



**General Operating Guideline # 2002**

**Subject: Fire Department Records**

**Approval: February 15, 2024**

## **Section 1: Purpose**

Comprehensive records management is essential for meeting fire service operational requirements, providing solid statistics for critical decision making and long-term strategic planning and protecting the legal, financial and other interests of the fire service.

The purpose of this guideline is to provide for the efficient and systematic control of fire departments' records in support of effective conduct of business, compliance and accountability with legislated obligations and published standards.

## **Section 2: Scope**

The records management guideline is applicable to Lunenburg Regional Fire and Emergency Service personnel.

## **Section 3: Definition**

Records management is the control and maintenance of both digital and hard copy documentation of fire department transactions and activities. This includes the creation, identification, storage, retrieval and disposition of such records. Records management ensures records are properly stored, accessed and managed in a secure manner. It also ensures compliance with legal requirements and regulations regarding the storage, access and use of information.

## **Section 4: General Responsibility**

It is the responsibility of the fire service to create, classify, maintain, access, retrieve, store, destroy and preserve information resources throughout their life cycle according to applicable standards and procedures. Records management should be designed to maximize the usefulness of the records and facilitate retrieval through the records life cycle.

All records shall be:

- centralized, backed up and secured from unauthorized access, alteration, removal or destruction
- dated to ensure version control
- consist of written documents, computer files and other formats such as letters, maps, plans, drawings, reports, forms, memos, films, videotapes, photographs, 911 recordings, and other recorded radio communications
- organized in a manner to be readily available for the research and decision making
- collected and maintained in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy legislations
- managed in accordance with established records retention schedules for specific classes of records

## **Section 5: General Record Types**

The following (but not limited to) record classifications are to be maintained in a records management system.

### **Financial and Administration**

- complete and auditable financial records
- purchasing agreements and service contracts

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- operating licenses and permits
- department incorporation documents and associated operating bylaws

### **Personnel**

- member contact information, emergency contacts, photographs, qualifications, experience, training
- application, appointment and initial membership records, personal data such as beneficiaries, types of benefits and entitlements, changes in status, performance appraisals, commendations, disciplinary actions etc.
- accident and hazardous exposure reports, department and WCB insurance claims, critical stress incidents, physician and health related information, correspondence, department separation records, etc.
- membership attendance at incidents, training, meetings, fire departments events etc.

### **Training and Certifications**

- formal training program records and certifications for membership e.g. station drills, schools, qualifications and licenses (refer to NFPA 1401)
- training recertification schedules
- training resource libraries or digital links

### **Department Meetings**

- minutes of all department and ratepayers or other public meetings
- department bylaws, polices, legal documents, deeds or other legislated resolutions

### **Property and Infrastructure**

- department property and infrastructure holdings e.g. fire station, dry hydrants and other water sources, etc

### **Inventory, Apparatus and Equipment**

- documentation and tracking by description, code, serial number etc.
- maintenance records on all equipment and apparatus (including preventive maintenance schedules)
- information and tracking on equipment used and inventory expended at the emergency scene

### **Preplanning and Fire Prevention**

- inspection reports and basic property information on all sites within the district, i.e. fire safety plans, building hazards, utilities and shut offs, water supply, drawings and floor plans, digital photographs
- public education outreach activities

### **Dispatch and Incident Management**

- district mapping files including road names and civic addressing
- complete dispatch and incident management reports including OFM reports
- incident investigation and insurance reports
- automatic and mutual aid agreements

### **Standard Operating Guidelines**

- standard operating guidelines and department policies

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## **Section 6: General Record Management Considerations**

Records management includes control and maintenance of both digital and hard copy documentation of fire department activities. To efficiently and effectively control these many records, a records management system should consider the following capabilities:

- be integrated across the various fire department functions and provide accurate information organized around department processes and eliminating the need for redundant data entry
- provide as a minimum for records management of incident tracking and reporting, training reporting and management, asset and equipment inventories, maintenance logs, personnel management, pre-incident planning, mapping, mobile access and interoperability  
meet published standards for records management
- be centralized, backed up and secured
- be customizable and scalable to meet the needs of the department and its future growth

### **Reference:**

NFPA 1401: Recommended Practice for Fire Service Training Reports and Records

NFPA 1221: Standard for the Installation, Maintenance, and Use of Emergency Services Communications Systems

NFPA 1620 Standard for Pre-Incident Planning

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