



## Digital Records Management Policy

### Policy Summary:

In response to challenges like limited staff, efficiency, space constraints, and access difficulties for records, Hubbardston has taken proactive steps to revamp its record-keeping approach. The town successfully adopted a comprehensive Document Management System (DMS) in 2023 to address these issues. This policy lays out the roadmap for the DMS, detailing its purpose, benefits, sustainability plan, and operational measures.

The policy's main aim is to establish clear guidelines for using the DMS within the organization. The Laserfiche-powered web portal serves as Hubbardston's designated digital document management system. By implementing this policy, the town seeks consistent document storage, retention, and destruction practices within Laserfiche.

The DMS implementation revolves around key objectives:

- Enhancing document retrieval and storage efficiency.
- Optimizing office space by transitioning from physical storage to digital, improving services, and avoiding unnecessary costs.
- Strengthening public access to records through the town website, promoting transparency and trust.

This shift to digital document management reflects Hubbardston's commitment to efficiency, resource management, and transparent service. The policy covers document uploading, retention, security, access, and departmental responsibilities. Failure to adhere to the policy could lead to disciplinary actions. Periodic reviews will ensure its alignment with changing needs and legal requirements.

Standardized Operating Procedures will be developed in accordance with the accepted policy.



## **Town of Hubbardston Digital Records Management Policy**

In light of the challenges posed by constrained staff efficiency, limited space availability, and difficulties in accessing records, the Town of Hubbardston has proactively undertaken a transformative approach to its record-keeping practices. Acknowledging the urgent requirement for a more efficient and accessible solution, the town successfully implemented a comprehensive town-wide Document Management System (DMS) in 2023. This policy serves as a definitive roadmap outlining the objectives, benefits, sustainability plan, and measures that ensure operation of the DMS.

### **Purpose of the Document Management Policy**

The primary purpose of this policy is to establish clear guidelines and procedures for the use of the DMS within the organization. The web portal, powered by Laserfiche technology, serves as the designated digital document management system for the Town of Hubbardston. By implementing this policy, the town seeks to ensure that all employees adhere to consistent and standardized practices for document storage, retention, and destruction within the Laserfiche platform.

### **Objectives**

The core objectives driving the implementation of the Document Management System are rooted in the town's commitment to enhance its administrative processes, resource utilization, and public service offerings. The key goals are as follows:

- A. **Improve Document Retrieval and Storage Efficiency:** The current document storage practices involve dispersed files and varied retrieval methods, leading to time-consuming searches and reduced staff productivity. By adopting a streamlined and standardized DMS, the town aims to eliminate the inefficiencies associated with manual searches and ensure swift access to information for timely decision-making.
- B. **Optimize Space Utilization:** Hubbardston faces the challenge of space limitations within its offices, primarily due to the reliance on physical file cabinets for record storage. With the implementation of the DMS, the town seeks to reduce the physical storage footprint, creating more open spaces thus enhancing resident services, and avoiding costly leases for additional space.
- C. **Enhance Public Access to Records:** In a digital age where information accessibility is critical, the town recognizes the importance of providing convenient and transparent access to public records. By utilizing the DMS to offer 24/7 public-facing access to records through the town's website,

Hubbardston aims to foster greater trust, engagement, and accountability among its residents. The successful realization of these objectives through the implementation of the Document Management System will undoubtedly mark a significant leap forward for the Town of Hubbardston, empowering its staff, optimizing resource utilization, and reinforcing the principles of transparency and public service at the core of its operations.

### **Applicability**

This policy and procedure apply to all employees of the organization whose documents have been placed on the Laserfiche web portal. This group includes, but is not limited to, the Office of the Town Administrator, Town Accountant, Land Use, Assessor, Building, Board of Health, and Human Resources.

### **Policy**

#### Uploading Documents

- A. Employees are required to upload all relevant and necessary documents to the Laserfiche web portal within 30 days of their creation or receipt. This ensures timely and efficient storage of documents and allows for easy access and retrieval when needed.
- B. Editor Access to the Laserfiche web portal will be granted to authorized employees only, as determined by the Town Administrator.
- C. Each employee is responsible for uploading their respective documents to the portal, ensuring appropriate indexing and categorization for easy retrieval.
- D. Documents should be saved in a standardized and approved format to maintain consistency and compatibility across the system.
- E. Senior work-off assistance will be provided on a first-come, first-served basis to eligible individuals who seek it, as applicable.

#### Document Retention and Destruction

- A. The retention period for physical documents stored in the Laserfiche web portal will be determined based on the commonwealth of Massachusetts document retention policy, legal requirements, and industry best practices.
- B. All document destruction requests must be approved through the Records Management Unit, Massachusetts State Archives at Columbia Point. Please see the Office of the Town Clerk for the application and contact info. If you are requesting to destroy documents that have been scanned, please check with the Office of the Town Clerk for resources and information to help determine if permission is necessary.
- C. The Office of the Town Clerk will regularly distribute document retention schedules to ensure compliance and make necessary updates based on legal or regulatory changes. Any questions on the retention schedule can be directed to the Office of the Town Clerk.

#### Data Security and Access

- A. Employees are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality and security of documents uploaded to the Laserfiche web portal. Access should be limited to individuals with a legitimate need to view or modify specific documents. If you have a question about public versus private documents, please see the Town Clerk or Town Administrator.

## Digital Management System Maintenance

### A. Responsibility of Departments

1. All departments within the organization are held responsible for the proper maintenance of their respective digital uploads within the digital management system, irrespective of the document format.
2. Each department must develop and implement procedures to ensure the effective organization and management of their documents within the system.
3. The procedures should encompass the classification of records based on the nature of their business purposes, facilitating easy retrieval and efficient record management.

### B. Grouping of Related Records

1. Departments must categorize and group related records together to ensure efficient organization and easy retrieval of relevant information.
2. The grouping should be based on the content, context, and relevance of the records to the department's operations and functions.
3. All records, regardless of their format, should be properly indexed and tagged for quick identification and retrieval.

### C. Authorized Access and Confidentiality

1. The digital management system must be configured to provide authorized access to employees, agents, and individuals who have a legitimate business need for the information.
2. Departments must ensure that access controls are in place to safeguard sensitive and confidential information from unauthorized disclosure.
3. Access permissions should be periodically reviewed and updated to align with changes in staffing or departmental roles.

### D. Quarterly Reviews for Compliance

1. The Office of the Town Administrator will conduct quarterly reviews of the digital uploads and records to ensure compliance with established procedures and standards.
2. Any discrepancies or non-compliance with the procedures should be promptly addressed and rectified by the respective departments.

## Training and Support

- A. The Office of the Town Administrator or designated Laserfiche Vendor will provide training to employees on the proper use of the Laserfiche web portal, including document uploading, indexing, and retrieval procedures.
- B. Employees are encouraged to seek assistance from the Office of the Town Administrator if they encounter any issues or have questions regarding the portal's functionalities.

## Continuous Improvement

- A. Departments are encouraged to seek opportunities for continuous improvement in their document management practices within the digital management system.

- B. Feedback from staff and users of the system should be actively sought and considered to enhance the system's effectiveness and usability.
- C. The organization shall regularly assess the overall performance of the digital management system and take necessary measures to optimize its efficiency.

#### Non-Compliance

Failure to adhere to this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination, as determined by the organization's management.

#### Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure its effectiveness and compliance with changing organizational needs and legal requirements.