



ELECTRONIC RECORDS & IMAGING POLICY AND PROCEDURES

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Subject: Electronic Records Policy Number: _____
Effective date: _____ Modified date: _____

Type of Government Office: County Municipal State Agency Other*

Municipality: Town of Landis

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1. PURPOSE

The records covered by this policy are in the custody of the Town of Landis and are maintained for the benefit of the Town's use in delivering services and in documenting the Town's operations. This electronic records policy reflects guidelines established in the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources publication *Guidelines for Managing Trustworthy Digital Public Records* Version 2.1. Complying with this policy will increase the reliability and accuracy of records stored in information technology systems and will ensure that they remain accessible over time. Exhibiting compliance with this policy will enhance records' admissibility and acceptance by the judicial system as being trustworthy.

All public records as defined by North Carolina G.S. § 132-1 are covered by this policy. This includes permanent and non-permanent records, including both confidential and non-confidential records. These classifications may warrant different treatments when processing the records. This policy serves as basic documentation of the procedures followed by the department in imaging, indexing, auditing, backing up, and purging electronic records in accordance with the disposition schedule, and in handling the original paper records, if applicable.

This policy also serves to protect those records digitized by the Town's in house imaging system, which reduces required storage space for original documents as the Town transitions to a "more paperless" digital system and provides instant and simultaneous access to documents as needed.

The form provided in Section 10 of this document, *Request for Disposal of Original Records Duplicated by Electronic Means*, is completed and submitted to the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources whenever the Town wishes to dispose of a series of paper records that have been digitized.

This policy will supersede any electronic records system policy previously adopted. This policy will be reevaluated at a minimum of every five years, or upon the implementation of a new information technology system and will be updated as required. A copy of this policy will remain on file at the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources.

2. RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

- a) Department Director
- b) IT Department
- c) Records Creators

a) Department Director – Responsibilities Include:

- 1. Determining access rights to the system.
- 2. Ensuring training of records creators.
- 3. Approving systems as configured by IT.
- 4. Periodically auditing imaged records for accuracy, readability, and reproduction capabilities before the original documents are destroyed.
- 5. Establishing and providing training on equipment and software, documenting such training, and providing remedial training as needed. Such training includes, but is not limited to, training on the imaging system.
- 6. Creating and updating detailed procedural manuals describing the imaging process and equipment.

b) IT Department – Responsibilities Include:

- 1. Installing and maintaining equipment and software.

2. Configuring the system according to the Town's needs, including creating and testing applications and indexes.
3. Controlling access rights to the system.
4. Maintaining documentation of system hardware and software.
5. Establishing audit trails that document actions taken on records stored by the information technology system.
6. Providing backups for system records and recovering deleted imaged records when necessary.
7. Completing a disaster recovery backup at least once every two years.

c) Records Creators – Responsibilities Include:

1. Attending and signing off on training conducted by Town staff or by the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources.
2. Creating passwords for computers that are long, complex, and frequently changed.
3. Creating and managing electronic records in their purview in accordance with the policies and other guidance issued by the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources and complying with all IT security policies.
4. Reviewing system records annually and purging records in accordance with the retention schedule.
5. Guaranteeing that records, regardless of format, be retained for the period of time required by local records retention schedules.
6. Carrying out day-to-day processes associated with the agency's imaging program, including:
 7. Designating records to be entered into the imaging system.
 8. Noting confidential information or otherwise protected records and fields.
 9. Removing transitory records from the scanning queue.
 10. Completing indexing guide form for each record being scanned.
 11. Reviewing images and indexing for quality assurance.
 12. Naming and storing the scanned images in designated folders.
 13. Once approved, destroying or otherwise disposing of original records in accordance with guidance issued by the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources
14. Conducting any necessary batch conversions or batch renaming of imaged records.
15. Town employees who have been approved to telecommute or use mobile computing devices must:
 - Comply with all information technology security policies, including the Town and statewide acceptable use policies, as well as all statutes and policies governing public records.
 - Back up information stored on the mobile device daily to ensure proper recovery and restoration of data files.
 - Keep the backup medium separate from the mobile computer when a mobile computer is outside a secure area.

3. AVAILABILITY OF SYSTEM AND RECORDS FOR OUTSIDE INSPECTION

The Town of Landis recognizes that the judicial system may request pretrial discovery of the information technology system used to produce records and related materials. Town personnel will honor requests for outside inspection of the system and testing of data by opposing parties, the court, and government representatives. Records must be available for inspection and audit by a government representative for the full period required by law and approved records retention schedules, regardless of the life expectancy of the media on which the records are stored. Records must continue to exist when litigation, government investigation, or

audit is pending or imminent, or if a court order may prohibit specified records from being destroyed or otherwise rendered unavailable.

In order to lay a proper foundation for the purpose of admitting the Town's electronic records into evidence, the Town will be able to provide up-to-date, detailed documentation that describes the procedural controls employed in producing records; procedures for input control including tests used to assure accuracy and reliability; and evidence of the records' chain of custody. In addition to this policy, such documentation includes:

- Procedural manuals
- System documentation
- Training documentation
- Audit documentation
- Audit trails

The Town will also honor inspection and copy requests pursuant to N.C. G.S. § 132. The Town should produce the records created and used in the course of business, maintaining an established folder structure as applicable. The Town should produce records in any format it is capable of producing if asked by the requesting party; however, the Town is not required to create or compile a record that does not already exist. If it is necessary to separate confidential from non-confidential information in order to permit the inspection or copying of the public records, the Town will bear the cost of such separation.

4. MAINTENANCE OF TRUSTWORTHY ELECTRONIC RECORDS

- a) Produced by Methods that Ensure Accuracy
- b) Maintained in a Secure Environment
- c) Associated and Linked with Appropriate Metadata
- d) Stored on Media that are Regularly Assessed and Refreshed

a) Produced by Methods that Ensure Accuracy

All platforms used by the Town to create and manage electronic records, including e-mail clients, social media platforms, and cloud computing platforms, conform with all Department of Natural and Cultural Resources policies and all applicable IT security policies.

Electronic files are named in accordance with the *Best Practices for File Naming* published by the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources.

Electronic files are saved in formats that comply with DNCR's File Format Guidelines for Management and Long-Term Retention of Electronic Records. File formats used by the Town are identified as standard by DNCR and are well-supported, backwards compatible, and have robust metadata support.

b) Maintained in a Secure Environment

Security of the system and the records it holds is maintained in the following ways:

- Access rights are managed by the IT department and are assigned by a supervising authority to prevent unauthorized viewing of documents.
- The information technology system is able to separate confidential from non-confidential information, or data creators organize and name file systems in such a way to identify confidentiality of the documents.

- Folders with confidential information are restricted, and access rights to confidential data are carefully managed. Confidential material is redacted before it is shared or otherwise made available.
- Physical access to computers, disks, and external hard drives is restricted.
- All system password and operating procedure manuals are kept in secure off-site storage.

c) Associated and Linked with Appropriate Metadata

Metadata is maintained alongside the record. At a minimum, metadata retained includes file creator, date created, title (stored as the file name), and when appropriate, cell formulae and e-mail header information. Employees are not instructed to create metadata other than metadata that is essential for a file's current use and/or retention.

d) Stored on Media that are Regularly Assessed and Refreshed

Data is converted to new usable file types as old ones become obsolete or otherwise deteriorate. The following steps are taken to ensure the continued accessibility of records kept in electronic formats:

- Data is audited and assessed annually. If there is evidence of file corruption, data should be migrated to new media.
- Records are periodically verified through hash algorithms. This is required before and after the transfer to new media to ensure the records were not altered.
- Media is refreshed every three to five years. The Town documents when and how records are transferred from one storage medium to another. Once the new media has been sampled to assure the quality of the transfer, the original media may be destroyed according to the guidelines of 07 NCAC 04M .0510.
- Records are periodically migrated to new file types, particularly when a new information technology system requires that they be brought forward in order to render the file properly.
- Metadata is maintained during transfers and migrations.
- Storage media are maintained in a manner and in an environment that promotes bit-level preservation. Humidity does not exceed 50% and should not fall below 30%. Room temperature is set between 65° F to 75° F. The Town adheres to the media manufacturers' recommendations for specific environmental conditions in which the media should be stored.
- Whatever media is used to store data is clearly labeled with enough information that its contents can be determined (e.g., optical media should have a physical label; data stored on a server should be indexed).

5. COMPONENTS OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SYSTEM

- a) Training Programs
- b) Audit Trails
- c) Audits

a) Training Programs

The Department Director will conduct training for system use and electronic records management, using material published by the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources when appropriate. All employees will be made aware of system procedures and policies and trained on them; employees will acknowledge by initialization or signature that they are aware of the policies and have received training on them. When appropriate, employees will also attend trainings offered by the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources on the maintenance of electronic records. Documentation will be maintained for the distribution of written procedures, attendance of individuals at training sessions and refresher training programs, and other relevant information.

b) Audit Trails

The IT department will maintain documentation on who has read and/or write permission to files maintained by the Town. A log of activities on the system may be maintained, which shows who accessed the system, how and by whom records were created and modified, and whether standard procedures were followed.

c) Audits

Audits are designed to evaluate the process or system's accuracy, timeliness, adequacy of procedures, training provided, and the existence of audit trails. Internal audits are conducted regularly by the Town's IT staff, at least annually.

6. DOCUMENTATION OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SYSTEM

- a) System Design
- b) Retention of System Documentation

a) System Design

The Town of Landis maintains documentation that describes system procedures, practices, and workflows. This documentation also identifies system software and hardware and captures the system environment in terms of the organizational structure, functions and responsibilities, and system processes. It explains how the system operates from a functional user and data processing point of view. Documentation is reviewed and updated by IT staff annually or upon implementation of a new information technology system. Such documentation maintained by the Town includes:

- Procedural manuals
- System documentation
- Security backup and disaster recovery procedures as a part of the Continuity of Operations Plan
- Service level agreements for contracted information technology services

b) Retention of System Documentation

One set of all system documentation will be maintained during the period for which the records produced by the process or system could likely be subject to court review and until all data created by every system instance has been destroyed or transferred to a new operating environment. All such documentation is listed in the Town of Landis's records retention schedule.

7. DIGITAL IMAGING PROGRAM DOCUMENTATION AND PROCEDURES

- a) System and Procedural Documentation
- b) Training
- c) Indexing and Metadata
- d) Auditing and Audit Trails
- e) Retention of Original and Duplicate Records

a) System and Procedural Documentation

The Department Directors are responsible for preparing and updating detailed procedures that describe the process followed to create and manage imaged electronic records. This documentation will include a description of the system hardware and software. A current procedural manual will be maintained to ensure the most

current steps are followed and to ensure reliable system documentation will be available for judicial or similar proceedings.

Each workstation designated as a scanning station will have, at a minimum, the following hardware and software, unless the scanner is collocated by means of a network interface:

- Document/image scanner authorized by IT: FUJITSU ScanSnap iX1600
- Driver software for scanner: ScanSnap Specific Driver
- Imaging software: Laserfiche by MCCi
- Instructions manual, maintained by a Department Director, describing in detail the steps required in the scanning process. This manual will also define:
 - The resolution of scanned images, as well as any compression standard used.
 - The file formats of scanned images.
 - The file naming conventions used for scanned images.
 - Whether batch conversion or batch file re-naming will be necessary, and what tool is used for such conversions.
 - How the scanned images will be stored in the file system.
 - Whether any image enhancement techniques should be conducted after imaging.

b) Training

Only designated staff that have been formally trained by a Department Director and have signed off on training documentation on the use of the imaging software and equipment will be allowed to scan records. Components of the training will include basic techniques for image capture, indexing, quality control, security configuration, auditing, use of equipment, and general system maintenance. Permissions to image and index records will not be assigned until the user has been trained. If a user improperly indexes or scans a document, an auditor will address this occurrence with the user, and remedial training will be required.

c) Indexing and Metadata

All imaged records must be indexed in order to facilitate efficient retrieval, ease of use, and up-to-date information about the images stored. This index should capture the content, structure, and context of the imaged records and will be developed by IT staff prior to the implementation of any imaging system. Metadata will be maintained in accordance with the guidelines provided in Section 4, *Maintenance of Trustworthy Electronic Records*.

d) Auditing and Audit Trails

Staff trained to conduct imaging will conduct a quality control audit following the imaging of a record to ensure that the following features of the imaged record are legible:

- Individual letters, numbers, and symbols.
- Combinations of letters, numbers, and symbols forming words or sentences.
- Graphics such as signatures, logos, and pictures.
- Other features of records such as color, shape, texture, etc., that relate to the content of the information.

Managerial staff for the various units of the Town will also periodically audit imaged records for accuracy, readability, and reproduction capabilities. Written quality control documentation will be prepared indicating the sampling of records and what remedial procedures were followed if the expected level of accuracy was not achieved.

Audit trails should be built into the imaging system that will automatically document who creates, duplicates, modifies, or otherwise accesses records and what procedures were taken. Audit trails include the success or failure, date, time, and user of the following events:

- Add/Edit electronic document
- Assign index template
- Copy document
- Copy pages
- Create document/folder
- Delete entry
- Delete pages
- Delete volume
- Edit image
- E-mail document
- Export document
- Index creation/deletion/modification
- Insert page
- Log in/out
- Move document
- Move pages
- Print document

Managerial staff will document by position title employees that have the authority to complete each of the tasks listed.

e) Retention of Original and Duplicate Records

To obtain permission to destroy original records following imaging, the Town will complete Section 10 of this document, *Request for Disposal of Original Records Duplicated by Electronic Means*. For each records series identified for scanning, the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources must approve the destruction of the original records. Permanent records may be imaged for ease of access, but the original documents may not be destroyed unless an analog copy exists prior to the records' destruction.

Destruction of original records is allowed only after quality assurance has been conducted on the imaged records, necessary corrections have been made, the electronic records system is audited for accuracy, and the destruction of records has been approved.

If digital images replace the original records and assume all legal authorities, these scanned records will be considered the record copy and must be maintained for the specified retention period defined in the appropriate records retention and disposition schedule. The retention period is considered to have begun when the original document was created, not when the electronic version was produced. Any hard copy generated from the imaged records will be considered the Town's duplicate "working" record or reference copy.

8. OTHER ELECTRONIC RECORDS MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

- a) System Planning
- b) Shared Drive Management
- c) Security and Disaster Backup and Restoration
- d) Cloud Computing

a) System Planning

Based on what format best serves the records retention requirements, The Town of Landis uses paper media, electronic media, and microfilm. For example: paper media is used for permanent records while electronic media is for short term retention.

b) Shared Drive Management

Employees use shared storage for collaboration and access. Procedures for the use of this shared storage comply with DNCR's guidance document *Global Shared Storage Guidelines*.

c) Security and Disaster Backup and Restoration

The Town has a disaster recovery plan for its electronic data in place, which includes contact information for data recovery vendors and information about backups of all data. Security backups to protect against data loss are generated for all but the most transitory of files. Routine backups are conducted three times a day and are kept on an infinite retention schedule. The Town's SharePoint Environment is backed up by the Datto Software as a Service Backup Solution. Imaged documents will be synchronized to SharePoint immediately upon document changes or upon document scanning.

e) Cloud Computing

SharePoint is used as a primary document storage location - the SharePoint environment acts effectively as a server in the O365 cloud which stores all file data within the tenant. No local storage is required, though the OneDrive desktop can be used to sync files to individual workstations to work with them offline or from the file system. Ultimately, the data is stored in SharePoint, in the Microsoft cloud. SharePoint also offers collaboration features - Office documents (think Word, Excel, PowerPoint, etc.) can be opened in 'Co-Authoring' mode (multiple users working on the same document at one time) as long as the file is saved to a location in SharePoint, Teams, or OneDrive. There are some exceptions for certain files, such as password-protected files or macro-enabled files. The Datto SaaS backup solution is used to back up the SharePoint and O365 environments for the Town. If VC3 fails or the Town discontinues service with VC3, the Town will retain full access and control of their O365 tenant and can transfer admin services to another vendor as the Town sees fit.

9. COMPLIANCE AND ELECTRONIC RECORDS SELF-WARRANTY

The completion of this form by all signing employees signals that all employees of the Town will adhere to the rules set forth in this policy. Furthermore, this section is to be used as a self-evaluation tool to ensure that electronic records produced by the Town are created, reproduced, and otherwise managed in accordance with guidelines for electronic public records published by the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources. The self-warranting of records in itself does *not* authorize the destruction of records, originals or copies, *nor* does it change current records retention and disposition scheduling procedures. Destructions of records are authorized when the Town approves the current retention and disposition schedule(s). If scanned records are intended to take the place of original paper records, the Town must submit the *Request for Disposal of Original Records Duplicated by Electronic Means* form.

10. REQUEST FOR DISPOSAL OF ORIGINAL RECORDS DUPLICATED BY ELECTRONIC MEANS

This form is used to request approval from the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources to dispose of non-permanent paper records which have been scanned, entered into databases, or otherwise duplicated through digital imaging or other conversion to a digital environment. This form does not apply to records which have been microfilmed or photocopied, or to records with permanent retention.

This form can be obtained from the Town Clerk Office or by visiting the State Archives of North Carolina website: archives.ncdcr.gov.

11. SIGNATURES

Each signatory should initial each element for certification, print his/her name on the Approved by line, fill in the job title, and sign and date the form.

- a) Records Custodian
- b) IT Professional or Other Project Supervisor
- c) Town Manager
- d) Department of Natural and Cultural Resources

a) Records Custodian

The records custodian is the person responsible for creating records or managing the staff who create records. The records custodian certifies that:

_____ The records created or duplicated by electronic means in this office are prepared in accordance with these guidelines as indicated by the following statements:

- Quality – Records are legible, accurate, and complete.
- The records are produced or reproduced as part of a regularly conducted activity.
- The records conform to DNCR guidance regarding file formats, file naming, and if applicable, digital preservation guidance produced by DNCR.
- Detailed, documented procedures are in place and followed when the records are created, copied, modified, or duplicated.
- The person who creates, copies, modifies, or duplicates records receives formal training on detailed system procedures prior to records preparation.
- Details of the training received are adequately documented through written policies and procedures.
- Employees sign training records after receiving training.

_____ The Town of Landis will comply with the best practices and standards established by the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources as published on its website.

_____ The Town of Landis will submit to the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources Section 10 of this policy, *Request for Disposal of Original Records Duplicated by Electronic Means*, to seek approval for the destruction of original records that have been converted from paper to electronic record.

_____ Affected records creators will be trained on the proper creation and maintenance of electronic records.

_____ Imaged records will be periodically audited for accuracy, readability, and reproduction capabilities before the original documents are destroyed.

Approved by: _____ Date: _____

Title: _____

Signature: _____

b) IT Professional or Other Project Supervisor

The IT Professional is the person responsible for providing technical support to the records custodians and who may be involved in infrastructure and system maintenance. In the absence of an IT department, the supervisor of the records custodian should verify the following items. The IT Professional certifies that:

_____ Audit trails document the identity of the individual who creates, duplicates, modifies, or otherwise prepares the records, what actions are taken by the individual during the course of the process, when these actions are taken, and what the results of these actions are.

_____ Audits:

- are performed periodically to confirm that the process or system produces accurate results.
- confirm that procedures followed are in accordance with the agency’s documentation.
- are performed routinely on files to ensure no information has been lost.
- are performed by an independent source (i.e., persons other than those who create the records or persons without an interest in the content of the records. Acceptable sources may include different departments or authorized auditing authority).
- are adequately documented.

_____ The process or system hardware and software are adequately documented.

_____ Permanent records conform to all file format, file naming, and digital preservation guidance produced by the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources.

_____ Backup procedures are in place and comply with best practices as established by the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources.

_____ Successful disaster recovery backup is completed at least once every two years.

Approved by: _____ Date: _____

Title: _____

Signature: _____

c) Town Manager

The Town Manager, with the authorization from the Town of Landis Board of Aldermen, is the person responsible for approving internal policies and procedures related to the creation and maintenance of electronic records. The Town Manager certifies that:

_____ Determinations are made regarding employees' permission rights to the electronic records system.

_____ IT's configurations for the electronic records system are reviewed and approved before the electronic records system becomes operational.

Approved by: _____ Date: _____

Title: _____

Signature: _____

d) Department of Natural and Cultural Resources

Approved by: _____ Date: _____

Title: _____

Signature: _____