

## Keeping records

### Guide for employees

This guide explains why keeping employee records are important to Royal Mail Group and what constitutes good record keeping.

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#### Getting help

**Contact your manager if you have any queries about this guide.**

Managers can obtain advice by:

Calling the HR Services Advice Centre on 0845 6060603 / 5456 7100

Managers working for Parcelforce Worldwide should call 0845 6042787 / 5456 4747

For web access please go to:

<https://www.psp.royalmailgroup.com>



# Keeping Records

## Guide for employees

### Overview

This guide explains why keeping records is important, what records should be kept and for how long, and how to keep good records.

Royal Mail Group reserves the right to review this guide periodically, in light of any developments in employment legislation or good employment practice to ensure continuing relevance and effectiveness.

### Why is keeping records important?

As an employer Royal Mail Group has to manage certain statutory and regulatory responsibilities and relies on managers keeping good records to make sure that they are not open to potential liabilities.

Good records can also help managers in their day to day work by allowing them to:

- Make better decisions based on fact
- Know what employee resources are available to meet service requirements
- More accurately assess levels of performance and productivity
- Know what is happening and take appropriate and timely action in cases of:
  - Absence
  - Employee turnover
  - Sickness
  - Accidents at work
  - Lateness
  - Discipline
- Make sure that decisions are fair and consistent across all employees

### What records should be kept?

Managers and HR Services should work together to make sure that accurate and up to date records are kept for every employee.

Formal records should be kept which include information about the employee's:

- **Personal details:** including name, address, emergency contact, date of birth, sex, tax code, national insurance number, bank details, details of any known disability that may affect their ability to work
- **Employment history with Royal Mail Group:** including the date employment began, promotions, present role, job title
- **Terms and conditions of employment:** including pay, hours of work, holiday entitlement, any other benefits, any changes to their terms of employment that have been agreed on a temporary basis such as during a period of rehabilitation back to work
- **Attendance details:** including lateness, sickness, any other authorised or unauthorised absence e.g. holiday, maternity or paternity leave
- **Accidents on duty:** including any accidents connected with work and any administration of first aid. All levels of accident should be recorded
- **Any disciplinary action:** including notes from any formal meetings,

outcomes of any meetings and records of any incidents of minor misconduct as recorded on PSP

- **Details of termination of employment**

In Royal Mail Group these records should be kept in the archives and/or locally in a secure place or recorded on our IT systems.

In some situations it is also appropriate for informal records to be kept by the manager. These may take the format of notes in the manager's diary rather than a specific file note in the employee's record.

For example:

- **Informal resolution of attendance issues:** where the employee's attendance is causing the manager concern but has not triggered a formal process, the manager may informally discuss the issue with the employee. The manager may make a note of the outcome of this discussion
- **Informal resolution of conduct issues:** where an employee has been accused of minor misconduct or where the manager's fact finding does not find probable evidence that an employee has breached the agreed standards of conduct
- **Informal resolution of performance issues:** notes of any informal resolutions where an employee's performance is slipping below the agreed levels but has not yet reached a point where it is appropriate to discuss this formally
- **Informal resolution of complaints:** where the employee makes an informal complaint about a manager or an employee and this is resolved outside the formal procedure

More generally managers should keep written records or notes of:

- Any disciplinary action taken, in particular disciplinary hearings
- Meetings with workplace representatives, including union representatives
- Individual and collective redundancy consultation meetings and agreements
- Negotiations relating to information and consultation agreements

### What are "good" records?

All records should have the following characteristics

- **Be accurate:** It is very important that all records are accurate as any discrepancies may be challenged at a later date. Managers may check the accuracy of records with the employee, or, if the records relate to a meeting or incidence, check the accuracy with witnesses. In the situation where formal notes have been taken during a meeting, the employee should be sent a copy of the notes and given the opportunity to make amendments as they see appropriate. Both the original version and the copy with any amendments made by the employee should be retained on the employee's file. Managers should make a record of any conversations, meetings etc as soon as possible to ensure accuracy
- **Be up to date:** In order to ensure that all records are up to date managers should periodically review employees' files. Managers should record any incidents, meetings or other matters in a timely manner to make sure that an employee's record is always up to date
- **Contain details of any formal discussions between the manager and the**

**employee or any other party:** All relevant discussions between the manager and any other party including the employee should be filed in the employee's record. This includes details of any fact finding interviews

- **Be held securely and locally in accordance with the Data Protection Act:** Further information about the Data Protection Act is provided below. For advice on where and how to secure data about an employee, managers should contact the HR Services Advice Centre

### Responsibility for taking accurate notes during meetings

The following tips can help an employee or manager who is asked to take notes during a meeting.

- **Understand the meeting:** Meeting minutes have no value if they are not accurate. Names and terms, especially any jargon, must be spelled correctly. One way to make sure that minutes are easily understood is for the note taker to prepare before the meeting and make sure they understand the agenda and related documents, such as minutes from previous meetings, related hearings or interviews
- **Leave enough time:** For preparation, for the meeting itself and to write up minutes. Meeting minutes that are written up promptly are more likely to be accurate and will therefore be more effective
- **Remain neutral.** In formal meetings the appointed note taker must not talk or engage in debates or conversation. They should remain objective and should show no personal interest in the outcome of the meeting. When writing up the notes they should ensure that these are objective and unbiased

After any meeting, the note taker should send the notes to the manager to ensure that all of the information was captured correctly and make any amendments where necessary. The manager should then send the notes to the employee so that they may make any amendments. A copy of the notes with and without the amendments should be stored locally.

Royal Mail Group does not allow recordings of meetings. Any requests to record meetings should be refused. The written record of meetings forms the basis of decision making in Royal Mail Group.

### The Data Protection Act

All records should be kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. This is the legal guideline as to how, where and why data about an employee must be kept.

The key points of the Act are that personal data should be:

- Processed fairly and lawfully
- Obtained only for specified and lawful purposes and shall not be processed in any manner incompatible with those purposes
- Accurate and where necessary kept up to date
- Kept for no longer than is necessary for the purposes for which it is processed
- Subject to appropriate technical and organisational measures to protect against unauthorised or unlawful processing and accidental loss, destruction or damage

**How long records** By law certain records must be kept for a set period of time. Details of the

**should be kept?**

statutory retention period for different types of record are set out below.

However, it is a good idea to keep records for a period of six years (five in Scotland) to cover the time limit for bringing any civil legal action against the business, including national minimum wage claims and contractual claims. Some examples are shown below:

Type of record	Statutory retention period
Grievance Stage 1 & 2	Life of employment plus seven years
Absence declarations	Life of employment plus seven years
Other Time Off ( Special Leave)	Return to Work plus seven years
Records & case Papers relating to appeals	Closure of appeal plus six months
Employment Tribunal- witness bundles	Up to & including the ET hearing (including any appeal) plus one year
Maternity Leave	Return to work plus one year
Annual holiday records	Current year plus seven years

**Where to go for further information**

For further information please refer to the contact details, entitled 'Getting Help', on the front page of this guide.

In addition the following guide should be read in conjunction with this policy:

- *Information Management IM05- Records Retention Policy* which can be found on the Group Policies intranet site - [https://intranet.royalmailgroup.com/CompanySecretarysOffice/Pages/group\\_policies\\_information\\_management.aspx](https://intranet.royalmailgroup.com/CompanySecretarysOffice/Pages/group_policies_information_management.aspx)