

## RECORDS MANAGEMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURES APPENDIX 1

### PROCEDURES FOR FILING ELECTRONIC RECORDS NAMING CONVENTIONS

#### Your responsibilities

You are responsible for ensuring the records generated or received by you are stored correctly.

Specifically, you are responsible for correctly storing records:

- you send to or receive from external parties
- you create
- you send to internal recipients. In most circumstances:
  - where you request a response from a team member, you will be responsible for managing the document chain.
  - where you are responding to a team member, it remains their responsibility to file the resulting document chain.

If it is not clear who is saving the information, clarify this with your colleagues to ensure that important records are not lost.

You may delegate responsibility for filing your records to other team members in specific or all instances. The delegation must be clear and documented.

**Rule 1: File names should include the date, the name of the correspondent (if applicable) and an indication of the subject, except where the inclusion of any of these elements would be incompatible with rule 3 (unnecessary repetition).**

The file names of correspondence should include the following elements so that the record can be easily identified and retrieved:

- Date of document
- Name of correspondent (sender and/or receiver – if applicable)
- Subject description - shown in (round brackets).

You should normally order the elements in the same order listed above, as it is likely that documents will be retrieved by date. However, order elements in the most appropriate way, and avoid repetition.

If it is likely that a document will be emailed externally as an attachment, it is important to name the file so that its contents are clear to the other party.

When naming the sender or receiver use the organisation name. If there are multiple contacts with an organisation, follow the organisation name with the initials of the contact, forename first. If the sender or receiver is an individual use the format ‘SurnameInitials’.

<b>Example</b>	
<b>Incorrect file name</b>	<b>Correct file name</b>
/.../Complaints About Us/ EmailFromHelenThomas10Jun03.msg LetterFromJoeBloggs5Jan04.pdf LetterToHelenThomas10Jul03.doc LetterToJoeBloggs11Dec03.doc LetterToJoeBloggs5Dec03.doc  (Ordered alphanumerically as the files would be in the directory list)	/.../Complaints About Us/ 2003-06-10 ThomasH (C) - ESC (Complaint).msg 2003-07-10 ESC - ThomasH (C) (Response).doc 2003-12-05 BloggsJ (C) - ESC (Complaint).doc 2003-12-11 ESC – BloggsJ (C) (Acknowledgement).doc 2004-01-05 ESC - BloggsJ (C) (Response).pdf  (Ordered alphanumerically as the files would be in the directory list)

### Explanation:

If filed correctly, all the correspondence with Joe Bloggs appears together in chronological order. The same is true of the correspondence with Helen Thomas. You don't need to include a fuller indication of the subject, as it's given in the folder name.

<b>Example</b>	
<b>Incorrect file name</b>	<b>Correct file name</b>
/.../Complaints/ Appeal/ WilliamEvans15Aug04.pdf WilliamEvans25Oct04.doc WilliamEvans5Aug04.pdf  (Ordered alphanumerically as the files would be in the directory list)	/.../Complaints/ Appeal/ 2004-08-05 Evans, W (Appeal).pdf 2004-08-15 ESC - Evans, W (Acknowledgement).pdf 2004-10-25 ESC - Evans, W (Response).doc  (Ordered alphanumerically as the files would be in the directory list)

## Explanation:

If filed correctly, all the correspondence is listed in chronological order, it is easy to see what the correspondence is about, who it is with and its progress.

## Multiple emails on the same day

If more than one email is received from the same person, on the same day, on the same subject but the latest email does not include the whole string of the correspondence, then save both emails and amend the subject element of the file name to differentiate them.

Appendix 2 gives guidance on managing your emails and when and how to save your emails to a shared drive/CMS.

When filing in the CMS the format of the record (email, letter, etc) should be included in the filename. The CMS does not allow all formats to be previewed. Including the format indicates whether preview is possible or whether the document must be downloaded to see the contents.

Records relating to conduct complaints also include a letter to indicate the correspondent type. For example:

- C – complainer
- R – respondent
- MO – Monitoring Officer
- CE – Chief Executive

Example
Correct file name
2021-03-29 BloggsJ (C) (Initial Complaint) 2021-03-30 Email chain BloggsJ (C) and ESC (acceptance of complaint) 2021-04-27 Email ESC to BloggsJ (C) (accept for investigation) 2021-04-27 Email ESC to Brown,B (MO, cc CE) (initial notification) 2021-04-27 Email ESC to Smith,A (R) (initial notification) 2021-04-27 Letter ESC to Brown,B (MO, cc CE) (initial notification) 2021-04-27 Letter ESC to Smith,A (R) (initial notification)
(Ordered alphanumerically as the files would be in the directory list)

## Rule 2: Keep file names short, but meaningful

It is more difficult to identify a record if the file name is long.

Long file names also mean long file paths. These can cause problems in accessing the file. If the full file path exceeds the maximum number of characters allowed then it will become inaccessible on the system. A link to the record can break if split across two lines in an email or document.

Avoid using initials, abbreviations and codes that are not commonly understood.

<b>Example</b>	
<b>Incorrect file name</b>	<b>Correct file name</b>
Final version of the performance management policy as agreed.doc	Performance Management Policy.doc
MinutesoftheInvestigatingOfficers meeting28052014approved.doc	2014-05-28 IO Meeting (Minutes) APPROVED
JBloggsHMRC(QueryRePAYEsttmentfor organisationandresponse)03-04-07.doc	2007-04-03 HMRC (PAYE Statement query and response).doc
(Ordered alphanumerically as the files would be in the directory list)	(Ordered alphanumerically as the files would be in the directory list)

### Explanation:

Some words, like 'the' and 'of' add length to a file name but do not contribute towards the meaning. If the remaining file name is still meaningful, these elements can be removed. Where words have standard abbreviations, for example 'IO' for 'Investigating Officer', these can be used in the file name.

## Rule 3: Avoid unnecessary repetition and redundancy in file names and file paths.

Avoid redundancy in file names and file paths. Unnecessary repetition increases the length of file names and file paths, which is incompatible with rule 2.

### Example

#### Incorrect file name

../ Senior Management Team Meetings / 2014-04-30 Senior Management Team Meeting Minutes.pdf

../Investigating Procedures/Investigation Procedures Councillors.doc

#### Correct file name

../Senior Management Team Meetings/2014-04-30 Minutes.pdf

../Investigating Procedures/Councillors.doc

#### Explanation:

In the first example, the folder is called “Senior Management Team Meetings’ so you don’t need to include the words ‘Senior Management Team Meetings’ in the file name. In the second example, the folder is called ‘Investigating Procedures’ so it is not necessary to include the word ‘Investigation Procedures’ in the file name.

However, if it is likely that a document will be emailed externally as an attachment, it is important to name the file so that its contents are clear to the other party.

## Rule 4: Order the elements in a file name in the most appropriate way to retrieve the record.

The naming convention outlined in Rule 1 is standard. However, there may be occasions when this is not the most appropriate way to name a document.

Sometimes, the elements to be included in a file name should be ordered according to the way in which the record will be retrieved during the course of everyday business. This will depend on the way you work. If you are saving to an existing folder and are not sure which filename to use, review the filenames of the documents already stored in that folder.

For example, if the records are retrieved according to their date, the date element should appear first. If the records are retrieved according to their description, the description element should appear first.

<b>Example</b>	
<b>Incorrect file name</b>	<b>Correct file name</b>
/.../Management Team Meeting/ Agenda 1 Feb 2005.doc Agenda 20 Jan 2005.doc Agenda 30 June 2004.doc Minutes 1 Feb 2005.doc Minutes 20 Jan 2005.doc Minutes 30 June 2004.doc	/.../Management Team Meeting/ 2004-06-30 Agenda.doc 2004-06-30 Minutes.doc 2005-01-20 Agenda.doc 2005-01-20 Minutes.doc 2005-02-01 Agenda.doc 2005-02-01 Minutes.doc
/.../Staff/Terms and Conditions 2010-11-17 Dignity at Work Policy.doc 2010-11-22 Confidentiality Policy.doc 2011-02-23 Attendance Policy.doc 2011-02-23 Code of Conduct.doc 2014-08-06 Data Protection Policy.doc	/.../Staff/Terms and Conditions Attendance Policy.doc Code of Conduct.doc Confidentiality Policy.doc Data Protection Policy.doc Dignity at Work Policy.doc
(Ordered alphanumerically as the files would be in the directory list)	(Ordered alphanumerically as the files would be in the directory list)

### Explanation:

The first example shows minutes and agenda for Management Team Meetings. Minutes and papers of a meeting are likely to be retrieved on the basis of the date of the meeting, it is therefore best to have the date at the start of the file name, otherwise all the Agendas will come at the top of the directory list, followed by all of the minutes, and then by the papers.

The second example shows the file names of the documents in a Staff Terms and Conditions folder. Because these are likely to be retrieved by the name of the policy rather than the date, it is most useful to have that element first.

**Rule 5: When including a number in a file name always give it as a two-digit number (unless it is a year or a number with more than two digits).**

The file directory displays file names in alphanumeric order. To maintain the numeric order it is important to include the zero for numbers 0-9. This helps to retrieve the latest record number.

<b>Example</b>	
<b>Incorrect file name</b>	<b>Correct file name</b>
Office Procedures V1	Office Procedures V01
Office Procedures V10	Office Procedures V02
Office Procedures V11	Office Procedures V03
Office Procedures V2	Office Procedures V04
Office Procedures V3	Office Procedures V05
Office Procedures V4	Office Procedures V06
Office Procedures V5	Office Procedures V07
Office Procedures V6	Office Procedures V08
Office Procedures V7	Office Procedures V09
Office Procedures V8	Office Procedures V10
Office Procedures V9	Office Procedures V11
(Ordered alphanumerically as the files would be in the directory list)	(Ordered alphanumerically as the files would be in the directory list)

**Explanation:**

This example shows the successive versions of an office procedures document. If two-digit numbers are used the latest version will always be at the bottom or top of the list.

**Rule 6: If using a date in the file name always state the date 'back to front', and use four digit years, two digit months and two digit days: YYYY-MM-DD or YYYY-MM or YYYY.**

Dates should always be presented 'back to front', that is with the year first (always given as a four digit number), followed by the month (always given as a two digit number), and the day (always given as a two digit number).

The exception is when representing a period covering two years, such as a financial year. This should be shown in the format YYYY-YY (2014-15).

Giving the dates back to front means that the chronological order of the records is maintained when the file names are listed in the file directory. This helps when trying to retrieve the latest dated record.

## Example

### **Incorrect file name**

1Aug2005 Agenda.doc  
1Aug2005 Minutes.doc  
1Feb2006 Agenda.doc  
1Feb2006 Minutes.doc  
24March2004 Agenda.doc  
24March2004 Minutes.doc  
24March2004 PaperA.xls  
(Ordered alphanumerically as the files would be in the directory list)

### **Correct file name**

2004-03-24 Agenda.doc  
2004-03-24 Minutes.doc  
2004-03-24 Paper A.xls  
2005-08-01 Agenda.doc  
2005-08-01 Minutes.doc  
2006-02-01 Agenda.doc  
2006-02-01 Minutes.doc  
(Ordered alphanumerically as the files would be in the directory list)

### **Explanation:**

This example shows the minutes and papers of a committee. By stating the date back to front the minutes and papers are grouped together with those from the most recent meeting appearing at the bottom of the list.



## Rule 7: When including a personal name in a file name give the family name first followed by the initials.

It may be appropriate to include within a file name the name of an individual, usually when the record is a piece of correspondence. The family name should be given first followed by initials as it is most likely that the record will be retrieved according to the family name of the individual.

### Example

#### Incorrect file name

/.../Invitations Issued 2004-12-01/SamRBrown20041201.doc

#### Correct file name

/.../Invitations Issued 2004-12-01/Brown, SR.doc

#### Explanation:

This is a letter to Samuel R Brown. By putting the family name first, the file directory will display this file next to the b's, which is where you would expect to find a letter to a Mr/Mrs/Etc Brown.

There are a number of options when recording both the organisation and the individual or department in the filename.

### Examples

#### Correct file name

2021-12-01 SPCB – AESC (Agenda for 10Dec21)

2021-12-01 SPCB CrerarJ – AESC (Agenda for 10Dec21)

2021-12-01 SPCB JC – AESC (Agenda for 10Dec21)

2021-12-01 SPCB – IB (Agenda for 10Dec21)

2021-12-01 SPCB – Brucel (Agenda for 10Dec21)

2021-12-01 SG – AESC (Agenda for 10Dec21)

2021-12-01 Scottish Government PAT– AESC (Agenda for 10Dec21)

2021-12-01 SG Procurement – AESC (Agenda for 10Dec21)

All of the above are acceptable. The context will advise the best naming convention to use. The date, name of the external organisation and subject are essential. The external party's name can be abbreviated where the abbreviation is in common usage.

It is advisable with contacting large organisations, such as the Scottish Government, to include the department or individual's name.

## Rule 8: Avoid using common words, such as 'draft' or 'letter', at the start of file names.

Avoid using common words such as 'draft' or 'letter' at the start of file names, or all of those records will appear together in the file directory, making it more difficult to retrieve the records you are looking for.

You may only this rule if starting file names with these sorts of words aids the retrieval of the records. See rule 4 for further details.

### Example

#### Incorrect file name

./../Annual Accounts 2013-14/  
Draft Annual Accounts V01.doc  
Draft Budget Report 2013-14 V15.xls  
Draft Office Procedures V10.doc  
Final Annual Accounts V05.pdf  
Final Budget Report 2012-13 V20.xls  
Letter J Murphy.doc  
Letter P Fraser.doc  
(Ordered alphanumerically as the files would be in the directory list)

#### Correct file name

./../Annual Accounts 2013-14/  
2014-02-05 FraserP (Audit Plan).doc  
2014-03-12 MurphyJ (Accounting treatment queries).doc  
Annual Accounts V01 Draft.doc  
Annual Accounts V05 Final.doc  
Budget Report 2012-13 V20 Final.xls  
Budget Report 2013-14 V15 Draft.xls  
Office Procedures V10 Draft.doc  
(Ordered alphanumerically as the files would be in the directory list)

#### Explanation:

The file directory will list files in alphanumeric order. This means that all records with file names starting 'Draft' will be listed together. When retrieving the files, it will be more useful to find the draft budget report next to the previous year's budget, rather than next to an unrelated draft record.

## Rule 9: Avoid using non-alphanumeric characters in file names.

Different operating systems, such as Linux, macOS and Windows, have different rules when it comes to using special characters such as &, % and \$ in file names – some are accepted others are not. The range of characters has increased in recent years. In particular, & and + are less problematic. However, others may still cause difficulties.

Even if your operating system allows you to save the file, you may encounter difficulties if you try to transport the file to another operating system. The file may not be recognised or a recipient may not be able to open it.

Avoid: \* : \ / < > | " ? [ ] ; = £ \$ , .

However, hyphens (-), commas (,) and round brackets () may be used. The ampersand (&) and plus (+) may be used with caution.

### Example

#### Incorrect file name

Smith,John:20070507.txt  
"DavidLaingCollection".rtf  
Guidelines&Regulations.pdf  
Budget2006/07

#### Correct file name

2007-05-07 SmithJ (Invoice query).txt  
Attendance Policy.doc  
Guidelines and Regulations.pdf  
Budget 2006-07.xls

#### Explanation:

Most special characters can be omitted without much loss of meaning, e.g. commas and quotation marks. Others can be replaced with alphanumeric characters, e.g. "&" and "+" can be replaced with "And" and "Plus". Hyphens can be used in place of forward slashes.

**Rule 10: The version number of a record should be indicated in its file name by the inclusion of 'V' followed the version number and, where applicable, 'Draft' or 'Final'.**

Some records go through a number of versions. For example, they start out as working drafts, become consultation drafts and finish with a final draft, which may then be reviewed and updated at a later date. It is important to be able to differentiate between these various versions by giving them each their own number.

Where a version number is applicable, it should always appear in the file name of the record so that the most recent version can be easily identified and retrieved.

## Examples

### **Incorrect file name**

Annrep0304\_draftv3.doc

Annrep0304\_finalv4.doc

### **Correct file name**

Annual Report 2003-04 V03 Draft.doc

Annual Report 2003-04 V04 FINAL.doc

### **Explanation:**

This shows two versions of the annual report for 2003-04. The subject is written in full as it is a document likely to be widely circulated so a self-explanatory title is helpful. Version 3 is a draft version and version 4 is the final version. The covering years are given in the standard format. The version number is given with two digits so that the versions will appear in numeric order.

### **Incorrect file name**

Org\_Hier\_2002\_v2.xls

Org\_Hier\_2002\_v3.xls

Org\_Hier\_2002\_v4.xls

### **Correct file name**

Organisation Chart 2002 V02.xls

Organisation Chart 2002 V03.xls

Organisation Chart 2002 V04.xls

### **Explanation:**

This shows a number of versions of the organisation chart for 2002. None of the versions are marked as draft or final because the nature of the record means that these labels are not applicable.