



**arts and culture**

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Department:  
Arts and Culture  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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**NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND  
RECORDS SERVICE OF  
SOUTH AFRICA**

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**STRATEGY FOR PRESERVATION OF  
ARCHIVAL MATERIAL**

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**DECEMBER 2013**

## **SECTION A: PRESERVATION STATEMENT**

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1. In terms of the legislative framework the National Archives and Records Service has a duty to provide access to the information in its holdings. Section 32(1)(a) of the Constitution of South Africa (Act No 108 of 1996) provides that everybody has the right of access to any information held by the state. Therefore under the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa (Act No. 43 of 1996 as amended), the National Archivist has the statutory responsibility of ensuring that necessary steps are taken to preserve records under his/her care for continued access. The Act also charges the National Archivist with making sure that these records are made available to the public for research, and exhibition purposes.
  
2. Preservation in the National Archives and Records Service is regarded as a top priority. The main aim is to bring preservation activities in line with acceptable international standards so as to extend the life of records.
  
3. Efforts are being made to ensure that records are properly looked after by the records creators (e.g. government bodies) so that they can still be in good and usable condition when they are eventually transferred to National Archives Repositories.
  
4. The purpose of this policy is to explain the actions that the National Archives and Records Service will take to preserve the records while at the same time making these records accessible to the general public and governmental bodies. This policy must be read with the detailed National Archives and Records Service Policy Guidelines and other relevant policies and strategies of the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa.

## SECTION B: POLICY

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In order to properly preserve archival records, the National Archives and Records Service shall:

1. Ensure that the **facilities** in which records are kept meet internationally accepted archival standards.
2. Ensure that the **conditions** under which records are kept are of internationally accepted archival standards.
3. Implement strategies that will minimise physical handling of the original records so as to **reduce the risk** to these records.
4. Provide copies **for use** where the originals are not in usable condition or where the intended use may threaten the physical well being of the records, or where copying may improve legibility of the content, or in the event where the user requests such copies.
5. Provide **conservation** treatment and repair where the records are damaged or are in need of stabilisation. This conservation work will be very minimal and will be guided by the form of damage and intended use for the record.
6. In the case of audio-visual recordings preservation interventions should take place to ensure the survival of the content on the carrier in cases of obsolescence and other damage. International partnerships in saving the content should be considered where technology or expertise in the country is not available.

7. Withdraw records from circulation when they are at risk due to handling and use. In this case, **surrogates** can be provided for use while the original is undergoing conservation repair.

## **SECTION C: SUPPORT**

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### The National Archives and Records Service

1. Monitor **technical developments** in preservation internationally and will incorporate applicable strategies so as to improve **service delivery** and cost effectiveness.
2. Support technical initiatives aimed at improving **quality** of materials and technology used for documentation.
3. Continue encouraging **good record keeping** in record offices and provide guidance where necessary.
4. Implement **awareness programs** for staff and users in good preservation practices and handling of records.

5. Provide **training** so as to enhance **skills** in the use of records for staff involved in providing access and, **professional development** for staff involved in preservation in particular.
  
6. Implement **awareness strategies** for members of the public to ensure that they understand the need to preserve archival resources.
  
7. Revise this policy in line with legislative changes and other developments in the sector.

**ACTING NATIONAL ARCHIVIST**

**NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS SERVICE OF SOUTH AFRICA**

SIGNATURE:  ..... DATE: 04/12/2013