



Public Record Office Victoria
PROS 11/01
Storage

Guideline

1

Approved Public Record Office Storage Suppliers (APROSS)

Version Number: 1.4

Issue Date: 27/07/2011, revised 25/08/2014

Expiry Date: 25/08/2019

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Acknowledgements

The Public Record Office Victoria would like to acknowledge the valuable contribution of members of the *Storage Advisory Group* during the development of this Guideline.

Version	Version Date	Details
1.0	27/07/2011	Released
1.1	21/09/2011	APROSS Forms added to text
1.2	17/07/2013	Copyright changed to Creative Commons license
1.3	25/08/2014	Revised in line with the 2014 Storage Standard Review
1.4	12/12/2014	Relationship diagram and associated references amended

1. Introduction

1.1. Public Record Office Victoria Standards

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 and for assisting Victorian government agencies to apply those Standards to records under their control.

Recordkeeping Standards issued by the Public Record Office Victoria (PROV) reflect best practice methodology. This includes international standards issued by the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) and Australian Standards (AS) issued by Standards Australia, in addition to PROV research into current and future trends.

Heads of government agencies are responsible under section 13b of the *Public Records Act 1973*, for carrying out with the advice and assistance of the Keeper, a program of efficient management of public records that is in accordance with all Standards issued by the Keeper.

In Victoria, a programme of records management is identified as consisting of the following components:

- A recordkeeping framework;
- Recordkeeping procedures, processes and practices;
- Records management systems and structures;
- People and organisational structures; and
- Resources, including sufficient budget and facilities.

A programme of records management needs to cover all agency records in all formats, media and systems, including business systems.

1.2. Purpose

The purpose of this Guideline is to provide Victorian Government agencies with useful and practical guidance on the storage of public records with a commercial storage provider, while adhering to best practice recordkeeping principles identified in the *Storage Standard*. This Guideline will assist government agencies to implement the requirements in the *Agency Records Storage Specification* in situations where they have outsourced the storage of public records in their custody to an Approved Public Record Office Storage Supplier (APROSS). This Guideline may also be a useful reference for APROSS companies to understand the compliance requirements of their Victorian government clients.

1.3. Scope

This Guideline applies to government agencies that either store or intend to store records in an APROSS facility. It applies to the storage of both digital and hard copy records with commercial storage suppliers.

For guidance regarding Places of Deposit (POD) please refer to *Storage Guideline 4: Places of Deposit*. For information about the APROSS Authorisation and Inspection Process, please refer to *Storage Guideline 12: Records Storage: Authorisation and Inspection Programme*.

1.4. Related Documents

This Guideline must be read and implemented in conjunction with PROV's Standards and associated documentation, including appropriate Retention and Disposal Authorities (RDA). The Standard, Specifications and other Guidelines associated with this Guideline are detailed below:

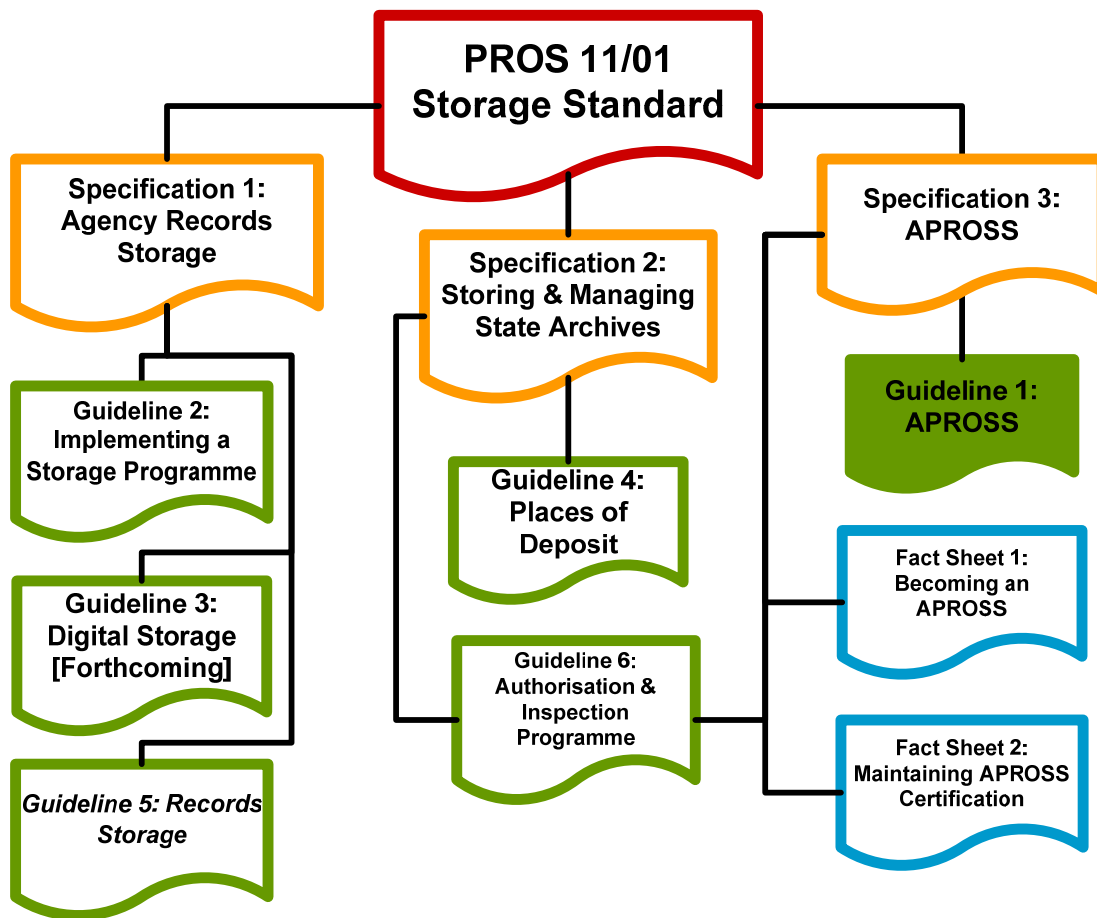


Figure 1: Relationship Diagram

2. What is APROSS?

An APROSS is a commercial storage facility which has been appointed by the Keeper of Public Records under s. 12 of the *Public Records Act 1973*, following an inspection regarding its suitability for the storage of public records. Records held in an APROSS are deemed to be under the custody of the controlling agency. Mandatory conditions govern the control of records to be transferred to, or stored at, the site of the approved commercial facility.

The APROSS programme was established by PROV in the 1990s in response to the issue of government agencies having insufficient space within their own offices to store public records. A system of certifying external storage providers was developed, which includes inspections to ensure that records were being stored in satisfactory locations and conditions.

Approved Public Record Office Storage Supplier companies provide record storage services to agencies that do not wish to run their own extensive in-house records storage and retrieval programme. PROV has inspected each of the existing commercial storage facilities approved under the APROSS programme and found them to comply with the requirements outlined in the *APROSS Specification*¹. The APROSS programme gives agencies the opportunity to negotiate retrieval and storage costs in a competitive environment with approved commercial facilities.

Approved Public Record Office Storage Supplier companies and government agencies are bound under various acts including the *Public Records Act 1973*, the *Information Privacy Act 2000*, *Health Privacy Act 2001* and the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*. Government agencies are obliged to follow these acts regardless of whether their records are stored in an APROSS or not. For further details regarding this legislation refer to *Appendix One*.

¹ Information about the Authorisation and Inspection Programme is located in PROS 11/01 G6 Records Storage: Authorisation and Inspection Programme Guideline: <http://prov.vic.gov.au/government/standards-and-policy/all-documents/pros-1101-g6>.

3. Choosing an APROSS

Current certified APROSS facilities are listed on the [PROV website](#). When selecting an APROSS the agency should assess and compare service levels and fee structures. Permanent retrieval fees in particular should be identified as they may impact the cost of implementing the agency's disposal programme.

When choosing an APROSS, consider asking the following questions:

- Where is the storage facility located?
- How much notice do you require to retrieve records?
- Are you certified to store the type of records we need to store (not all APROSS facilities are certified to store all formats of public records)?
- Do you provide couriers or will the agency need to arrange them?
- What are your fees?
- Are records able to be processed onsite (such as when the agency needs to run disposal programmes), and is there a cost involved?
- Do you provide a secure record destruction service?
- Are we able to retrieve records via an online ordering service?

The agency should ensure that all required purchasing processes are followed. The agency should obtain legal advice before signing the contract. The contract should specify at a minimum:

- Any special requirements for the records;
- Access arrangements;
- Security arrangements;
- Exit fees (including permanent retrieval); and
- Ongoing management and setup costs.

The agency should also confirm with their insurance provider that all records are still covered whilst stored in APROSS facilities.

4. Transferring Records to an APROSS

Once an agency has chosen the appropriate APROSS and has a contract in place, records can start to be transferred

Temporary records can be sent to an APROSS at any time. Unsentenced records and State Archives will need to be approved by PROV prior to their being placed within an APROSS facility.

Triggers for transferring records to an APROSS may include:

- Inadequate space in onsite storage areas;
- Onsite storage areas do not meet PROV Standards;
- Long record retention periods;
- Infrequent use of records;
- Restricting physical access to agency staff; or
- Lower cost of off-site storage.

Identification and control

Before transferring any records to an APROSS they should be appropriately identified and controlled. Requirements 20 to 22 in the *Agency Records Storage Specification* must be implemented by the agency prior to transfer. This includes having systems in place to track the physical location of records and the intellectual control to enable records to be easily retrieved from storage containers. This means that the agency needs to document which records are being stored in each box and record where each box is currently located. Each transfer should be documented by the agency (in conjunction with the APROSS) through a form which can be signed off upon receipt of the records. The agency is still responsible for the records once they have been transferred and will need to know what records were transferred to which location at what date. Further guidance is located in the *Implementing a Storage Programme Guideline*.

Unsentenced records

Unsentenced records may only be sent to an APROSS if a plan to sentence the records has been approved by the Keeper of Public Records. PROV form *PRO 41 Request for Approval of Sentencing Plan* should be completed by the agency and submitted to PROV for approval. The records must only be transferred to the APROSS once approval has been granted.

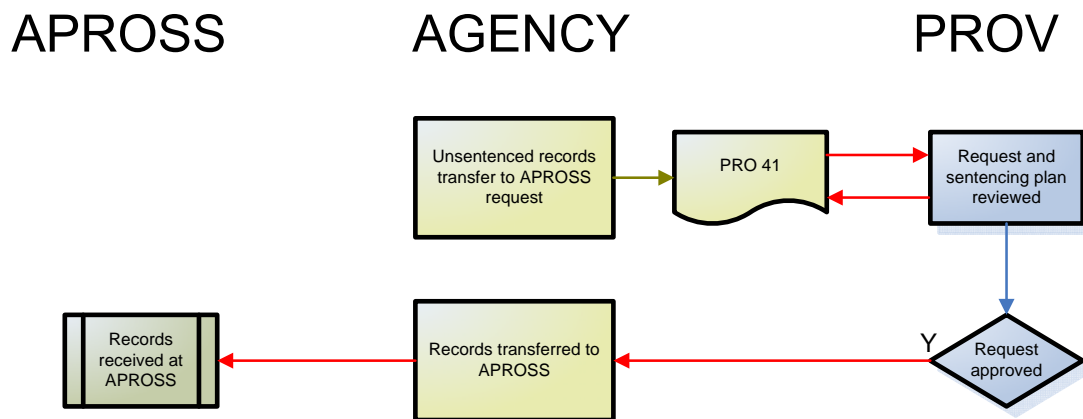


Figure 2: Transfer of unsentenced records to an APROSS facility process diagram

State Archives

State Archives (i.e. records identified in a current disposal authority as being permanent) may only be sent to an APROSS if a plan to transfer the records to PROV has been approved by the Keeper of Public Records. PROV form *PRO 42 Request for Approval of Transfer Plan* should be completed by the agency and submitted to PROV for approval. The records must only be transferred to the APROSS once approval has been granted.

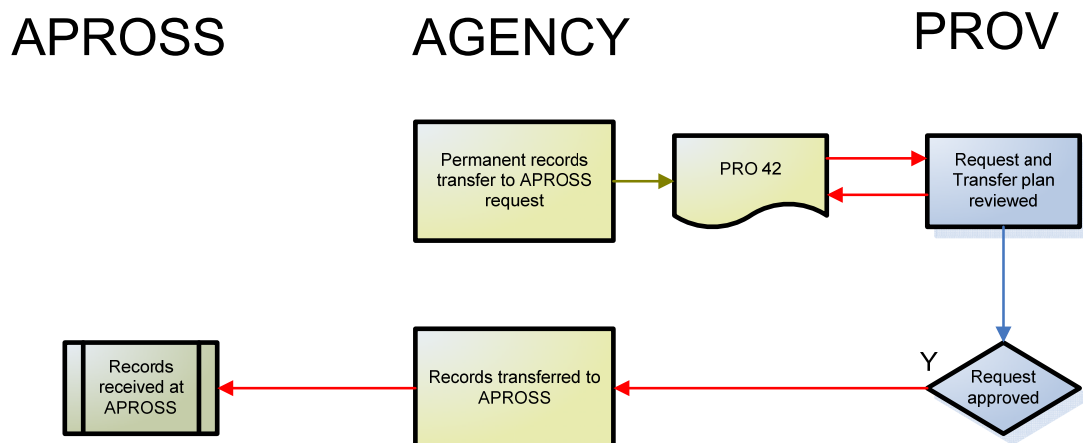


Figure 3: Transfer of State Archives to an APROSS facility process diagram

Security

Digital and hardcopy records need to be appropriately secured when in transit to the APROSS facility. Extra care should be taken when dealing with records containing sensitive or personal information. The agency should also ensure that any special security requirements for security classified material are met.

5. Managing & Retrieving Records from an APROSS

Records stored within an APROSS facility remain the responsibility of the agency and will therefore continue to need to be managed to ensure that the records will be locatable, accessible and usable when and as needed and that legal requirements continue to be met.

After records have been transferred to an APROSS they will need to be retrieved to meet client, staff and legal access requirements. In the case of permanent records, they will need to be retrieved once administrative use has concluded so they can be transferred to PROV.

Planning

Records management strategies, policies and plans implemented by the agency should include records held in APROSS facilities². The contractual arrangement used for the APROSS facility may include various clauses to ensure the ongoing preservation of the records. Regular monitoring should still be undertaken by the agency to ensure that the records are continuing to be housed appropriately, controls are adequate for efficient identification and retrieval of records, and that services provided continue to meet agency needs.

Control

Clear procedures should be developed as part of the agency's storage programme, which details how records are to be retrieved from an APROSS and promptly returned to storage once access requirements have been met. These procedures should cover:

- Identifying the current location of records;
- Submitting retrieval requests to the APROSS;
- Handling urgent retrieval requests;
- Deadlines and retrieval turn around times;
- Checking and documenting receipt of retrieved records;
- Updating the current location of records;
- Maintaining the security of records; and
- Following up on the return of records to storage.

State Archives records

Records identified as being permanent in a current disposal authority will need to be retrieved once administrative use has concluded so they can be transferred to PROV as State Archives. The transfer of these records to PROV is a requirement of the *Disposal Standard*. When retrieving these records it is important that the APROSS is advised that the retrieval is permanent and the records will not be returning to the APROSS for storage. This will ensure that the agency doesn't continue to be charged for the storage of these records.

² Please refer to PROS 11/01 Storage Guideline 2: Implementing a Storage Programme for further guidance.

6. References

Legislation

Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Vic)

Health Records Privacy Act 2001 (Vic)

Information Privacy Act 2000 (Vic)

Public Records Act 1973 (Vic).

All Victorian legislation is available at <http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au>.

Other Resources

For more information about APROSS, please contact:

Public Record Office Victoria

Ph: (03) 9348 5600

Fax: (03) 9348 5656

Email: agency.queries@prov.vic.gov.au

Web: www.prov.vic.gov.au