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CHAPTER 12.

SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF ARCHIVES AND HISTORY

(Statutory Authority: 1976 Code Section 30-1-90(B))

ARTICLE 10.

MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR FACILITIES WHICH HOUSE SOUTH CAROLINA PUBLIC RECORDS

12-1000. Purpose and Scope.

A. Standards for facilities which house the public records of South Carolina will help minimize the danger of losing information vital to the current operational and long term reference requirements of state and local government, and will help ensure the preservation of valuable historical information.

B. The standards apply to (1) any existing facility or area thereof, and (2) any new construction or renovation of a facility or area thereof in which the public records of South Carolina state and local government are permanently or temporarily housed, including public buildings and offices where such records are ordinarily kept and used, as well as public and private facilities specifically designated or designed for records storage.

12-1001. Definitions and General Requirements.

A. Definitions

(1) "Public Records" has the meaning as provided in Section 30-4-20 (c), Code of Laws of South Carolina, 1976, as amended.

(2) "Public Body" has the meaning as provided in Sections 30-4-20 (a) and 30-1-10 (b), Code of Laws of South Carolina, 1976, as amended.

(3) "Facility or Area Thereof" means any physical structure used entirely or in part for the storage and maintenance of public records, or any area or room within that or any other structure which is used for the storage and maintenance of records.

(4) "Existing Facility" means a structure which is already in place and is being used or will be used to house public records.

(5) "Records Retention Schedule" means a document which specifies how long public records shall be kept and indicates their final disposition.

(6) "On-Site" means the facility or area thereof where the records are normally used and maintained.

(7) "Off-Site" means a facility or area thereof away from where the records are normally used and maintained.

B. General Requirements

No records of a South Carolina public body shall be removed from the buildings in which they are ordinarily maintained and used, except for required administrative work, retention or disposal in accordance with a records retention schedule approved by the South Carolina Department of Archives and History, microfilming, or for special public display in accordance with provisions of the State's Public Records Act.

12-1002. Required Minimum Standards for All Records Storage Facilities.

Any facility or area thereof in which the records of a South Carolina public body are maintained shall meet the following minimum standards:

A. Construction:

- (1) The building shall be of sound construction and shall be well-maintained, with a roof which is free of leaks.
- (2) If the facility is located off-site (away from the building where the records are ordinarily maintained and used), and if part of the structure is used for other purposes, a fire wall shall separate the records area from any area which might present a hazard to the records.

B. Environment:

- (1) It shall be kept clean to avoid accumulations of dust and dirt.
- (2) If the facility is not climate-controlled, the records storage area shall be well-ventilated and shall not be subject to rapid and extreme fluctuations of temperature and humidity (more than plus or minus forty degrees or forty percent within twenty-four hours).
- (3) It shall be free of vermin and shall have a pest control program to guard against insects and rodents.
- (4) It shall be well-lighted, but records shall not be exposed to direct sunlight.
- (5) Records shall be protected from the threat of damage caused by smoking, eating and drinking.
- (6) Records shall be placed a minimum of three inches from the floor on sturdy, well-supported shelving units, file cabinets, or wooden pallets. Unbound inactive records shall be stored in file cabinets or in closed containers placed on shelves or pallets.
- (7) Records shall not be placed in areas subject to flooding or excessive moisture, in areas with exposed water or steam pipes subject to leaking, or in areas that are adjacent to furnaces or boilers unless separated by a four-hour fire wall.

C. Security/Protection:

- (1) It shall not be located in any area where the risk of natural and man-made disasters poses a significant threat to the facility and its contents. It shall be located sufficiently separate from external hazards to ensure a high degree of safety from such occurrences as fire and flood.
- (2) It shall be located within the coverage area of a fire station and near a regularly patrolled police route.
- (3) It shall be secured at all times, and, in the case of an off-site storage facility, if it is not normally open to the public, access shall be restricted to authorized persons.
- (4) It shall have an operational fire detection mechanism. In an off-site, unstaffed facility, the fire detection mechanism shall have an external audible alarm.
- (5) It shall contain an adequate supply (one or more) of well-distributed portable fire extinguishers with a minimum classification of IIA:10B:C suitable for extinguishing fires in all record materials stored.

12-1003. Compliance Guidelines.

The South Carolina Department of Archives and History shall be responsible for determining whether or not facilities are in compliance with this regulation. All facilities shall be in compliance with the required minimum standards or shall submit a compliance plan to the South Carolina Department of Archives and History within twenty-four months of the approval date of this regulation. In order to verify compliance, each public body shall complete an assessment of the existing facilities within its jurisdiction used or to be used for the storage and maintenance of public records. As provided by Section 30-1-70 of the State Code, the Archives Director may order the removal of public records from any facility which does not meet the minimum standards. Public bodies considering new construction or renovations of records facilities shall consult with the South Carolina Department of Archives and History when planning such work.