

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS SERVICE OF SOUTH AFRICA

READING ROOM RULES: 2020

INTRODUCTION

In line with the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act no. 43 of 1996 (as amended) and international standards for archives preservation and good record keeping, the National Archives (NARSSA) has to ensure proper handling and usage of its archival holdings. This is to ensure that the records are not subjected to any risk that may reduce their longevity. To achieve this, every researcher's cooperation is essential, and is requested to treat the records with the utmost care.

Please note that the Reading Room is under constant CCTV surveillance and cannot be considered as a private space. Also note that any material that a researcher takes into and out of the Reading Room is liable to be searched by archives and / or security staff. It is therefore in everybody's interest to declare any material brought into National Archives building at the NARSSA reception desk. Any material in a researcher's possession may be queried upon at any time at NARSSA. This material would include, but not be limited to, books and original records such as divorce decrees, etc.

READING ROOM HOURS

Mondays to Fridays 08:30 – 14:00.

The Reading Room will be closed on Saturdays until further notice.

No records may be requested between 10:00 to 10:15 and after 13:00 on weekdays.

CORONAVIRUS PRECAUTIONS

A face mask must be worn at all times and social distancing must be observed.

Hands must be washed regularly, but please ensure that no sanitizer or water comes into contact with the archival records.

Once an archival record has been handled, either by a member of the public or the staff, it has to be quarantined for a period of 72 hours before it can be made available again.

Only one person at a desk at a time.

Only 15 members of the public will be allowed in the Reading Room at a time.

Please follow all instructions regarding the current pandemic issued by staff members in the Reading Room.

NEW RESEARCHERS

A new researcher must be registered by a Reading Room official upon his/her first visit to the Reading Room. All researchers are issued with an access card which must be produced upon request each time that the Reading Room is visited. These access cards expire on the 31st of March each year and must be renewed for the next year if a researcher wishes to continue utilising the Reading Room.

VISITOR REGISTERS

All researchers must sign the visitors registers each time they use the facility. The registers can be found at Security Reception desk and Reading Room counter respectively.

LOCKERS

Bags or containers of any description, (including: briefcases, laptop bags, backpacks, handbags, plastic bags and camera bags), mobile phones and pens are not allowed in the Reading Room. These should be stored in the lockers provided for this purpose at the reception desk at the front entrance to the building. Keys for the lockers may be obtained, against signature, at this desk. Researchers are responsible for the safekeeping of these locker keys until they remove the contents of their lockers. They must then return the keys.

REQUESTING ARCHIVAL MATERIAL

A researcher may request up to a maximum of 10 archival records per day. This number may be less depending on the availability of staff and the number of researchers in the Reading Room.

Requests for archival records to be retrieved should be made by completing a requisition form in the Reading Room.

A researcher may only have one item (archival record) on his/her table at a time, excluding finding aids and reference material. The rest of the items must be placed on the "Delivery Table" together with the table number to indicate for whom they are reserved.

When a researcher has finished consulting the archival material it should be placed on the "Return Table".

COPYING FACILITIES

Cost per page/photo

A4 photocopies	R1- 00
Certified copies	R1- 53
Digital scan of photographs	R15-00 per 300 dpi scan

- Once a researcher has identified the archival material that s/he require copies of, an order form should be completed and handed to a Reading Room official. The official will hand the researcher an invoice which must be paid in cash at the Archives Registry in the foyer of the building before s/he can receive the copies. Cheques and credit cards are unfortunately not accepted.
- If copies are not available on the same day arrangements can be made to collect them within one week.
- Payments must be made between 9:00 and 14:00 on weekdays.
- No letter books or estate records for the period 1873 to 1960 may be photocopied.
- Reading Room officials have the right to deny a request to copy badly damaged or fragile archival records.
- No archival records may be removed from a file for the purpose of copying.

ARCHIVAL MATERIAL FALLING WITHIN THE 20 YEAR CLOSED PERIOD

In accordance with the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act (Act No 43 of 1996 as amended), all archival records under its control shall be available for public access if a period of 20 years has elapsed since the end of the year in which the archival record came into existence.

Some archival records including Estate Records and Court Cases are exempt from this provision and are open for immediate access.

If a researcher wishes to consult an archival record from the closed period s/he will have to apply in writing to the National Archivist for permission to do so. Reading Room officials may be consulted for more information in this regard.

RESERVING RECORDS

Until further notice no records may be reserved. This is because all records have to be quarantined for a period of 72 hours after they have been consulted before they can be made available for research again.

GENERAL

The guidelines below are to be followed when consulting any archival material in the Reading Room.

1. No pens or permanent markers are allowed or to be used in the Reading Room. Only pencils are allowed.
2. The use of a cell phone (mobile phone) in the Reading Room is prohibited.
3. Mutilating and / or scribbling on any archival record is not allowed and constitutes a criminal offence. This would include leaning on records while consulting them.
4. No documents / pages may be loosened from their bindings, removed from their place within a file or the content of files re-arranged.

5. Records must be returned back to the box they came in in the same order in which they have been found.
6. No food, liquids or chewing gum may be consumed in the Reading Room.
7. No archival records or boxes may be placed on the floor.
8. Volumes may not be forced open to flatten them – the assistance of a Reading Room official should be requested.
9. Personal devices may be used to take pictures of the records, but without a flashlight. Scanning of original records is not permitted.
10. No foreign objects may be placed inside records other than flat clean pieces of paper or the markers provided at the Reading Room desk.
11. Researchers must ensure that their hands are dry and clean before they handle any archival material.
12. Researchers may not disturb other researchers by behaving in an unbecoming manner while in the Reading Room. This would include being noisy.
13. Researchers are not allowed behind the Reading Room counter.
14. Researchers are advised to declare photocopies and original documents such as birth certificates, divorce decrees, etc. to security staff at the reception desk before taking them to the Reading Room.
15. The Reading Room officials are available to assist researchers who are welcome to consult them when they are unsure of anything.
16. Researchers are cautioned not do anything that might cause damage to records and thereby deprive future generations of their heritage.