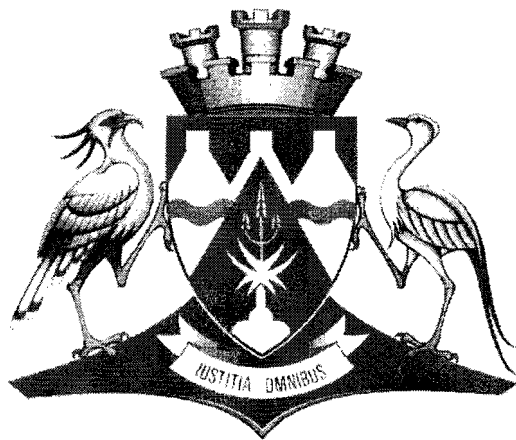


# **PIXLEY ka SEME DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY**



## **E-MAIL RECORDS MANAGEMENT POLICY**

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## **1. Purpose**

- 1.1 The National Archives and Records Service Act applies to e-mail in the same way as it does to records that are created using any other media.
- 1.2 All public servants are required to create and preserve records of the Pixley ka Seme District Municipality's organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures and transactions. The records must be properly stored, preserved and available for access.
- 1.3 The purpose of this policy is to facilitate the proper creation, management, preservation and disposal of e-mail records.
- 1.4 All employees of Pixley ka Seme District Municipality shall implement the e-mail policy.

## **2. Policy statement**

- 2.1 All records created and received by Pixley ka Seme District Municipality shall be managed in accordance with the records management principles contained in section 13 of the National Archives and Records Service Act, 1996.
- 2.2 The following broad principles apply to the record keeping and records management practices of Pixley ka Seme District Municipality:
  - The Pixley ka Seme District Municipality follows sound procedures for the creation, maintenance, retention and disposal of all records, including electronic records.
  - The records management procedures of Pixley ka Seme District Municipality comply with legal requirements, including those for the provision of evidence.
  - The Pixley ka Seme District Municipality follows sound procedures for the security, privacy and confidentiality of its records.
  - Electronic records in the Pixley ka Seme District Municipality are managed according to the principles promoted by the National Archives and Records Service.
  - The Pixley ka Seme District Municipality has performance measures for all records management functions and reviews compliance with these measures.

## **3. Scope and intended audience**

### **3.1 Applicability to employees**

- 3.1.1 This policy applies to all staff of Pixley ka Seme District Municipality who

generates records while executing their official duties.

- 3.1.2 Employees of Pixley ka Seme District Municipality should be aware that e-mails are subject to Promotion of Access to Information (PAIA) requests and legal discovery when a lawsuit is pending. Should e-mails that are a subject of a PAIA request or legal discovery be deleted because e-mails are not managed properly Pixley ka Seme District Municipality will face severe court sanctions and/or a criminal charge.
- 3.1.3 Employees who willfully contravene the e-mail management provisions in this policy will face disciplinary action.

### **3.2. Applicability to e-mails as records**

- 3.2.1 E-mails that are evidence of the business transactions of Pixley ka Seme District Municipality are public records and shall be managed and kept for as long as they are required for functional and/or historical purposes.
- 3.2.2 E-mails that approve an action, authorize an action, contain guidance, advice or direction, relate to projects and activities being undertaken, and external stakeholders, represent formal business communication between staff, contain policy decisions, etc. should be managed as records and should be filed into the file plan. This policy covers the e-mail message itself as well as any attachments that meet these criteria.
- 3.2.3 An e-mail message is a record if it:
- contains unique, valuable information developed in preparing position papers, reports, studies, etc.
  - reflects significant actions taken in the course of conducting business.
  - conveys unique, valuable information about Pixley ka Seme District Municipality's programs, policies, decisions, or essential actions.
  - conveys statements of policy or the rationale for decisions or actions.
  - documents oral exchanges (in person or by telephone), during which policy is formulated or other business activities are planned or transacted.
  - adds to the proper understanding of the formulation or execution of Pixley ka Seme District Municipality's actions or of Pixley ka Seme District Municipality's operations and responsibilities.
  - documents important meetings.
  - facilitates action by Pixley ka Seme District Municipality's officials and their successors in office.
  - makes possible a proper scrutiny by the Auditor-General or other duly authorized agents of the government.
  - protects the financial, legal, and other rights of the Pixley ka Seme District Municipality and of the persons directly affected by the Pixley ka Seme District Municipality's actions.

- approves or authorizes actions or expenditure.
- constitutes a formal communication between staff e.g. correspondence or memoranda relating to official business.
- signifies a policy change or development.
- creates a precedent e.g. by issuing an instruction or advice.
- involves negotiations on behalf of the Pixley ka Seme District Municipality.
- has value for other people or the Pixley ka Seme District Municipality as a whole.

3.2.4 E-mails that contain the following do not need to be filed:

- meeting announcements.
- announcements of employees' absences or schedules.
- changes in telephone numbers or office locations.
- meeting arrangements that normally would have been done by telephone.
- copies of memoranda or text sent for information rather than action.
- messages that have only temporary value such as a message that a meeting time has changed.
- messages that contain no evidence of Pixley ka Seme District Municipality's functions and activities.
- duplicate information already documented in existing records.

#### 4. Regulatory framework

4.1 By managing its e-mailed records effectively and efficiently Pixley ka Seme District Municipality strives to give effect to the actability, transparency and service delivery values contained in the legal framework established by:

- Constitution, 1996;
- National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act (Act No 43 of 1996 as amended);
  - National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Regulations;
- Municipal Finance Management Act (Act No 56 of 2003);
- Promotion of Access to Information Act (Act No 2 of 2000);
- Promotion of Administrative Justice Act (Act No 3 of 2000);
- Electronic Communications and Transactions Act (Act No 25 of 2002).

[Note: Governmental bodies should list all other acts, regulations and codes of practices that impact on the record keeping and records management practices of the body.]

## **5. Roles and responsibilities**

### **5.1 Council and Municipal Manager**

5.1.1 Council is responsible for the approval of this policy and the Municipal Manager for the designation of a manager as the records manager. The Municipal Manager shall mandate the records manager to implement this policy.

5.1.2 The Municipal Manager shall ensure that the management of records including e-mail is a key responsibility in the performance contracts of all managers.

### **5.2 Managers**

5.2.1 Managers are responsible for the implementation of this policy in their respective units. They shall ensure that the management of records including e-mail is a key responsibility in the performance agreements of all the staff in their units.

5.2.2 Managers shall lead by example and shall ensure that records, including e-mail generated by them are managed properly.

### **5.3 Records manager**

5.3.1 The records manager is responsible for:

- the implementation of this policy;
- staff awareness regarding this policy.

5.3.2 The records manager is responsible for ensuring that e-mails are managed as records according to the records management principles prescribed by the National Archives and Records Service Act and in terms of this policy. In this regard the records manager shall be consulted to determine which types of e-mail would be considered official records that should be managed properly, if the specific types are not covered in par. 3 above.

5.3.3 The records manager shall ensure that all records created and received by Pixley ka Seme District Municipality are classified according to the approved file plan and that a written disposal authority is obtained for them from the National Archives and Records Service.

5.3.4 The records manager is responsible for determining retention periods in consultation with the risk manager, the legal services manager and the users and taking into account the functional, legal and historical need of the body to maintain records of transactions.

- 5.3.5 The records manager is mandated to make such training and other interventions as are necessary to ensure that the Pixley ka Seme District Municipality's record keeping and records management practices comply with the records management principles contained in the National Archives and Records Service Act.
- 5.3.6 The records manager may from time to time issue circulars and instructions regarding the record keeping and records management practices of Pixley ka Seme District Municipality.
- 5.3.7 The specific duties of the records manager with regards to the management of e-mail as records are contained in the Records Manager's job description.
- 5.3.8 The Senior Manager Corporate Services is the records manager for the whole Pixley ka Seme District Municipality.
- 5.3.9 The records manager shall monitor the implementation of this policy.

#### **5.4 Senior Manager Corporate Services**

- 5.4.1 The Senior Manager Corporate Services is responsible for approval of requests for information in terms of the Promotion of Access to Information Act.
- 5.4.2 The Senior Manager Corporate Services shall inform the records manager if a request for information necessitates a disposal hold to be placed on records that are due for disposal.

#### **5.5 Staff**

- 5.5.1 Every user of the official e-mail system is responsible for ensuring that e-mails, that are evidence of business transactions, are captured as records.
- 5.5.2 Every user of the official e-mail system is responsible for ensuring that e-mails a subject classified against the approved file plan.

#### **6. Filing e-mails**

- 6.1 E-mails shall under no circumstances be isolated from Pixley ka Seme District Municipality's records management systems. Print the message, and any applicable attachments, to paper and incorporate into the body's paper records management system

- 6.2 If e-mail impacts on the work of a user and it comply with the criteria stated in par. 3, the e-mail shall be filed by the sender except if:
- there is a person in a unit or project group to whom the responsibility for this task has been designated.
  - it is an e-mail received from outside the Pixley ka Seme District Municipality in which case the recipient is responsible for filing it.

## **7. Disposing of e-mails**

- 7.1 E-mails considered to be public records shall not be deleted or otherwise disposed of without a written disposal authority issued by the National Archivist.
- 7.2 E-mails filed to subject files in the file plan are covered by Standing Disposal Authority No (insert number issued by the National Archives and Records Service) and shall be disposed of according to the retention periods in that disposal authority.
- 7.3 Should an e-mail be received/generated for which an appropriate subject file does not exist in the file plan, the records manager should be contacted to add an appropriate subject to the file plan and to apply for disposal authority on that subject.
- 7.4 E-mails that are not public records may be disposed of after two months in terms of the National Archives and Records Service's General Disposal Authority AT2 for the Destruction of Transitory Records.

## **8. Creating reliable e-mail records**

### **8.1 Structuring an out-going e-mail**

- 8.1.1 E-mails that are public records shall contain sufficient information to ensure that they are properly contextualized and that they are meaningful and accessible over time.
- 8.1.2 Outgoing mail shall include the reference number of the subject folder in the file plan in the top right hand corner of the message box to provide a contextual link to the business activity that supports the e-mail.

### **8.2 Proper subject line**

- 8.2.1 Subject lines are very important, since they indicate to a recipient what the message is all about. If subject lines are not used appropriately, the recipients



may not realize the importance of the message and choose to read it later or not at all. Users shall allocate useful subject lines to e-mails.

- 8.2.2 If a user receives a message with a senseless subject line and needs to reply to or forward it, the subject line should be changed to properly cover the subject of the e-mail before sending it off.

### **8.3 Auto-signatures**

- 8.3.1 Staff should always be contactable even if their e-mail systems are down. Auto-signatures shall be used and shall contain the following identifying information of a sender:

- name of sender
- position of sender
- name of unit/section
- name of the governmental body
- postal address
- phone number
- fax number

### **8.4 Attachments**

- 8.4.1 If an outgoing mail includes an attachment, the attachment shall be filed into the file plan in the Records Management System before it is attached to the e-mail to ensure that it contains the following prescribed minimum mandatory metadata.

- File plan reference number
- Record title: A sensible name given to it by the user
- Author
- Originating organization
- Originating sub office
- Record date
- Record type

- 8.4.2 Attachments shall be virus free.

## **9. Language used in e-mails**

- 9.1 Official communications shall be approached in the same manner as a business letter, thinking it through carefully and using proper grammar and correct spelling.

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## **10. Capturing e-mail string**

- 10.1 E-mail messages on a particular subject can become a string of replies until a matter is finalized. In such cases users shall:
- place all e-mails into the system separately as they occur and relate them to each other or
  - capture the final message – in which case user needs to make sure that the final message contains whole thread of the discussion.

## **11. When to capture e-mails**

- 11.1 Users shall capture official e-mails at the time of the action to ensure that
- the chronological order of the business transaction is clear.
  - the authenticity of e-mail is guaranteed.

## **12. Metadata**

- 12.1 The IT official shall ensure that the system is set up to capture the following metadata:
- The transmission data that identifies the sender and the recipient(s) and the date and time the message was sent and/or received;
  - When e-mail is sent to a distribution list, information identifying all parties on the list must be retained for as long as the message is retained.

## **13. Monitor and review**

- 13.1 The records manager shall review the e-mail record keeping and records management practices of Pixley ka Seme District Municipality on a regular basis and shall adapt them appropriately to ensure that they meet the business and service delivery requirements of Pixley ka Seme District Municipality.
- 13.2 This policy shall be reviewed on a regular basis and shall be adapted appropriately to ensure that it meets the business and service delivery requirements of Pixley ka Seme District Municipality.

## **14. Definitions**

### **Correspondence system:**

A set of paper-based and electronic communications and associated documents, sent, received, generated, processed and stored during the

conduct of business.

**Disposal:**

The action of either destroying/deleting a record or transferring it into archival custody.

**Disposal authority:**

A written authority issued by the National Archivist specifying which records should be transferred into archival custody or specifying which records should be destroyed/deleted or otherwise disposed of.

**Disposal authority number:**

A unique number identifying each disposal authority issued to a specific office.

**Electronic records:**

Information which is generated electronically and stored by means of computer technology. Electronic records can consist of an electronic correspondence system and electronic record systems other than the correspondence system.

**File plan:**

A pre-determined classification plan by which records are filed and/or electronically indexed to facilitate efficient retrieval and disposal of records.

**Public record:**

A record created or received by a governmental body in pursuance of its activities, regardless of form or medium.

**Record:**

- 1) Recorded information regardless of form or medium.
- 2) Evidence of a transaction, preserved for the evidential information it contains.

**Record keeping:**

Making and maintaining complete, accurate and reliable evidence of official business in the form of recorded information.

## **Records management**

Records management is a process of ensuring the proper creation, maintenance, use and disposal of records throughout their life cycle to achieve efficient, transparent and accountable governance.

### **Retention period:**

The length of time that records should be retained in offices before they are either transferred into archival custody or destroyed/deleted.

## **15. Authorization**

This policy was approved by Pixley ka Seme District Municipality on 30 May 2012 and revised on 26 May 2015.



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**EXECUTIVE MAYOR**

**DATE APPROVED : 30 MAY 2012**

**DATE REVISED : 26 MAY 2015**

**RESOLUTION : R 2015 – 05 – 26 (9.8)**