SOP: File Retrieval and Tracking Procedures

Purpose: This SOP details **file retrieval and tracking procedures** to ensure efficient management and organization of documents. It covers the processes for requesting, locating, accessing, and returning files, as well as maintaining accurate tracking logs to prevent loss or misplacement. The aim is to facilitate quick file recovery, maintain data integrity, and uphold confidentiality throughout the document handling lifecycle.

1. Scope

This procedure applies to all staff members involved with the management, retrieval, and tracking of physical and digital files within the organization.

2. Responsibilities

- **Document Custodian:** Oversees file management and maintains tracking logs.
- **Requestors:** Submit file requests and ensure timely return of files.
- **All Staff:** Follow procedures to safeguard document integrity and confidentiality.

3. Procedure

3.1 File Request Process

1. Complete the **File Request Form** (physical or electronic) with the following details:
    - Requestor's name and department
    - Date and time of request
    - File name or reference number
    - Purpose of request

2. Submit the form to the Document Custodian (in person or via email).
3. The Custodian reviews and approves or denies requests based on authorization levels.

3.2 Locating and Accessing Files

1. Upon approval, the Custodian locates the file in the storage system (physical archive or digital repository).
2. Files are checked out only to authorized personnel, as documented in the tracking log.
3. All file access is logged, including date, time, and name of the individual accessing the file.

3.3 File Return and Verification

1. Return files to the Custodian by the agreed return date.
2. The Custodian checks the file for completeness and condition before accepting the return.
3. File return is recorded in the tracking log.

3.4 Tracking and Documentation

- Maintain a centralized **File Tracking Log** to record:
    - Date/time of file retrieval and return
    - File reference details
    - Borrower's name and signature

- Review and reconcile the log weekly to ensure all files are accounted for.

3.5 Confidentiality and Security

- Files must be handled in accordance with data privacy and confidentiality guidelines.
- Unauthorized duplication or disclosure of file contents is strictly prohibited.

4. File Tracking Log Template

Date & Time Out	File Reference	Name of Borrower	Purpose	Date & Time In	Custodian Signature	Remarks

5. Non-compliance

Failure to follow this SOP may result in disciplinary action and potential loss of file access privileges.

6. Review and Revision

This SOP will be reviewed annually or as needed to ensure continued effectiveness and compliance.