

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

Record Identification and Classification Procedures

1. Purpose

This SOP details **record identification and classification procedures**, including the systematic approach to recognizing, categorizing, and managing records. It covers criteria for record identification, classification schemes based on content and confidentiality, indexing methods, retention schedules, and secure storage practices. The objective is to ensure efficient retrieval, compliance with legal requirements, and protection of sensitive information throughout the record lifecycle.

2. Scope

This procedure applies to all records created, received, or maintained by [Organization/Department] in any format, including physical and electronic forms.

3. Responsibilities

- **Records Manager:** Oversees the implementation of record identification and classification.
- **Department Heads:** Ensure staff follow these procedures and address compliance issues.
- **All Staff:** Identify, classify, and manage records as instructed in this SOP.

4. Procedure

4.1 Record Identification

- Determine whether a document qualifies as a record based on the following criteria:
 - Documents evidence of business activities or decisions.
 - Required for legal, regulatory, or organizational purposes.
 - Contains information of enduring value.
- If identified as a record, assign a unique record identifier (e.g., record number, barcode, or electronic ID).

4.2 Record Classification

1. **Content-Based Classification:**
 - Group records by functional category (e.g., Finance, HR, Operations).
 - Classify according to document type (e.g., Invoice, Contract, Email).
2. **Confidentiality Level:**
 - Public: May be disclosed freely.
 - Internal: Restricted to internal stakeholders.
 - Confidential: Limited to authorized personnel.
 - Restricted/Sensitive: Access approved by management only.

4.3 Indexing Methods

- Assign keywords, tags, or metadata to facilitate retrieval.
- Record relevant index data (title, date, author, department, classification code).
- Maintain a central registry or database of all records and their classifications.

4.4 Retention Schedules

- Adhere to organizational/legislative retention requirements for each record type.
- Document retention periods in the retention schedule table.

Record Type	Classification	Retention Period	Disposition Method
Financial Reports	Confidential	7 years	Secure Destruction
Employee Records	Internal	Termination + 6 years	Secure Destruction
Contracts	Restricted	End of contract + 6 years	Secure Destruction

4.5 Secure Storage Practices

- Store physical records in locked, access-controlled environments.
- Store electronic records in secure, access-controlled digital repositories.
- Implement encryption for sensitive electronic records.
- Review and audit access permissions regularly.

5. Review and Audit

- Conduct periodic audits of record identification and classification procedures.
- Update procedures in response to legislative or organizational changes.

6. References

- [List applicable legal, regulatory, and organizational references here]

7. Attachments

- Sample Classification Scheme
- Retention Schedule Template
- Access Control Request Form