

## AUTHORIZING ACCESS TO RECORDS IN THE STATE RECORDS CENTER

Effective Date: May 19, 2009

Last Revised: March 9, 2018

(Procedure VSARA0007)

### I. OVERVIEW/DESCRIPTION

The State Records Center provides low-cost, secure storage for records that must be maintained for audit, fiscal, legal, or administrative needs, but are no longer used frequently enough to justify storing the records on-site, which is generally more expensive. Services of the State Records Center are available to all state agencies and include box pick-up, storage, retrieval, and destruction.

For records stored in the Center, both legal control and control of access to the records are retained by the agency until the records are either transferred to the State Archives or destroyed. The State Records Center does not have the authority to release records to the public or state employees under any circumstances or respond to public record requests. Therefore, if a private citizen or state employee contacts the Records Center to access records, they are referred to the appropriate agency/department records officer or records liaison.

This procedure provides guidelines for records officers and records liaisons to authorize access to their records in the State Records Center through the Vermont State Archives and Records Administration's (VSARA) Reference Room and/or the ability to check out, remove and pick up records from the State Records Center.

### II. AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

*State Archivist:* Maintains a record center to hold inactive records in accordance with records schedules approved by the State Archivist (3 V.S.A. § 117).

*Records Liaison:* Carries out records management functions, as delegated by a records officer, within a division or district office.

*Records Officer:* Oversees the records management program for a state agency or department (pursuant to 3 V.S.A. § 218, where applicable) and appoints and supervises records liaisons to help manage that program.

*Reference Room Staff:* Provides access to agency or department records through the Reference Room to authorized members of the public and state employees.

*State Records Center Supervisor:* Accepts, stores, retrieves, and re-files records in the State Records Center based on an approved records retention schedule.

**III. PROCEDURE STEPS/CHECKLIST**

A. Records Officer or Records Liaison

1. Upon receiving a request from a staff member, state employee or member of the public for records that are stored in the State Records Center, determines whether it is appropriate to retrieve the records (see [Retrieving Records from the State Records Center](#)) or authorize access to the records through VSARA's Reference Room.
2. If the determination is made to authorize access to the records, completes *Authorization to Access Agency Records through Reference Room (VSARA-03)* by:

- i. Listing the individual who is authorized to access records and his or her Employee ID number and agency/department name (where applicable).

*Note: Authorization forms listing multiple people will be rejected.*

- ii. Specifying the series, boxes and/or film numbers that the individual listed on the form is authorized to access and how long the authorization is valid.
  - iii. In circumstances in which the individual is also authorized to copy or check out and remove records from the State Records Center while on-site, ensuring that the appropriate boxes are marked.
  - iv. Signing the form.
3. Faxes a copy of the completed signed form directly to the Vermont State Archives and Records Administration using the number listed on the form.
    - i. Scanned copies of signed forms will also be accepted if e-mailed directly from the records officer or records liaison. E-mailed authorizations should be sent to [sos.recordscenter@vermont.gov](mailto:sos.recordscenter@vermont.gov)
  4. Ensures that VSARA has the completed authorization form prior to the individual's arrival at the Reference Room.
    - i. In circumstances in which access is needed on the same or following day, also notifies the State Records Center staff at [sos.recordscenter@vermont.gov](mailto:sos.recordscenter@vermont.gov) that an individual has been granted access to certain boxes and/or films and requests for records to be pulled ahead of time for access via the Reference Room.
    - ii. In circumstance in which an authorized individual will be picking up records from the State Records Center but not accessing the records via the Reference Staff, notifies the State Records Center staff at

[sos.recordscenter@vermont.gov](mailto:sos.recordscenter@vermont.gov) and requests that certain boxes and/or films be prepared for pick-up.

5. Maintains a record of authorizations granted. Reissues authorizations annually, where applicable. (Unless a shorter time period is specified on a complete form, all authorizations expire annually on June 30<sup>th</sup>.)

#### B. Reference Room Staff

1. Upon receiving a faxed or e-mailed VSARA-03 verifies that the form is complete and signed by a designated records officer or records liaison.
  - i. Verifies the records officer or records liaison's designation and signature using VSARA's database.
  - ii. Verifies the specific records series and/or records that the individual is authorized to access.

*Note: In the event the form contains a possible error, amends the authorization form after consultation with the records officer or records liaison and signs and dates the change.*

- iii. Verifies the individual's identity by viewing a state-issued photo ID (driver's licenses or state ID badge).
  - iv. Registers the individual (if the individual is not already registered).
2. Upon processing the records request, Reference Room staff will log each box or film into the Reference Room database to ensure that there is a proper chain of custody audit trail.
3. Ensures the [Reference Room Guidelines](#) are followed at all times. There are no exceptions to these *Rules and Procedures* (including staff members accessing their agency or department's own records or for state employees) *unless* the agency or department has made prior arrangements with VSARA.
4. Upon receiving a request to make copies of the records, verifies permission to copy has been granted to the individual by the records officer or records liaison. Ensures that the [Reference Room Guidelines](#) for copying records are followed.
5. Upon receiving a request to check out and remove records from the State Records Center, verifies the authorizations that have been granted to the individual by the records officer or records liaison. If the individual is authorized to check out and remove records from the State Records Center, contacts the State Records Center Supervisor to complete this transaction.

C. State Records Center Supervisor

1. Upon receiving a request from the Reference Room staff to retrieve records for an authorized individual:
  - i. Locates the requested records in the State Records Center and checks the records out in the Versatile system to the Reference Room.
2. At the end of each day, checks all requested records that were accessed in the Reference Room back into the State Records Center using the Versatile system. Ensures all records requested throughout the day are accounted for and returned.
3. Upon receiving a request from an individual to check out and remove records from the State Records Center, verifies the authorizations that have been granted to the individual by the records officer or records liaison. If the individual is authorized to check-out and remove records:
  - i. Checks the box or film back into the State Records Center, if they were checked out to the Reference Room, and checks the box or film out to the records officer or records liaison who authorized the individual to remove records from the State Records Center.

Note: If a file or record is being checked out rather than the whole box or film, completes the On-Site File Checkout Form (VSARA-19) for each file being checked out and affixes one copy of the form to the file folder and files the other copy of the form in the box.

4. In the event the individual will not be accessing the records through the Reference Room but instead will be picking up the records, the same procedures apply for verifying authorizations and checking out records.
  - i. The records will be available at VSARA's reception desk along with a copy of the completed authorization form.
  - ii. Prior to releasing the records, VSARA reception staff will verify the individual's identity by viewing a state-issued photo ID (driver's licenses or state ID badge).

#### IV. GETTING HELP

The Vermont State Archives and Records Administration (VSARA) provides records training, assistance and services to public agencies. For help, please contact:

- State Records Center: [sos.recordscenter@vermont.gov](mailto:sos.recordscenter@vermont.gov) or 802-828-3280
- Records Management: [sos.rim@vermont.gov](mailto:sos.rim@vermont.gov) or 802-828-3897

#### V. APPLICABILITY AND AUTHORITY

This procedure is for authorizing access to records in the State Records Center in Middlesex, Vermont and supersedes any State of Vermont practices in existence prior to its effective date.

The Vermont State Archivist is the statutory authority for maintaining a records center and for this procedure on authorizing access to records in the State Records Center. This procedure was reviewed and approved by the Vermont State Archivist on May 19, 2009.

The State Archivist reviewed and approved the current version of this procedure on March 9, 2018. The next review date is March 2020, or sooner at the discretion of the State Archivist.

Revision History	
2018-03-07	Updated email addresses to @vermont.gov due to email migration and revised "Getting Help" section.
2016-07-19	Changed phone number for Records Analysis Unit contact only.
2014-06-04	Updated document and page hyperlinks to conform to new website.
2012-12-04	Reviewed for content changes. None made.
2009-07-14	Revised all sections concerning the <i>Authorization to Access Agency Records through Reference Room</i> (VSARA-03) and the roles and responsibilities of records officers and liaisons, reference room staff and the State Records Center Supervisor.
2009-05-19	New procedure for authorizing access to records in the State Records Center.