

**MANUAL OF THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES
AND RECORDS SERVICE OF SOUTH AFRICA
COMPILED IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE
PROMOTION OF ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT (PAIA)
(ACT NO. 2 OF 2000)**

FIRST EDITION

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Historical background of the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa

The National Archives and Records Service of South Africa has its origins in the appointment of an Archives Commission of the Cape Colony in 1877, and after Union, in the appointment of a Chief Archivist for the Union of South Africa in 1919 and the promulgation of the first Archives Act in 1922. The Service was geographically decentralized with archives repositories being maintained in each provincial capital, under central administrative control of a head office. New legislation was promulgated in 1953 and 1962 and amended on various occasions.

The promulgation of the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act (No 43 of 1996 as amended) provided the basis for the transformation of the public archives system and its alignment with the imperatives of the democratic South Africa. It also paved the way for the transfer of authority in archival matters other than those at national level to provincial governments. Schedule 5 of the Constitution of 1996 provides for archives other than national archives to be an exclusive provincial competency.

The Bureau of Heraldry was established in 1963 in terms of the Heraldry Act (No 18 of 1962).

1.2 Applicability of the Promotion of Access to Information Act

The Promotion of Access to Information Act (No 2 of 2000) is applicable to the National Archives and Records Service as a public body, particularly in respect to its internal records systems and archival records that are younger than 20 years in age. Access to archival records older than 20 years is governed by the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act (No 43 of 1996 as amended). See also section 2, *Access Procedure*.

1.3 Purpose of the Manual in terms of PAIA

The purpose of this Manual is to identify the structures and functions of the National Archives and Records Service and describe its records systems to facilitate the objectives of PAIA.

1.4 PAIA Guide

The PAIA Guide published by the Human Rights Commission assists the public in how to use the PAIA Act (See sections 14(1)(c) and 10 of PAIA).

The guide includes the following:

- a) the objects of the PAIA Act;
- b) the postal and street address, phone and fax number and if available, electronic mail address of –
 - (i) the information officer of every public body; and
 - (ii) every deputy information officer of every public body appointed in terms of section 17(1);
- c) such particulars of every private body as are practicable;
- d) the manner and form of a request for –
 - (i) access to a record of a public body contemplated in section 11 of the PAIA Act; and
 - (ii) access to a record of a private body contemplated in section 50 of the PAIA Act
- e) the assistance available from the information officer of a public body in terms of the PAIA Act;
- f) the assistance available from the Human Rights Commission in terms of the PAIA Act;
- g) all remedies in law available regarding an act or failure to act in respect of a right or duty conferred or imposed by the PAIA Act, including the manner of lodging –
 - (i) an internal appeal; and
 - (ii) an application with a court against a decision by the information officer of a public body, a decision on internal appeal or a decision of the head of a private body;

- h) the provisions of sections 14 and 51 requiring a public body and private body, respectively, to compile a manual, and how to obtain access to a manual;
- i) the provisions of sections 15 and 52 providing for the voluntary disclosure of categories of records by a public body and private body, respectively;
- j) the notices issued in terms of sections 222 and 54 regarding fees to be paid in relation to requests for access; and
- k) the regulations made in terms of section 92 of PAIA.

The guide can be obtained from the Human Rights Commission

Website address of the Human Rights Commission: <http://www.sahrc.org.za>

2. Access procedure

2.1 Certain records excluding records with a security classification are automatically available. See 8.1 of the Manual.

2.2 Access to other records maintained by the Division must be requested from the Information Officer in terms of the procedures defined in sections 17-32 of PAIA. See contact details of Information Officer in par. 3.

2.3 Prescribed request forms

The prescribed request forms can be obtained from the Information Officer of the Department of Arts and Culture. See par. 3.

2.4 Supervised Access

Access is provided in designated areas such as reading rooms under the supervision of a member of staff, who is able to provide guidance on the retrieval and contextualisation of information in records and archives.

3. Contact information

3.1 Contact details of Information Officer of the Department of Arts and Culture

Prof Itumeleng Mosala
Director-General
Department of Arts and Culture

Postal address

Private Bag X897
PRETORIA
0001

Street address

Oranje Nassau Building
188 Schoeman Street
Pretoria

Telephone number

(012) 337 8000

Fax number

(012) 337 8308

**Contact details of the Deputy Information Officer (National Archives and
Records Service)**

Dr Graham Dominy
National Archivist

Postal address

Private Bag X236
PRETORIA
0001

Street address

24 Hamilton Street
Arcadia

Telephone number

(012) 323 5300

Fax number

(012) 324 2855

E-mail address

archives@dac.gov.za

3.2 Website addresses of the Department of Arts of Culture

<http://www.dac.gov.za>

<http://www.national.archives.gov.za> (National Archives and Records Service)

4. Structure and functions**4.1 Vision and mission statement****Department of Arts and Culture****Vision**

Arts and culture will be fully utilized in achieving social and moral development, economic empowerment and in branding the Country; our 11 official languages will enjoy equitable promotion and protection; respect for our history through the conservation of our collective heritage and information.

Mission

- To achieve equity as far as access to resources for arts, culture, heritage and language is concerned;
- To promote the linguistic diversity of our country as a resource in empowering all South Africans to participate in their country's social, political and economic life;
- To support the equitable development. conservation and promotion of our collective history, national symbols, heritage and libraries;
- To promote South Africa's presence in the international arena through bilateral and multilateral collaboration programmes;

- To develop the economic and creative potential of arts and culture through arts education training and culture as a platform for sustainable job creation.

National Archives and Records Service

Mission

To foster national identity and the protection of rights

- by preserving a national archival heritage for use by the government and people of South Africa; and
- by promoting efficient, accountable and transparent government through the proper management and care of government records.

4.2 Organisational structure of the National Archives and Records Service.

NARS comprises the Directorate National Archives and the Directorate Bureau of Heraldry.

4.3 Core functions as defined by statute and policy

The objects and functions provided in section 3 of the **National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act** (No 43 of 1996 as amended) are determined as being to:

- (a) preserve public and non-public records with enduring value for use by the public and the State;
- (b) make such records accessible and promote their use by the public;
- © ensure the proper management and care of all public records;
- (d) collect non-public records with enduring value of national significance which cannot be more appropriately preserved by another institution, with due regard to the need to document aspects of the nation's experience neglected by archives repositories in the past;
- (e) maintain a national automated archival information retrieval system, in which all provincial archives services shall participate;

- (f) maintain national registers of non-public records with enduring value, and promote co-operation and co-ordination between institutions having custody of such records;
- (g) assist, support, set standards for and provide professional guidelines to provincial archives services;
- (h) promote an awareness of archives and records management, and encourage archival and records management activities;
- (i) generally promote the preservation and use of a national archival heritage.

The **Legal Deposit of Publications Act** (No 54 of 1997) designates the National Film, Video and Sound Archives as a place of deposit for audio-visual material that has been published and made available in South Africa.

The functions of the Bureau of Heraldry are defined in section 3(2) of the **Heraldry Act** (No 18 of 1962). The Bureau is to receive and examine applications for the registration or deletion of heraldic representations, names, special names or uniforms, give advice on these matters and issue certificates of registration. It should keep the register and documents lodged.

The Subdirectorate of Meta-information administers the following legislation:

- The **National Council for Library and Information Services Act, 2001** (Act No. 6 of 2001)
- The **National Library of South Africa Act, 1998** (Act No. 92 of 1998)
- The **South African Library for the Blind Act, 1998** (Act No. 91 of 1998)
- The **Legal Deposit Act, 1997** (Act No. 54 of 1997).

4.4 Impending changes.

None

5. **Public services**

- Identification and retrieval of archival records in all media, including an enquiries service, and facilities to consult and copy archival material. Archives may be retrieved using manual finding aids in reading rooms and the National Automated Archival Information Retrieval System (NAAIRS) which is available on the NARS website (www.national.archives.gov.za). No fees are charged for access to archives. Fees as prescribed by the Treasury are levied for the making of copies and the use of editing tables at the National Film, Video and Sound Archives.
- Maintenance of the National Automated Archival Information Retrieval System (NAAIRS) incorporating national registers of non-public records in the custody of collecting institutions, accessible free of charge on the NARS website (www.national.archives.gov.za).
- Supply of publications relating to archives and finding aids according to tariffs set out in the *List of Publications For Sale*.
- Design and registration of heraldic representations. Fees as prescribed by the Treasury are levied for this service.
- Some services are rendered to governmental bodies only, e.g. records management services, training of records managers and the supply of archives.

6. **Public participation**

The National Archives and Records Service Act makes provision for a National Archives Advisory Council comprising not more than six members appointed by the Minister from among persons who are knowledgeable of or have an

interest in archival matters, and every chairperson of the various provincial councils advising on archives or, in the absence of such a provincial council, a representative of the province in question elected through a public and transparent process.

The public participates informally in the shaping of services through contact made in the provision of public services and collecting and outreach activities. Provision is made for public enquiries via the NARS website (www.national.archives.gov.za), including queries about the functioning of the National Automated Archival Retrieval System (NAAIRS).

7. Records description

7.1 Overview of records systems

The records systems comprise public records transferred to archival custody in terms of the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act (No 43 of 1996 as amended); non-public records acquired for archival preservation in terms of the Act; and audio-visual publications deposited in terms of the Legal Deposit of Publications Act (No 54 of 1997). Separate internal records systems are maintained by the National Archives head office, the National Film, Video and Sound Archives and the Bureau of Heraldry, as well as in respect of human resources matters.

7.2 Retention and disposal processes

Public and non-public records which have been transferred or acquired in terms of the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act are preserved permanently. Internal records are appraised in terms of the provisions of the Act and records appraised as having archival value are preserved and transferred into archival custody.

7.3 Indication of records in archival custody

Internal records created according to records systems in operation before 1963 and appraised as having archival value, have been transferred to the

custody of the National Archives Repository. Data on the records is accessible in the National Automated Archival Information Retrieval System (NAAIRS) and computer print-outs containing the data are available in the reading room. The source codes are ARH and ART. These systems are as follows:

- Letters received, 1902-1909, 1914
- Records system (Transvaal Archives), 1903-1961
- Records systems (Head Office), 1919-1958; 1936-1963
- Records system (Publications Division), 1938-1953
- Records systems (Natal and Orange Free State), 1922-1952
- Records systems (Personnel), 1916-1948; 1945-1963
- Records system (Archives Commission), 1922-1952

7.4 Description of records systems

7.4.1 Public records transferred to archival custody in terms of the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act (No 43 of 1996 as amended)

These are public records in all media, paper-based as well as in photographic, cartographic, audio-visual and electronic format, that have been appraised by the National Archives and Records Service as having archival value, and which are housed in archives repositories in Pretoria and Cape Town. These archives cover all areas of governance conducted in the three spheres of government, since written records commenced being kept. They currently occupy about 120 000 linear metres of shelving space in total. Public records older than 20 years are generally accessible in terms of the National Archives and Records Service Act without recourse to PAIA. Special access conditions may apply to a few categories of records such as those relating to registrations of births and adoptions. Public search facilities are available in reading rooms. An extensive range of finding aids is available either in a manual form or in the National Automated Archival Information Retrieval System (NAAIRS), which is

accessible via the National Archives and Records Service's website (www.national.archives.gov.za).

7.4.2 Non-public records acquired for archival preservation in terms of the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act (No 43 of 1996 as amended)

In terms of the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act, the National Archivist may acquire non-public records with enduring value of national significance and which cannot be more appropriately preserved by another institution. Conditions of access are determined at the time of acquisition for each accession. Most accessions have no restrictions on access. Public search facilities are available in reading rooms. Published *Guides to Accessions* or related finding aids such as inventories may be used to identify and retrieve material. Information on non-public records in the custody of the National Archives and Records Service is also accessible in the national registers of non-public records that form part of the National Automated Archival Information Retrieval System (NAAIRS), which is accessible via the National Archives and Records Service's website (www.national.archives.gov.za).

7.4.3 Audio-visual productions deposited in the National Film, Video and Sound Archives in terms of the Legal Deposit Act (No 54 of 1997)

The Legal Deposit Act specifically designates the National Film, Video and Sound Archives as a place of deposit for audio-visual material that has been published and made available in South Africa. Thus, in addition to audio-visual material of official origin transferred in terms of the National Archives and Records Service Act, commercially produced audio-visual material is also preserved. Facilities to screen or listen to audio-visual material are available at the National Film, Video and Sound Archives. An appointment should be made as a three-day notice period is required to allow audio-visual material to acclimatize after removal from climatically controlled storage. Manual finding aids are available, and information regarding some of the material is available

in the National Register of Audio-Visual Material, which forms part of the National Automated Archival Information Retrieval System (NAAIRS) and which is accessible via the National Archives and Records Service's website (www.national.archives.gov.za).

7.4.4 Current internal correspondence-based records systems

- **Main file plan of the National Archives and Records Service, 1998-date**

(Note: The National Film, Video and Sound Archives and the Bureau of Heraldry operate separate file plans. See below for specific information.)

The mechanisms of retrieval are the file plan itself and the Register of Files Opened.

The file plan comprises the following main series:

Legislation

Organisation and Control

Accommodation, Supplies, Equipment and Services

Finance

External Organisations

National Archives Advisory Council

Records Management

Processing of Records

Transfer and Supply of Records

Collection, Exchange, Lending and Losses

Archives Library

Public Use of Records

Publications and Computerisation

Information, Advice and Training

Cooperation with and coordination of provincial archival services

Meta-information

- **Human resources file plan of the National Archives and Records Service, 1998-date**

The mechanisms of retrieval are the file plan itself and the Register of Files Opened.

The file plan comprises the following main series:

Legislative and policy framework
 Establishment matters
 Conditions of service
 Staff recruitment, losses and movement
 Training, development and qualifications
 Staff evaluation
 Staff control
 Finance
 Journeys and transport
 Social matters

- **Main file plan of the National Film, Video and Sound Archives, 1998-date.**

The mechanisms of retrieval are the file plan itself and the Register of Files Opened.

The file plan comprises the following main series:

Legislation
 Organisation and management
 Accommodation, supplies and equipment
 Finance
 External organizations
 National Archives Commission
 Acquisition, inspections, processing and preservation
 Purchase, lending and creation of records
 Archives library
 Public use of records
 Publications and computerization
 Information, advice, training and standards

- **Main file plan of the Bureau of Heraldry, 1963-date.**

The mechanisms of retrieval are the file plan itself and the Register of Files Opened.

The file plan comprises the following main series:

Legislation and regulations

Heraldry Council

Organisational administrative support services

Design and registration of heraldic representations

Genealogy

Information about heraldic and genealogical matters

Membership of organisations

Accessions

External relations

7.4.5 Terminated correspondence-based records systems

- **Main file plan of the National Archives and Records Service, 1963-1997**

This was a uniform file plan used by the head office and all regional offices. The mechanisms of retrieval are the file plan itself and the Register of Files Opened.

The file plan comprises the following main series:

Legislation

Archives Commission

Organisation

Accommodation

Equipment, supplies and services

Control of depots and divisions

Reports and returns

Registry matters

Financial matters

Record management
Processing of archivalia
Transfer of archives
Accessions and exchanges
Source research
Archives publications
Public use of archives
Information on archival science
Archives libraries
Loaning and hiring of documents and publications
Circulars and codes of practice
Participation: external organisations and gatherings
Advice and recommendations
State historiography

- **Human resources file plan of the National Archives and Records Service, 1963-1997**

This was a uniform file plan used by the head office and all regional offices. The mechanisms of retrieval are the file plan itself and the Register of Files Opened. The file plan comprises the following main series:

Public Service Act and Regulations
Establishment and inspection reports
Conditions of service
Appointments
Qualifications and training
Merit assessment
Promotions, transfers and secondments
Ending of service
Control over staff
Finance
Visits
Staff registry

7.4.6 Other internal records systems

- **Draft file plans of governmental bodies**

The purpose of system is to keep a record of all draft file plans submitted in terms of the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act for approval. Paper-based registers are maintained.

- **Master copies of approved file plans of governmental bodies, 1959 – date**

The purpose of system is to keep a record of file plans of governmental bodies approved in terms of the National Archives and Records Service Act. The master copies are recorded in alphabetical paper-based registers according to the sphere of government and the name of the body.

- **Applications for disposal authority**

The purpose of the system is to keep a record of all applications for disposal authority received in terms of the National Archives and Records Service Act. Applications are registered sequentially in paper-based form.

- **Case files, Disposal Authorities issued by the National Archivist, 1941 - date**

The case files contain the documentation regarding investigations into disposal applications and the written authorisation issued by the National Archivist for disposal of records of governmental bodies. The case files are indexed in alphabetical and alpha-numerical paper-based registers.

- **Records Management Policies of governmental bodies**

The purpose of the system is to facilitate the provision of assistance and advice regarding records management practices in terms of the regulatory role of the National Archives and Records Service. Alphabetical/chronological paper-based registers are maintained.

- **Records Management Procedure Manuals of governmental bodies**

The purpose of the system is to facilitate the provision of assistance and advice regarding records management practices in terms of the regulatory role of the National Archives and Records Service. Alphabetical/chronological paper-based registers are maintained.

- **Master copies of Records Management Publications**

The purpose of the system is to enable the National Archives and Records Service to maintain updated records management publications. A list of all Records Management publications is maintained.

- **Registrations of heraldic representations, names, uniforms and badges**

All heraldic representations registered by the Bureau of Heraldry are recorded sequentially and case files are maintained for all applicants. Information is available in the *South African Armorial* which is available in published form and on-line in the National Automated Archival Information Retrieval System (NAAIRS), which is accessible via the National Archives and Records Service's website www.national.archives.gov.za. Information on registrations of names, uniforms and badges is maintained similarly.

8. **Records automatically available**

8.1 **Disclosures in terms of section 15 of PAIA**

The following archives and records are automatically open:

Archives:

- Public records in archival custody which are older than 20 years in age
- Records of court proceedings and deceased estates
- Non-public records acquired without stipulation of conditions of access

Internal records:

- Registers of applications for disposal authority
- Registers of disposal authorities issued
- Registers of draft file plans submitted

- Case files for disposal investigations, 1941-date
- Indices of registrations of heraldic representations, names, uniforms and badges

8.2 Records categories which are already published or are available to the public without the need for a PAIA request

- Archives and non-public records which are accessible in terms of the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act
- Annual Reports of the National Archivist and the State Herald
- Records management publications available on NARS's website
- Databases in the National Automated Archival Information Retrieval System (NAAIRS) containing data on the holdings of archives, non-public records and registrations of heraldic representations, names, uniforms and badges

Appendix 1: List of Terms

Archival value:

Those values, administrative, fiscal, legal, evidential and/or informational, which justify the indefinite or permanent retention of records

Archives:

Records in the custody of an archives repository.

Current records:

Records that form part of a records classification system still in use.

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.

File plan:

A pre-determined logical and systematic structure into which records are arranged and intellectually stored according to subject groups and subjects to facilitate efficient retrieval and disposal of records. The *file plan* is used for both current paper-based and current electronic correspondence systems. It usually contains the reference number, title, description and disposal authority of files/folders held in an office.

General authority:

This is a standing authority, which is issued in respect of types of records, which generally occur in all offices, e.g. financial records

Governmental body:

Any legislative, executive, judicial or administrative organ of state (including a statutory body) at the national level of government and until provincial archival legislation takes effect also all provincial administrations and local authorities.

Head of a governmental body:

The chief executive officer of a governmental body or the person who is acting as such.

NARS Act:

The National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act (Act No. 43 of 1996), as amended.

PAIA Act:

The Promotion of Access to Information Act (Act No. 2 of 2000)

PAIA Manual:

Manual on functions of, and index of records held by, a public body

Public record:

A record created or received by a governmental body in pursuance of its activities, regardless of form or medium. (See Annexure 1)

Record:

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

Record classification system:

A plan for the systematic identification and arrangement of business activities and/or records into categories according to logically structured conventions, methods and procedural rules represented in the classification system. The records classification systems prescribed by the National Archives and Records Service are *filing system* for correspondence systems and the *schedule for records other than correspondence systems*.