



Vital Records

Vital Records are those which are required to:

- Establish and protect the rights and interests of the organization and its clients;
- Re-instate business operations during or following a disaster; and
- Continue to communicate with, and service the needs of, staff following a disaster.

Examples of Vital Records Include (but not limited to):

- Insurance policies;
- Pay rates;
- Some policy and procedures;
- Certificates of incorporation;
- Corporate seals;
- Legal documents;
- Software programs and licenses;
- Deeds;
- Contracts and agreements;
- Copyrights;
- Leases;
- Wills;
- Client files;
- Personnel register;
- Current financial records; etc.

Identification of Vital Records:

- Is an essential business practice for any organization;
- A vital records register is an essential component of any risk management or disaster management plan;
- A Register will ensure that the organization's vital records are identified and protected;
- Identification of vital records requires a sound understanding of the objectives and functions of the business of the organization;
- Senior management within each section or division of the organization will have a good understanding of key functions and the recorded information relevant to those functions, will be essential to re-establish business; and
- Vital records will only remain "vital" for certain periods of time. For example: contracts and deeds are **vital** whilst they are current. They will still be important records to keep once their currency has expired but they will not be necessary for **immediate** recovery of business activity.

Protecting Vital Records:

- Recovery and access to vital records (regardless of format) is an essential business component for any organization;
- Protection, Recovery and Access to vital records is reliant on:
 - ✓ **Identification** – once identified, incorporate into a Vital Records Register;
 - ✓ **Duplication** – copies are essential so that the copy may be used for day to day business / reference purposes and the original is protected and safeguarded;
 - ✓ **Backup** – daily backup of systems where possible; and
 - ✓ **Removal** – remove vital records from the site to a place where they can be safely stored and retrieved when required.

For further information, contact the State Records Office at sro@sro.wa.gov.au