the number of racks in Phase 2 under the Scheme, HD compiled statistics on the number of applications received from tenants for each estate in 2004. Such information was consolidated in Estate Management Division Instruction No. P11/2004 issued on 2 September 2004. After that, HD had not conducted similar statistical exercise. Therefore, statistics on aggregate number of laundry racks installed under Phase 2 of the Scheme were not readily available. Nevertheless, the records of laundry rack installation of each estate have been kept in respective EMOs.

During replacement of laundry pole-holders in 2014, HD has taken various measures to enhance the record keeping and work progress monitoring in respect of laundry rack installation and sealing-up of the pole-holders. Project teams in respective EMOs were required to update and report the progress of work regularly. The information was then consolidated to establish a database with records of laundry rack installation to facilitate future monitoring.

Upon completion of Batch I of the Laundry Rack Replacement Programme, HD will review the effectiveness of the current monitoring mechanism.

- (h) There were seven fatalities out of these eight casualties.
- (i) HA takes proactive and pragmatic approach to enhance the existing laundry facilities of PRH estates whenever resources allow. In some Estate Improvement Programmes, the proposal of comprehensive replacement of pole-holders with laundry racks by

HD free of charge as landlord's provision was welcomed by tenants and other stakeholders. Therefore, in 2014 HD conducted a review of laundry facilities and launched a programme for replacement of laundry pole-holders.

- (j) As at 31 December 2016, there were completion delays in three works contracts which were mainly due to the contractors' deficiencies in works management. The following actions were therefore taken against the contractors concerned under the provisions of the contracts respectively:

Contractor	Number of Contract Warning Letter issued	Adverse Report issued	Liquidated Damages claimed
Contract "A"	4	1	Yes
Contract "B"	2	Nil	Yes
Contract "C"	Nil	Nil	Yes