



Welcome to the Vermont State Archives and Records Administration (VSARA)

**Upcoming...**

• Open Houses

Thursdays	Fridays
Afternoons 1:30 – 3:30 pm	
May 15	May 2
June 19	June 6
July 24	July 11

**NOTE:** Due to the observance of Independence Day, July's Open Houses will be held the second Friday and fourth Thursday.

See [p. 2](#) for more information

**Reminders**

- Web Module Logins
- Designations

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- Box Transfer List

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- Administrating (updated)

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**Training**

- Got Records, Now What? Workshop

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**Fast Fact**

- Managing paper records

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**Contact us!**

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**From the State Records Center**

**To Authorize or Not: Weighing Your Options**

Records officers and liaisons commonly have to deal with public records requests and inquiries for information. But what happens when the records that answer the inquiry are not at hand? There are some questions you should ask yourself before choosing to authorize someone to access your agency's records. [\(continued on p. 2\)](#)



**What's the Trouble with Acetate?**

Acetate, or "safety" film, was introduced for professional use by Eastman Kodak in 1949 as an alternative to nitrate film. Nitrate is unstable and highly flammable, and was the cause of several explosions in the early half of the 20th century. But by the 1950s, two things were happening. [\(continued on p. 5\)](#)



**Training Opportunity**

**VHRAB Emergency Preparedness Workshops**

After Tropical Storm Irene, Vermont workers and citizens showed dedication and perseverance in salvage and recovery efforts around the state. But the lessons remain and the experience of state agencies located in Waterbury at that time demonstrate how important emergency plans are to ensuring that essential records survive a disaster. [\(continued on p. 3\)](#)



**Creating New Record Series**

**When the Numbers Mean Something**

VSARA's record retention schedules provide not only updated retention requirements and a more comprehensive approach to records management, but also present a method for classifying all records created by state government. [\(continued on p. 4\)](#)

Record Category/Type	Applicability/Notes
800-1489-1742-100	Use for records of operations that will be the basis of a record series.
800-1489-1742-101	Use for records of operations that will be the basis of a record series.
800-1489-1742-102	Use for correspondence that has significant administrative value.
800-1489-1742-103	Use for records of operations that are not subject to a retention schedule.
800-1489-1742-104	Use for records of operations that are not subject to a retention schedule.
800-1489-1742-105	Use for records of operations that are not subject to a retention schedule.
800-1489-1742-106	Use for records of operations that are not subject to a retention schedule.
800-1489-1742-107	Use for records of operations that are not subject to a retention schedule.
800-1489-1742-108	Use for records of operations that are not subject to a retention schedule.
800-1489-1742-109	Use for records of operations that are not subject to a retention schedule.
800-1489-1742-110	Use for records of operations that are not subject to a retention schedule.

**Best Practices Corner**

**Generally Accepted Recordkeeping Practices**

We would like to introduce a new recurring feature highlighting standards and best practices related to records management. Being aware of best practices can help us make informed decisions as we deal with our records, ensuring that our work is effective and viable. [\(continued on p. 6\)](#)





**Upcoming...**

- Open Houses

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Open houses are held at VSARA twice a month.

At these events we provide informal, basic training in records management and using the State Records Center. We give you the opportunity to tour our facilities and meet our staff.

We encourage new records officers and liaisons, or anyone who has never been to VSARA, to attend!

We now offer open houses on the first Friday and third Thursday of every month, at 1:30pm.

**NOTE:** Due to the observance of Independence Day, July's open houses will be held the second Friday and fourth Thursday.

If you can't make it to one of our scheduled open houses, and have two or more people in your office who'd like to visit VSARA, let us know and we'll be happy to schedule a visit at another time.

To register for an open house or get more information,

email us at [rim@sec.state.vt.us](mailto:rim@sec.state.vt.us) or call Sally Blanchard at 828-5385.

**From the State Records Center**

**To Authorize or Not: Weighing Your Options**

*(continued from front page)*

**Who's got the records?**

- You still have them on site at your office. (VSARA is not involved.)
- The records have been transferred to the State Records Center (SRC). This means that while they are physically in Middlesex, your agency still has legal custody: you are responsible for any access to these records.
- The records have been transferred into the State Archives and are thus in VSARA's legal custody. Have the person seeking access contact our reference room staff directly at [archives@sec.state.vt.us](mailto:archives@sec.state.vt.us) or 802-828-2308.
- You don't know who has custody. Contact VSARA's Records Analysis unit at [rim@sec.state.vt.us](mailto:rim@sec.state.vt.us).



*Boxes in the SRC*  
[courtesy VSARA staff]

**Should I request the records back to my office?**

If someone wants access to records in storage, you can simply request the records back from the SRC and have them delivered to your office. This may be the best option if the records might include exempt information—you would want to review the file contents before making them available. You will be responsible for managing records while they are in your office. You must also notify the SRC if the records will not be returned there.

**Can I send the person to where the records are stored?**

A records officer or liaison can formally authorize the requestor to access agency records held in the SRC through the VSARA Reference Room in Middlesex. You must complete the Authorization to Access Agency Records Form (VSARA-03) and send it to VSARA staff via email, fax, or postal mail. *For security reasons, this form is not available through the VSARA website, only upon request by a records officer or liaison.*

If you decide to authorize someone, remember these important things:

- The form must be completely filled out, with an appropriate record series or box number identified. If any information is missing, we will have to contact you, which will slow down the process.
- Be as specific as possible about which records are authorized for access. If the requested records are only in one box or one microfilm reel, don't provide access to an entire record series.
- Even if the person being authorized brings in a duly signed form to hand to us, we cannot not accept it. The form must come directly from you (email, fax, or postal mail).
- The dates of authorization are very important. If a person requests access outside the dates specified on the form, that access will be denied. *(continued on p. 3)*

### Reminders

#### • Web Module Logins

Logins for the Versatile Web Module are intended only for the designated records officer or liaison to whom it was given.

**Please do not use other people's logins or share your own login with others.**

Sharing logins compromises the security of your agency's or department's records. If you share your username or password with anyone else in your office, you assume liability for anything that might happen with those records.

If you have any questions about logging into the Versatile Web Module, please contact us at [rim@sec.state.vt.us](mailto:rim@sec.state.vt.us).

#### • Designations

**Be Aware:** Every year, June 30th marks the date when all records officers and liaisons need to confirm their appointments for the upcoming fiscal year.

Records officers receive a list of their active liaisons and will need to verify their status and fill out designation forms for any new appointees.

Additionally, records officers will need to notify us if they are no longer serving as the officer for their agency. We will be sending out more information as the time gets closer.

### Training Opportunity

*(continued from front page)*

The Vermont Historical Records Advisory Board (VHRAB) is partnering with the Northeast Document Conservation Center (NEDCC) to present a series of one-day workshops around the state this spring to help records repositories prepare for emergencies. The workshops are supported in part by grants from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) and the Vermont Humanities Council.

The curriculum is geared toward staff and volunteers at archives, town offices, historical societies, libraries, and any other institutions that maintain historical records. It is designed to provide participants with the necessary information and tools to develop effective emergency plans to protect the records in their care.

The workshops are being held in several locations, and each one runs 9 am to 4 pm:

- April 23 ....River Valley Technical Center, Springfield
- May 8.....Vermont Historical Society, Barre
- May 16.....Town Hall, Shelburne
- June 30 ....Fairbanks Museum, St. Johnsbury

The registration fee is \$25. Registrations can be made via NEDCC by visiting their website at <http://www.nedcc.org/preservation-training/vermont-program>.

If you cannot attend the workshops, please feel free to contact the NEDCC with questions regarding records recovery—the staff of this Massachusetts-based organization are truly experts in the field. Moving forward, VSARA will be developing and distributing more information about essential records and emergency planning to keep us better prepared to maintain Vermont records for the future. 📄



*Water-damaged records*  
[Courtesy VSARA staff]

### From the State Records Center

*(continued from p. 2)*

These rules are in place to protect your records and keep them secure. Only designated records officers and liaisons can access your agency or department records stored at the Records Center. How you, as an officer or liaison, choose to allow other employees or members of the public to access the records is up to you -- it is your choice to authorize or not authorize.

For more information, please see our [authorization procedure](#). 📄



**General Record Schedules**

- **Administrative Policy Records (revised)**  
[GRS-1000.1102]

The VSARA Records Analysis and Policy Development Unit would like to announce updates to the General Record Schedule (GRS) for Administrative Policy Records.

The schedule now appears in a layout that is consistent with our more recent schedules.

In addition, the schedule has added the record type of "Grants". This can be used by agencies who manage grants awarded to them, in contrast to the Granting GRS which covers the process of agencies granting money to other parties.

General Record Schedules set minimum retention requirements for records related to certain activities or functions of state government. Retention periods and directives are determined based upon a review of state and federal legal requirements.

Agencies using GRS should review any legal requirements or administrative needs that are unique to them, since this may mean that records need longer retention than the time set in the schedule.

VSARA records analysts are always available and willing to assist in determining if and how GRS can be used by your agency. Visit [our website](#) to learn more about this and other available GRS.

**Creating New Record Series**

*(continued from front page)*

The Vermont Functional Classification System (or VCLAS) is a tool for inventorying, appraising, and scheduling government records and information, allowing VSARA staff to better define, describe, and manage public records

VCLAS assigns a numerical code to specific record types in a record schedule. This code will then be reflected in any new record series created in the State Records Center. For example, the Administrative Policy General Schedule is numbered GRS-1000.1102. That number is tied to the classification system, and any new records series created will have series numbers based off that schedule.

As more state agencies adopt and apply record schedules and move away from the old disposition order system, new series for records stored in the State Records Center are being created. How this is done is outlined in VSARA's new procedure, [Requesting New Record Series in the State Records Center](#) (VSARA0002).

The process begins when a department or agency records officer sends a completed [Request to Use the State Records Center form](#) (VSARA-12) to a VSARA records analyst. This form is all that is needed if an agency-specific schedule is being used. If the records are covered by a General Record Schedule, we must have a Notice of Adoption on file for the agency or department, as well as a copy of an internal records policy outlining how the general schedule is being applied to the records.

Once a records officer has completed the paperwork and worked with a records analyst to classify the records, VSARA staff will create a new series, based on our classification system, into which records can be transferred.

Records officers can use this time to look at other records stored in the Records Center -- are there any older records that could also be covered by the same record schedule and series?

SPECIFIC RECORDKEEPING REQUIREMENTS for SRS-1498.1162	
Record Category/Type	Applicability/Use:
SRS-1498.1162.180 Articles of dissolution Public Access: General	Use for articles of dissolution filed with the filing office of a business seeking to dissolve. Includes supporting articles of revocation of dissolution.
SRS-1498.1162.53 Correspondence (Substantive) Public Access: General	Use for correspondence that has significant administrative value and/or supports decisions concerning the dissolution of a business.
SRS-1498.1162.63 Orders Public Access: General	Use for decrees of dissolution issued by a court regarding the dissolution of a business.
SRS-1498.1162.126 Pleadings Public Access: General	Use for pleadings submitted to a court regarding the dissolution of a business.

*New record series for the Secretary of State's Office*  
[courtesy VSARA staff]

The new procedure for creating record series is a part of VSARA's holistic approach to records management. It helps clarify why the records were created and what needs to be done with them, while also linking an agency's records into the administrative history of the state as a whole.

## Reminders

### • Box Transfer List

Please check out our revised [Box Transfer List](#) (VSARA-05) spreadsheet.

**NOTE: Please submit box transfer lists electronically, either using this spreadsheet or via the Versatile Web Module. Sending hand-written, faxed, or scanned pdfs greatly increases our process time and can lead to data entry errors.**

You'll notice that we've moved from a multi-tab format to a simple, single-tab version, which we hope users will find easier to complete and submit.

Remember to save the spreadsheet file to your local area. Then you can use that as a template and save your data more easily.

Each form has space for up to twelve boxes. You may fill out, save, and send in as many copies of this form as you need.

(If you get a pop-up box asking for a user name or password, just click *Cancel* and the form should open.)

Questions? Contact us at [rim@sec.state.vt.us](mailto:rim@sec.state.vt.us).

## From the State Records Center

### What's the Trouble with Acetate?

*(continued from front page)*

First the American film industry began actively using acetate film for new motion pictures and converting earlier nitrate films. Then libraries, archives, and other organizations also began programs to microfilm books, newspapers and records for space and preservation purposes. Almost all microfilm reels produced between 1949 and the mid-1980s are acetate.

So, what is the trouble with acetate? It can, unfortunately, decompose over time if kept in less than ideal storage conditions. In the early stages of decay, the film releases acetic acid, which is chemically identical to vinegar. This means that the decomposing film gives off a distinct vinegary scent. This decomposition is known as "Vinegar Syndrome".




*Acetate film in good condition*  
[courtesy VSARA staff]

In the mid-1980s, Vermont's micrographics program—dissolved in 2009—was moved to the Middlesex location of the (then) new State Records Center. Records were microfilmed using polyester-based film, an archival film with a life expectancy of 500 years when properly stored. Re-filming was a common practice after the state switched to polyester film. However, not all state agencies, towns, and counties elected to have their paper records re-filmed or their acetate films converted to polyester.

In November 2013 a request for copies of security microfilm yielded an unpleasant find: Vermont public agencies have records on acetate film, and it is possible that some of these acetate films are degrading. Despite the shift to the archival polyester film, older acetate films were transferred by public agencies for storage in the current State Records Center. The records may have been filmed by outside vendors or the state of Vermont, and storage conditions prior to transfer are largely unknown. Any deterioration on acetate film currently in the State Records Center could have started decades ago.

Vermont is not alone in this situation. There are other states who have found themselves with similar conditions, nearly thirty years after the use of acetate film was discontinued.

Currently, VSARA has more than 60,000 reels of microfilm in its physical custody. Now that we are aware that some public agencies have acetate microfilm stored in the State Records Center, an internal VSARA task force has been formed. **There is no evidence at this time that having records on acetate film means the films are deteriorating.** However, if your agency has any records on acetate, you will be notified as soon as possible.

Please feel free to contact us at [rim@sec.state.vt.us](mailto:rim@sec.state.vt.us) if you have questions or concerns. 



### Training

- Got Records, Now What? Workshop

June 5, 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm

439 Industrial Lane  
The Summit, Berlin

The first half of this three-hour workshop is designed to introduce concepts of records and information management, including best practices, tools and resources currently available.

The second half of the session helps attendees understand the statutes surrounding public records in Vermont, respond efficiently to public records requests, and understand public records exemptions and how to apply them.

For registration and more information, please visit <http://humanresources.vermont.gov/training/classroom/catalog>

### Fast Fact

- Managing Paper Records

In a recent survey, nearly 50% of responding organizations admitted that the majority or a significant portion of their paper records are unmanaged.

*Ticking the Right Box: Compliant Archiving of Non-Public Personal Information.* AIIM, December 19, 2013

### Contact us!

#### VSARA

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### Best Practices Corner

*(continued from front page)*

[ARMA International](#), the Association of Records Managers and Administrators, established a list of eight principles that are the basic tenets of recordkeeping. The procedures that VSARA has established for Vermont help to promote and protect these essential qualities of our records and information:

1. **Accountability:** Organizations need to be able to show responsibility for their actions. A records management program should oversee policies and procedures that enable the organization to document its responsibility.
2. **Integrity:** The information in records must be authentic and reliable. If the records have been tampered with or are otherwise unreliable, the information can't be trusted.
3. **Protection:** Confidential information should be kept safe. There should be policies in place to keep personal or sensitive information protected.
4. **Compliance:** Organizations need to comply with legal requirements, authorities, and obligations. Managing records well ensures this compliance.
5. **Availability:** Any information that is needed should be retrieved effectively and in a timely manner. Badly managed records will require lengthy searches for information and could result in unforeseen consequences.
6. **Retention:** Records and information only need to be kept for an appropriate time, as set forth in laws and regulations. Knowing this means that records are not kept beyond when they need to be.
7. **Disposition:** Records need to be disposed of in a way that complies with legal obligations. For example, sensitive records are shredded, or electronic records deleted and not sitting stagnant on a forgotten server.
8. **Transparency:** An organization needs to make sure that its actions are documented openly, and have that documentation available to interested and/or eligible parties. Similarly, any of the policies and procedures in place for records management need to be available to and understood by staff.

It is always important to keep in mind why we do what we do. When we get bogged down in the details, we can lose sight of what we are trying to accomplish. Records contain important information, and information is an asset.

For more information, please visit ARMA's website at <http://www.arma.org/r2/generally-accepted-br-recordkeeping-principles>

*Look for more features on records management standards in future issues!* 