

SIERRA LEONE HOUSE OF PARLIAMENT: RECORDS MANAGEMENT POLICY.

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish the framework needed for effective records management at the Sierra Leone House Parliament. This policy provides advice to Parliamentary staff on the creation and use of Parliamentary records and sets standards for classifying, managing and storing those records. It therefore provides a framework for the management of information consistent with the strategic plan.

A good recordkeeping programme is fundamental to Parliament's commitment to administrative transparency and accountability. It enables Parliament to account for decisions and actions by providing essential evidence in the form of records and ensures the preservation of the collective memory of Parliament.

This policy also seeks to ensure that Parliamentary business is adequately documented through creation/receipt of records that are then managed in accordance with best practice.

2. DEFINITIONS.

Appraisal: the process of evaluating business activities to determine which records need to be captured and how long the records need to be kept, to meet business needs, the requirement of organizational accountability and citizens expectations.

Archives: the whole body of records of continuing value of an organization or individual. Sometimes call Corporate Memory. Records that have been appraised as having continuing value.

Business Activity: an umbrella term covering all functions, processes, activities and transactions of Parliament and staff.

DISPOSAL: a range of processes associated with implementing appraisal decisions. These include retention, deletion or destruction of records. They may also include the migration or transmission of records.

ELECTRONICS RECORDS: records communicated and maintained by means of electronic equipment.

EVIDENCE: information that tends to prove fact. Manifesting the actual proof of decisions, actions and transactions.

RECORD KEEPING SYSTEMS: information systems which capture maintain and provide access to records overtime.

RECORDS: records information in any form including data in computer systems, created or retrieved and maintained by an organization or individual in the transaction of business or conduct of affairs and kept as evidence of such activity.

3. SCOPE

This policy is applicable to all departments of the Parliamentary Service. It is intended to comply with all relevant legislations dealing with records management (The Right to Access Information Act 2013).

Staff should be aware that electronics documents have the same status as paper document. Both electronics and paper documents are bound by the same legislative requirements and are subject to the same degree of confidentiality and care. Therefore electronics records must be managed as part of record keeping programme.

4. LEGISLATION

The Parliamentary Service must comply with the Right to Access Information ACT 2013.

4.1 STANDARD

The relevant International Standard on Records Management is ISO 15489. This standard has to be adopted by Sierra Leone House of Parliament.

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF RECORD KEEPING

5.1 The Clerk of Parliament

The overall responsibility of records management rests with the Clerk. As the Chief Administrator the Clerk has ultimate responsibility to ensure that Parliament complies with legislations and standards of this policy.

5.2 DEPUTY CLERK/DIRECTORS/HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS

The management – level staff are responsible for implementing and maintaining a sound record keeping practices within their respective departments.

They must ensure that records are created, maintained, and stored according to standards outlined in this policy and that no record shall be destroyed except the approval of the Director of Library, Research & Documentation.

5.3 STAFF

Record keeping is not only in the province of Library, and Documentation staff but an essential role of staff of Parliament. Every member of staff is responsible for making and keeping records that fully and accurately record their functions, actions, transactions and decisions.

Staff members are to follow authorized procedures in record keeping functions; must observe security, privacy and confidentiality at all times. Staff members are to handle records with care and respect so as to avoid damage in order to prolong their life- span.

6. CREATION OF RECORDS

In accordance with 5.3 of this policy, all staff is required to create full and accurate records which adequately document the business activities which they take part.

Records should be full and accurate to the extent necessary to:

- Facilitate action of employees at any level, and by their successors;
- Make possible a proper scrutiny of the conduct of business by any one authorized to undertake such scrutiny;
- Protect the financial, legal and other rights of Parliament, its client, and any other people affected by its actions and decisions.

7. CONTROL OF RECORDS

- **VERSION CONTROL**

Earlier versions (i.e. drafts) of a document may be deleted once the previous versions are no longer needed to create future record However, drafts that must not be dispose of are those that document significant decisions, reasons and actions and contain significant information that is not contained in the final form of the record. This applies to both paper and electronic drafts.

- **SECURITY**

Records must be made accessible to authorized users, Staff of Parliament enacting the normal course of their duties. Personal information about Members and staff must be secured at all levels of administration.

- **STORAGE**

Records must be stored in condition that are clean, secure, with low risk of damage from fire, water,dampness,mould,insects,rodents etc. They should be kept away from direct sunlight and other sources of light and heat.

- The storage area should be well ventilated and ideally maintained at stable temperature and humidity. Records in non-paper format such as photographs, maps or computer disks required specialized storage conditions and handling process that take account of their specific physical and chemical properties.
Irrespective of format, records of continuing value require higher quality storage and handling to preserve them for posterity.

8. DISPOSAL AND DESTRUCTION OF RECORDS

No staff has the right to destroy or dispose of any Parliamentary Records without the consent and approval of the Director of Library, & Documentation.

Except for Normal Administrative Practice (see Appendix A-Normal Administrative Practice).

Whereas records are scheduled for destruction this should be undertaken by methods appropriate to the confidentiality status of records. If staff are uncertain of the status of their records they should report to the department of Library and Documentation.

9. AUDIT AND REVIEW.

All records systems may be subjected to audit and review to ensure compliance with the legislative requirements and with the requirements of this policy.

To accommodate changes in legislation, technologies, programs and resources to Parliament, this policy will be reviewed when the need arises.

10. APPENDIX

Destruction as a normal administrative practice usually occurs because records are duplicated, unimportant or short-term use only. This applies to both paper and electronics records.

The following categories of records may be destroyed as normal administrative practice:

- Letters of appreciation or sympathy, or anonymous letter;
- address lists and change of address notices;
- calendars, office diaries and appointment books (other than those for management);
- telephone messages;
- draft reports, correspondence, speeches, notes, spreadsheet etc.;
- routine statistical reports compiled and duplicated in other reports.

Prepared by:

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Director of Library and Information Services.

