

Public Record Office Victoria

SPECIFICATION FOR PLACES APPOINTED TO STORE AND MANAGE STATE ARCHIVES PROS 20/02 S2

Version number: 1.0
Issue Date: 19 08 2021
Expiry Date: 19 08 2031

About this Specification

This Specification sets out the requirements which must be met to obtain and retain appointment as a Class A Place of Deposit.

Class A Places of Deposit are appointed by the responsible Minister under section 14 of the *Public Records Act 1973* to hold records of permanent value (State Archives), as well as records of temporary value.

Table of Contents

1	Introduction	4
1.1	Authority of Standards and Specifications	4
1.2	Obligation	4
1.3	Applying this Specification	4
2	Obtaining and retaining Class A POD status	5
2.1	Obtaining appointment and authorisation	5
2.2	Maintaining authorisation to operate as a Class A POD	5
2.3	Discontinuing the Class A POD appointment	6
3	Records which can be held by a Class A POD	7
3.1	Status of records	7
3.2	Permanent and temporary value records	7
3.3	Records which should be withheld from public access	7
4	Requirements for all Class A PODs	8
4.1	Public access status of records must be determined	8
4.2	Providing access to public records	8
4.3	Usage of the public records	8
4.4	Providing information, documents and reports to PROV	9
4.5	Inspection	9
4.6	Annual Attestation	9
4.7	Documentation of the permanent public records	9
4.8	Location of the storage	9
4.9	Protection	10
4.10	Business Continuity Plan	10
4.11	Disaster preparedness, management and recovery	10
4.12	Notification	10
4.13	Insurance	10
4.14	Training	10
5	Additional requirements for physical format records	12
5.1	Facility construction	12
5.2	Facility maintenance and use	12
5.3	Environmental controls	13
5.4	Preservation and conservation	13
5.5	Location tracking	13
5.6	Security systems	13
5.7	Risks relating to the facility	13
6	Additional requirements for digital format records	14
6.1	Outsourced storage arrangements	14
6.2	Storage methods and arrangements	15
6.3	Storage maintenance	15

6.4 Minimum metadata	15
6.5 Long term sustainable formats	15
6.6 Migration	16
6.7 Protection and security controls	16

1 Introduction

1.1 Authority of Standards and Specifications

Under section 12 of the *Public Records Act 1973*, the Keeper of Public Records ('the Keeper') is responsible for the establishment of Standards for the efficient management of public records.

This Specification is part of the *PROS20/02 Storage Standard*. This Specification, as varied or amended from time to time, shall have effect for a period of ten (10) years from the date of issue unless revoked prior to that date.

1.2 Obligation

Appointment by the Minister as a Class A Place of Deposit (POD) under section 14 of the *Public Records Act 1973* authorises the storage and management of specified Victorian public records of permanent value (State Archives) and/or of temporary value. To obtain and retain this authorisation the requirements in this Specification must be met.

In addition, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) must be established between the organisation responsible for the Class A POD and the Public Record Office Victoria (PROV). This will include any additional agreements, conditions, limitations or obligations between the parties. The Class A POD must continue to comply with the requirements and conditions set out in the MoU.

1.3 Applying this Specification

The organisation responsible for the Class A POD must implement the requirements of this Specification, in addition to any additional obligations contained in the MoU between the organisation responsible for the Class A POD and PROV.

If the responsible organisation and the Class A POD do not continue to meet the requirements of this Specification and the MoU, approval to operate as a Class A POD may be revoked.

2 Obtaining and retaining Class A POD status

2.1 Obtaining appointment and authorisation

STEP 1 - Organisations seeking appointment as a Place of Deposit under section 14 of the *Public Records Act 1973* must contact PROV to commence the process.

STEP 2 - PROV will work with the organisation to determine whether:

- the criteria for the Class A POD program are met and
- if so, assess them against the requirements of this Specification.

For organisations seeking appointment in order to hold physical records at least one site visit will be required. Other inspection arrangements may be required in respect to digital record holdings.

In cases where PROV is not satisfied that the program criteria and requirements are met, PROV will provide recommendations.

STEP 3 - If satisfied that the program criteria and requirements of the Specification are met, a MoU will be established between the organisation and PROV. This will set out the roles and obligations of PROV and the organisation. Any additional conditions, limitations or requirements will be included in the MoU. The MoU will also specify any exemptions to requirements which the Keeper has approved.

STEP 4 - PROV will then recommend the organisation's appointment by the Minister responsible for the *Public Records Act 1973* as a Class A Place of Deposit. The commencement date of the MoU will be the date the Minister authorises the appointment.

If public records in physical formats are to be stored, the place proposed for appointment will be the physical address of the storage facility.

If public records in digital formats are to be stored, the place proposed for storage, any additional places for storage, and the address of the managing body must be determined and agreed to by the Keeper before seeking appointment as a Place of Deposit.

If both physical and digital format public records are to be stored, the place or places proposed for appointment must be determined and then agreed to by the Keeper before seeking appointment as a Place of Deposit.

Note: during the process of assessment and appointment, organisations seeking Class A POD authorisation must provide information, documents and reports to PROV upon request, within required timeframes. Documentation may include, but is not limited to Certificate of Occupancy, Pest Management Logs, Security Logs, Maintenance Schedules, Fire Services and Environmental System details, Essential Services Reports, details of archival description or metadata capture or other plans, photos, and reports.

2.2 Maintaining authorisation to operate as a Class A POD

To maintain authorisation from the Keeper to operate as a Class A POD, the facility must continue to comply with the requirements of this Specification and all additional conditions or obligations agreed to under the MoU.

Class A PODs must send an Attestation to the Keeper each year, stating whether or not they are in compliance with this Specification and the MoU they have entered into with PROV. If there are areas where they are not in compliance, these need to be detailed on the Attestation.

If the Keeper believes that the Class A POD has not met the requirements and conditions PROV will conduct an investigation. The Class A POD may be required to rectify all identified issues within a timeframe specified by PROV.

The Keeper may recommend to the Minister that appointment as a Class POD be revoked if not satisfied:

- that it complies with this Specification
- that agreements, arrangements, requirements or obligations under the MoU are being met, and/or
- that non-compliance is being addressed by sufficient and timely actions.

2.3 Discontinuing the Class A POD appointment

If the organisation responsible for the Class A POD decides it wishes to discontinue the appointment it must notify the Keeper of Public Records of this at least six months in advance. The permanent value public records held by the Class A POD may need to be transferred with the required metadata and in an approved format to PROV or to a place specified by PROV, within timelines and in compliance with directions from the Keeper. Responsibility for the costs involved in this transition will be negotiated between PROV and the organisation.

If appointment as a Class A POD is revoked, the organisation responsible for the Class A POD must take responsibility for transferring the permanent value records with the required metadata and in an approved format to PROV or to a place specified by PROV, within timelines and in compliance with directions from the Keeper. Temporary value public records which are not old enough to be lawfully destroyed may be required to be returned to the originating government office or to another place specified by PROV. Responsibility for the costs involved in this transition will be negotiated between PROV and the organisation.

3 Records which can be held by a Class A POD

3.1 Status of records

As Specified under s14 (3) of the *Public Records Act 1973*, records in a Place of Deposit remain in the custody and under the control of the Keeper.

3.2 Permanent and temporary value records

Upon appointment by the Minister responsible for PROV as a Class A Place of Deposit, specified public records of permanent value (State Archives) and/or temporary value may be held and managed on behalf of the Keeper of Public Records.

3.3 Records which should be withheld from public access

Class A PODs may only hold records which need to be withheld from public access for a period of time, if specifically authorised to do this by the MoU between them and PROV.

If authorisation is given under the MoU, this will be on condition that:

- record closures are authorised in accordance with the *Public Records Act 1973* and PROV Standards
- requirements of the Victorian Protective Data Security Standards are met where applicable
- the records and metadata can only be accessed by authorised persons
- appropriate security controls are applied to the records and associated metadata, so that unauthorised access does not occur when in storage or being transmitted or transported
- staff are trained in access and security requirements and processes
- the records are made accessible to the public once the closure period has expired
- PROV is notified of any change to a record's access status.

4 Requirements for all Class A PODs

4.1 Public access status of records must be determined

Class A PODs must assess all public records proposed for transfer to them to determine whether the records should be withheld from public access for a specified period under the *Public Records Act 1973* and advise PROV of the outcome of the assessment. PROV is available to advise each Class A POD on the assessment to support consistent access status determinations.

Any records proposed to be transferred to a Class A POD must be approved by the Keeper of Public Records, unless specified in the organisation's MOU with specific conditions or exemptions.

If it is determined those records should be withheld from public access then Ministerial and / or Keeper approval is required (as applicable). PROV will assist the Class A POD to obtain the requisite approval.

4.2 Providing access to public records

Class A PODs must provide access to the public records, unless they have been withheld from public access for a specified period under the *Public Records Act 1973* (see section 4.1).

Access must be provided at no cost and within reasonable timeframes. A copying service must be provided, at a cost which is no greater than that charged by PROV under the *Public Records Act 1973 Regulations*. PROV will inform Class A PODs of any changes to the costs specified in the regulations.

Unless exempt by the Keeper, the body responsible for Class A PODs must provide reading room premises and services. These must be adequately supervised and monitored to ensure public records are not at risk of damage, theft or loss.

4.3 Usage of the public records

Class A PODs must provide record users with information about current copyright law as it relates to public records and, if appropriate, obtain a copyright declaration from them prior to records being copied.

Class A PODs must provide guidelines for the consistent citation of any public records in their custody that might be referenced or reproduced.

Class A PODs must obtain permission from PROV in order to loan permanent value public records to a third party (e.g. for an exhibition.¹) PROV may specify conditions or limitations when granting permission.

¹ Permission does not need to be sought when the organisation operating the POD is also the business owner of the records, and the records are being exhibited on premises occupied and operated by the organisation. However, the records must be borrowed using a valid user account, managed in line with the account's terms and conditions, and digitised before being put on exhibition. PROV can provide support to digitization of records if it is needed.

Permission will not be given for loaning records which are withheld from public access under the *Public Records Act 1973* unless there are exceptional circumstances.²

If the Class A POD displays permanent value records in sites controlled by them they must take all steps necessary to ensure the conditions and arrangements will not result in degradation, damage, theft or loss.

4.4 Providing information, documents and reports to PROV

Class A PODs must provide information, documents and reports to PROV upon request, within required timeframes. Required reporting documentation may include, but is not limited, to information about how the public records are described, managed and made accessible. For example, statistical reporting about how many public records are provided to researchers or accessed online each year. Requests may be ad hoc or as part of a regular monitoring and reporting program.

4.5 Inspection

S13A of the *Public Records Act 1973* gives the Keeper of Public Records the authority to inspect arrangements for the storage of public records to ensure they comply with PROV Standards and Specifications.

Class A PODs must allow delegates of the Keeper to inspect facilities and arrangements upon request. Inspection can be of the physical facility or of arrangements for storing / managing / transmitting / transporting digital or physical records.

4.6 Annual Attestation

Class A PODs must complete and send an Annual Attestation to the Keeper each year, stating whether or not they are in compliance with this Specification and the MoU they have entered into with PROV. If there are areas where they are not in compliance, these need to be stated on the Attestation.

PROV will provide each Class A POD with an Annual Attestation template and inform them of the required submission timeframes. The Annual Attestation must be authorised by the head of the managing body or their delegate.

4.7 Documentation of the permanent public records

Unless specified otherwise in the MoU between the Class A POD and PROV, PROV requires all permanent value records held by a Class A POD to be described in accordance with the PROV archival control model. A Class A POD must create, maintain and provide to PROV archival descriptive documentation about all the permanent value public records held by it. Archival documentation requirements will be specified in the MOU entered into by each Class A POD and PROV.

4.8 Location of the storage

‘Location’ can refer to the storage facility for physical records or the data centre where digital records are stored.

The facility / data centre must be located away from known hazards. For example, it should not be located in a high bushfire area or on a flood plain or next to a service station or fuel depot. Any issues with the location will be

² This excludes closures under s11(2) of the Act, which are in place due to the fragility of a record – these cases are covered by the normal processes of evaluating records for their suitability to be exhibited.

considered as part of the initial assessment process – this may mean the facility cannot be authorised or that additional conditions or requirements may apply.

A storage facility for physical records must be in Victoria.

A storage centre for digital records cannot be overseas, unless an exemption to this requirement is given by the Keeper.

4.9 Protection

Public records must be protected from theft, loss, misuse and unauthorised access, whilst they are being stored, used, transmitted or transported.

4.10 Business Continuity Plan

A current Business Continuity Plan documenting how the Class A POD will recover from a disaster event, ensure the preservation of the public records and maintain continuity of access to them must be in place.

The plan must be reviewed annually and revised accordingly.

4.11 Disaster preparedness, management and recovery

Current disaster preparedness, management and recovery programs for the public records and any associated systems or facilities must be in place.

4.12 Notification

The organisation responsible for the Class A POD must inform PROV when there are any issues or incidents which have affected or may affect public records. This notification must occur as soon as practicable.

This includes:

- Major structural damage to the facility or system / storage service failures
- Disasters or incidents leading to the damage, destruction or loss of public records
- A major issue with the ability to locate and retrieve records
- Any issues or incidents / breaches affecting the security of the records
- Any major changes to outsourced hosting / service provision arrangements for digital record holdings.

The Class A POD must inform PROV when its Business Continuity Plan or Disaster Plan has been activated.

4.13 Insurance

The Class A POD must be sufficiently insured so that the facility holding the public records can be repaired if its condition is placing records at risk.

4.14 Training

Staff and volunteers who will be working with the public records must be given training in requirements, tasks, systems and processes which will be relevant to their role. This training must be refreshed on a regular basis. Details of the

training program must be supplied to PROV upon request. PROV support for any training will be negotiated on a case-by-case basis.

This may include but is not limited to training in:

- The PROV Archival Model and archival principles and concepts
- Providing information and services to researchers wishing to access public records
- Processing, documenting and describing public records
- Protecting records from theft, loss or damage
- Ensuring that unauthorised access does not occur
- Updating location information when retrieving records in physical format
- Safe manual handling practices for records in physical formats, including equipment use
- Disaster management and recovery processes.

5 Additional requirements for physical format records

Class A PODs authorised by the Keeper to hold and store public records in physical formats must meet the additional requirements set out in this section.

5.1 Facility construction

The facility construction must have been assessed as being compliant with the Building Code of Australia and any associated codes that applied at the time of construction.

The facility must be constructed of suitable materials, such as steel, brick, stone, reinforced concrete or concrete block and must not be subject to significant movement, cracking or rising damp.

Walls³ and doors of records storage areas must have a minimum fire resistance level rating of 90/90/90. This equates to a minimum 90 minute hour fire resistance.

The facility must have in place effective fire detection and suppression systems which comply with the Building Code of Australia and any relevant standards. Water based sprinkler system are to be a part of any fire and detection system installations.

Areas within the facility where public records are stored must be physically separated from areas in the building used for other purposes (e.g. offices, research centres, kitchens and toilets). For example, by a solid wall.

Areas within the facility where the public records are stored must not have drainage pipes or exposed plumbing (excluding fire systems).

Archive storage areas and facilities must have sufficient floor loading capacity to safely support the maximum volume of records, their containers and any furnishings or equipment.

Plans for new facilities or major changes to the facilities where public records are stored must be endorsed by a PROV representative before construction is commenced.

5.2 Facility maintenance and use

An integrated pest management system must be established and maintained.

The facility must be subject to a regular maintenance and cleaning schedule. Remedial repairs must be completed as soon as practicable

The facility cannot be used to store any items which would place public records at risk. Any hazardous chemicals must be stored in a dedicated hazardous material store well away from record storage areas.

Shelving, racking and handling equipment must be appropriate for the weight, size and format of the records.

³ This means walls in the record storage areas in the facility cannot have windows and the ceilings cannot have skylights.

5.3 Environmental controls

Temperature and humidity levels in record storage, processing and viewing areas must be appropriate for the format of the records.

Temperature and humidity levels in record storage areas must meet the following for paper records. A temperature of 20C with a variance of +/- 1C and a humidity of 50% with a variance of +/- 5%. These levels are based upon the ones used by PROV. This system must operate constantly (24 hours per day, 7 days per week).

Air within storage areas must be freely circulating, capable of being isolated from external hazards and filtered to remove dust, pollens and other pollutants. This requirement can be met by having a heating, venting and cooling (HVAC) system. These must be regularly maintained, with temperature and humidity logs kept and provided to PROV upon request.

Lighting within the storage areas must be filtered, and limit the exposure of the collection to unnecessary light. For staff working in the storage areas a lux level of 160-240 is required.

5.4 Preservation and conservation

PODs must inform PROV about any records with preservation problems which are likely to become worse over time.⁴ Where POD staff do not have the skills or resources to stabilise or protect a record, it should be transferred to the Victorian Archives Centre.

5.5 Location tracking

Sufficient and accurate location information about all public records must be created and maintained to ensure they can be found and retrieved quickly and easily. This information must be kept up to date to reflect any movement of the public records.

Records must be tracked while in transit, with processes and systems ensuring that they are not lost or misplaced and continue to be accessible.

5.6 Security systems

Security systems (including alarms, intruder detection devices with base monitoring and locks with restricted key system) must be installed, maintained and regularly reviewed to ensure records in the facility are protected from unauthorised activities.

5.7 Risks relating to the facility

Identified risks to the facility must be recorded in an organisational risk register which includes risk mitigation strategies. The register must be reviewed on an annual basis and made available to PROV upon request.

⁴ For example, records containing active mould will become more fragile of time; records with torn bindings will remain fragile but their condition is unlikely to become worse.

6 Additional requirements for digital format records

Class A PODs authorised by the Keeper to hold and store public records in digital formats must meet the additional requirements set out in this section.

6.1 Outsourced storage arrangements

If using an outsourced third party digital storage provider, the Class A POD must ensure that contracts, agreements and/or arrangements are in place which will result in compliance with this Specification and any additional requirements or obligations set out in a MoU between the Class A POD and PROV. The Class A POD must monitor compliance. The contract or agreement with the outsourced provider must include remedies for non-compliance within agreed timeframes.

The Class A POD must ensure that the Keeper is given access to and copies of any digital records held by the outsourced storage provider, upon request.

The Keeper or their delegate must be able to inspect the arrangements for the storage, management or transmission of the digital records by the outsourced storage provider. Any inspection of the arrangements would be carried out in conjunction with the Class A POD.

Contracts or agreements between the Class A POD and the outsourced storage provider must include provisions for the public records in the case of the arrangement expiring or ceasing. This means ensuring that the outsourced storage provider will transfer the digital records, in the required formats and with the required metadata, to the Class A POD, to the PROV Digital Archive or to another provider.

If the arrangement is expiring or ceasing, the Class A POD must ensure that PROV is informed at least six months in advance. The Keeper must approve the destination of the digital records. The Keeper may require that the permanent value records are transferred to the PROV Digital Archives as VERS encapsulated objects (VEOs). Costs for this will be negotiated between the Class A POD and PROV.

Contracts or agreements between the Class A POD and the outsourced storage provider must include provisions for the public records in the case of the provider being sold to another organisation. The Class A POD must inform PROV of any upcoming sale, with as much notice as possible. The Keeper must approve the destination of the digital records. The Keeper may require that the permanent value records are transferred to the PROV Digital Archives as VERS encapsulated objects (VEOs). Costs for this will be negotiated between the Class A POD and PROV.

Contracts or agreements between the Class A POD and the outsourced storage provider must ensure that the storage provider is not able to subcontract storage to another organisation without the express permission of the Class A POD. If permission is sought by the outsourced storage provider to subcontract storage to another organisation, the Class A POD must inform PROV of this as soon as possible. The Keeper of Public Records reserves the right to not allow the movement of public records to this new subcontracted organisation. This may mean that the public records and any associated metadata need to be returned to the Class A POD in agreed formats and within specified timeframes (or to another body as agreed between the Class A POD and the Keeper).

6.2 Storage methods and arrangements

Methods and arrangements for storing public records must ensure they are protected from loss, deterioration or degradation. This means:

- They must be created and maintained in formats which are expected to survive and be readable over time
- Suitable technologies (e.g. hardware, media) must be used for their storage and refreshed / replaced when appropriate
- They must be protected from interruptions, fluctuations or outages to power supplies
- Effective backup and restoration arrangements must be established and maintained to ensure records can be identified and accessible within required timeframes.

6.3 Storage maintenance

An effective maintenance program must be implemented, with issues rectified in a timely manner. This means:

- Storage systems and technologies must be regularly tested to ensure they are functioning as expected, with issues rectified
- Power supplies (and uninterruptable power supplies) must be maintained so that systems holding records are protected from surges, fluctuations or outages
- Backup arrangements must be regularly tested and appropriately maintained
- When storage is refreshed or records are moved to different storage, care must be taken to ensure that the records and associated metadata are not lost or altered by the process (for example by dates being inadvertently and automatically reset by the process)
- Storage media must be maintained and replaced as necessary, as part of a managed media update program
- Storage server / media racks and equipment must be properly maintained, with any issues rectified.

6.4 Minimum metadata

All records must have sufficient descriptive information attached to them to allow management and access over time.

Permanent value digital records must include the minimum metadata required for VERS⁵ Encapsulated Objects (VEOs)⁶.

Class A PODs must meet the minimum metadata requirements specified in *PROS 19/05 S2 Minimum Metadata Requirements Specification*, unless an exemption is given by the Keeper.

6.5 Long term sustainable formats

All records must be captured and stored in a format that optimises their reliability and integrity over time.

Permanent value digital records must be in an approved long term sustainable format that allows for efficient capture as VERS encapsulated objects (VEOs) and transfer to the PROV Digital Archive should it be required in the future.

⁵ VERS is the Victorian Electronic Record Strategy, developed by PROV. It is about ensuring the creation, capture and preservation of authentic, complete and meaningful digital records.

⁶ PROV requires permanent value digital records to be converted into a long-term format called a VERS Encapsulated Object (VEO) for long-term preservation and transfer to PROV. VEOs contain digital records in an approved long-term preservation format and contextual information (metadata) about the record(s).

Class A PODS must meet the requirements specified in *PROS 19/05 S3 Long Term Sustainable Formats Specification*, unless an exemption is given by the Keeper.

6.6 Migration

All public records must be managed to facilitate migration over time. Digital records must be held in systems that provide effective and accurate export of the records (including metadata) from the system.

If required at some point in the future, permanent value digital records must be transferred to PROV as VERS encapsulated objects (VEOs).

6.7 Protection and security controls

Protection and security controls must be designed and implemented within any systems holding public records in digital formats to ensure they can only be accessed and used as authorised and cannot be deleted, altered or amended.

Copyright Statement

© State of Victoria 2021



Except for any logos, emblems, and trade marks, this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license, to the extent that it is protected by copyright. Authorship of this work must be attributed to the Public Record Office Victoria. To view a copy of this license, visit <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/legalcode>

Disclaimer

The State of Victoria gives no warranty that the information in this version is correct or complete, error free or contains no omissions. The State of Victoria shall not be liable for any loss howsoever caused whether due to negligence or otherwise arising from the use of this Standard.