

Public Record Office Victoria

SPECIFICATION

PROS 20/02 S1: APROSS

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About this Specification

This Specification sets out the requirements which must be met by a storage provider for their facility to be certified as an Approved Public Record Office Storage Supplier (APROSS) and to retain this certification.

Victorian public offices can only store physical format public records in a facility not controlled by them, if that facility has been certified as an APROSS.

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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 and for assisting Victorian public offices to apply those Standards to records under their control.

Heads of public offices are responsible under section 13b of the *Public Records Act 1973* for carrying out a program of efficient management of public records. The program of records management needs to cover all records created by the public office, in all formats, media and systems across the organisation.

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

It is mandatory for all Victorian public offices to follow the principles and comply with the requirements of the Standards and Specifications issued by the Keeper.

1.3 Applying this Specification

This Specification sets out the requirements which must be met by a storage provider for their facility to be certified as an Approved Public Record Office Storage Supplier (APROSS) by the Keeper of Public Records under s12 of the *Public Records Act 1973*.

Victorian public offices can only store physical format public records in a facility not controlled by them, if that facility has been certified as an APROSS. A facility may be certified subject to specific conditions or limitations.

To retain APROSS certification, the facility must continue to comply with the requirements of this Specification and any conditions set by PROV. If PROV is not satisfied that a facility is continuing to meet requirements and conditions, APROSS certification will be revoked.

While stored in an APROSS, public records remain under the control of the public office which has responsibility for them. This means the head of the public office is responsible for the records and must ensure the APROSS manages the records appropriately. This would usually be done through a contract or agreement between the public office and the APROSS.¹

PROV expects that APROSS will cooperate fully with public offices whose records they hold and work with them to ensure records are managed properly.

¹ PROV recommends that Victorian public offices set more detailed and specific requirements when entering into an agreement or contract with an APROSS.

2 Requirements for APROSS

2.1 Obtaining Certification as an APROSS

Any commercially operated storage facility which is seeking authorisation to store physical format public records must be assessed by PROV as being compliant with this Specification.

If the facility meets the requirements and the company agrees to any specific conditions set by PROV the facility will be certified as an APROSS.

A facility may be certified subject to specific conditions or limitations. These will be clearly documented and communicated to the company. If relevant, they will also be included in the information PROV makes available to public offices.

Once a facility has received certification as an APROSS, it is authorised by the Keeper of Public Records to store some categories of physical format Victorian public records.²

PROV will publish details of certified APROSS facilities on their website.

2.2 Maintaining Certification as an APROSS

To retain APROSS certification, the facility must continue to comply with the requirements of this Specification and any conditions set by PROV.

If PROV believes that a facility is not continuing to meet requirements and conditions it will conduct an investigation. This may result in the APROSS being required to rectify the identified issues within a timeframe specified by PROV.

If PROV is not satisfied that the issues have been rectified, or are not being rectified by the specified timeframes, APROSS certification will be revoked. If this occurs the storage provider must notify their Victorian public office clients.

PROV will publish details of this revocation on its website and may communicate this to Victorian public offices.

2.3 Providing Information, Documents and Reports

APROSS must provide information, documents and reports to PROV upon request, within timeframes specified by PROV. This may include information about which Victorian public offices are utilising their storage services.

Requests may be ad hoc or as part of a regular monitoring and reporting program. Required documentation may include, but is not limited to, reports, photos, plans, videos, registers, logs or certificates.

2.4 Inspection

Section 13A 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.

² The categories of physical records which a Victorian public office can store in an APROSS are specified in Section 3.

To obtain and maintain APROSS certification, providers must allow delegates of the Keeper to inspect facilities and arrangements upon request. APROSS are expected to cooperate fully with these inspections.

2.5 Notification

An APROSS must inform PROV and the public offices whose records they are holding 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
- Disasters or incidents leading to the damage or destruction of public records
- A major issue with the facility's ability to locate and retrieve records
- Any issues or incidents affecting the security of the records.

As part of this, the APROSS must inform PROV when its Business Continuity Plan or Disaster Plan has been activated.

2.6 Location

The facility 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 assessed as part of the APROSS certification process – this may mean the facility cannot be certified as an APROSS or that additional conditions or requirements may apply.

2.7 Building Code Compliance

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.

2.8 Fire Detection and Suppression

The facility must have in place effective fire detection and suppression systems which comply with the Building Code of Australia and any relevant standards.

2.9 Free-standing and Single-purpose Facility

The facility must be free-standing and single-purpose. The single purpose of the facility must be the storage of records but can include the storage of similar formats such as papers or magazines. The single purpose can include areas for services which add value to record storage such as digitisation or process areas.

The facility cannot be used to store any items which would place public records at risk (e.g. hazardous chemicals).

2.10 Physical Separation

Areas within the facility where public records are stored must be physically separated from office hubs including 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).

2.11 Conditions

The storage provider must ensure conditions in the facility will not damage the records or adversely affect their useability. For example by overloading shelves or allowing poor handling practices.

In cases where the storage provider agrees to hold specialised record formats, the storage provider and the responsible public office must agree on conditions and arrangements which will ensure the records survive and are readable for the minimum required retention period. This may include, but is not limited to, special requirements for audiovisual material, photographic collections or microform.

2.12 Pest Management

An integrated pest management system must be established and maintained.

2.13 Shelving, Racking and Equipment

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

2.14 Retrieval and Tracking

Systems and processes must enable records to be retrieved within timeframes agreed with the public office responsible for them.

Effective retrieval, tracking and reporting of records being delivered to or returned from the responsible public office must be in place.

2.15 Protection

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

Where the APROSS is responsible for transporting records to or from the public office they must ensure the records are protected from theft, loss, misuse and unauthorised access during transit.

2.16 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.

2.17 Maintenance

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

2.18 Risks

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.

2.19 Business Continuity Plan

A current Business Continuity Plan documenting how the APROSS facility will recover from a disaster event and maintain continuity of service must be in place.

The plan must be reviewed annually and revised accordingly.

2.20 Disaster Preparedness, Management and Recovery

A current disaster preparedness, management and recovery programs for the facility and public records within the facility must be in place.

2.21 Insurance

The facility must be adequately insured, so that any issues can be properly rectified.

Records in the facility must be insured for recovery and restoration, in the case of any damage occurring to them.

Where the APROSS is responsible for transporting records to or from the public office, the records must be insured during transit for restoration and recovery, in case of damage occurring to them.

2.22 Training

Staff members who will be working in a facility where public records will be stored must be trained in:

- How to handle records and use equipment to ensure records are not damaged
- How to follow procedures to ensure unauthorised access does not occur
- Disaster management and recovery processes.

This training must be conducted before staff commence work in the facility and be refreshed on an annual basis.

3 Categories of Records which can be stored in an APROSS

Public offices can only store physical records in a facility managed by an external provider which has been certified as an Approved Public Record Office Supplier (APROSS).

Public offices are responsible for ensuring they only store certain categories of physical records in an APROSS.

From the date this Standard is issued:

- Public offices cannot move permanent value physical records to an APROSS. Exemptions to this may be granted by the Keeper of Public Records or their delegate. If an exemption is granted, the public office must comply with conditions set by PROV.
- Retention requirements must be determined before records can be moved to an APROSS.

For those physical records already held in an APROSS at the date this Standard is issued:

- Public offices must develop a plan detailing the actions to determine required retention periods for those holdings where this is not known. The plan must meet requirements specified by PROV, be approved by the head of the public office or their delegate and provided to PROV upon request.
- Public offices must develop plans to transfer to PROV those physical records held in commercial storage which are known or become known to have permanent value. The plan must meet requirements specified by PROV, be approved by the head of the public office or delegate and provided to PROV upon request.

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