Handout 4.1—Access Priorities Table

Table 1: Access Priorities Table

LEVEL	DEFINITION	ACCESS	EXAMPLES	TIMEFRAME FOR ACCESS
Priority 1	Records essential for response and emergency operations and therefore needed immediately	Physical protective storage is close to disaster response site for immediate access. Electronic replication methods are available for immediate access of information.	• Emergency action plan • Business continuity plan • Vital records manual • Current facility drawings • Personnel security clearance files	Within the first 0–12 hours
Priority 2	Records essential for quick resumption and continuation of business following an emergency	Physical protective storage is close to disaster recovery site for quick business resumption. Electronic methods are quickly accessible, and backups can be quickly restored.	• Current client files • In-progress Accounts Payable and Accounts Receivable • Research documentation • Current contracts and agreements	Within the first 12–72 hours
Priority 3	Records needed to continue essential functions if normal agency information were unavailable for a prolonged period	Physical protective storage is accessible and outside of the disaster area.	• Accounts Payable and Accounts Receivable files • Existing contracts and agreements • Unaudited financial records	After the first 72 hours

This chart is based in part on ARMA International, ANSI-ARMA 5–2003 *Vital Records: Identifying, Managing, and Recovering Business-Critical Records.*

Handout 4.2—Establishing a Duplication Schedule for Essential Records

Duplication schedules for *electronic* records are quite straightforward: Copy the records; move them off site; and rotate the "backup" media, if any, periodically. Not so with fixed media that are harder to copy and update, such as paper and microform.

However, Priority 1 Essential Records are so critical to emergency response that updated copies *must* be located off site.

For other essential records in electronic form, backup copies should be made daily and fully accessible copies should be transferred off site monthly, either through a wide-area network or by physical media, such as tapes, external hard drives, or disks. Off-site software and hardware capable of reading these records are critical to the success of this strategy.

Other essential records not in electronic form should be (1) held in secure and fire-resistant locations while in active office use, and (2) transferred to a secure, fire- and other-hazard-resistant location, such as a fully qualified records center, as soon as their current business use has passed. Earlier copying of the most important of these by paper duplication, electronic imaging, or microform for off-site storage will substantially reduce the risk of loss and improve chances of an early return to business after an emergency.

Table 1: Factors for Establishing a Duplication Schedule for Essential Records

ESSENTIAL RECORDS SUCH AS:	THAT MAY CHANGE:	LIKELY WORKING MEDIA:	RECOMMENDED METHOD AND MEDIA FOR COPIES	COMMENTS
Geographic Information System (GIS) data and images; large databases containing financial information	Continuously	Electronic, possibly photographic prints	Electronic—Mirroring	Priority should be given to moving these records to electronic form for ease of duplication and safeguarding.
Priority 1 Essential Records • General Emergency, Records Emergency Action Plans (REAP), and Continuity of Operations (COOP) Plans • Delegation of authority • Infrastructure and utility plans; maps and building plans • Emergency contact information • E911 addressing data	Daily	Paper and electronic	Electronic—Tape or Disk	Priority should be given to moving these records to electronic form for ease of duplication and safeguarding. Routine backup on separate media for each business day.
Priority 1 Essential Records, continued.	Weekly	Paper and electronic	Electronic—Tape or Disk	Retain a cumulative backup for the month, releasing the media holding weekly data for reuse. Ensure that fully accessible copies are made, with supporting software and hardware for recovery.
Priority 1 Essential Records, continued.	Monthly	Paper and electronic	Electronic—Tape	
Birth, death, marriage, adoptions, land titles, and other vital personal information; payroll; insurance; delegation of authority; current ordinances, laws, policies, directives	Rarely, though new records may be added periodically	Electronic, sometimes paper and/or microfilm	Microfilm remains the best method of preservation for paper records that change infrequently and that must be protected against unauthorized alteration.	If records are created electronically, follow the advice for records that change monthly (see above).

Handout 4.4—Essential Records Template

Table 1: Essential Records Template

ESSENTIAL RECORD*	FORMAT(S) OF RECORD	ACCESS PRIORITY LEVEL (SEE KEY)	ACCESS TIMEFRAME	LOCATION OF ORIGINAL (INCLUDE COMPUTER NAME & PATH FOR ELECTRONIC RECORDS)	ACCESSIBLE AT ALTERNATIVE FACILITY?	BACKED UP AT THIRD LOCATION	MAINTENANCE FREQUENCY	PREVENTION/ MITIGATION STRATEGIES
Example:								
Delegation of Authority	Hardcopy and PDF file	Priority 1	Immediately, within 0–12 hours of the event	Deputy Administrator's Office, Washington Grove facility. GBaxter on 'gandalf\userdirs$\My_Documents\Disaster\DofA'	Records storage facility	Office of the Administrator, Springfield Facility, 2nd floor, Office 213b, top drawer of file cabinet next to secretary's desk	Bi-weekly	Backup tapes of Gandalf server

* Not every distinct essential record needs to be listed. Record series may suffice (e.g., death certificates, obviously, may be listed once), if at the same location and on the same medium or media.

Table 2: Priority Level Key

PRIORITY LEVEL	DESCRIPTION
Priority 1	Essential for emergency operations and therefore needed immediately—in the first few hours—to respond to the emergency.
Priority 2	Records that are needed to manage the incident and resume operations.
Priority 3	Records needed to continue essential functions if normal agency records were unavailable for a prolonged period. These include records that are needed off site to work on specific programs or projects most critical to the agency's mission.