

AUDIT ALERT

Purpose of Audit Alerts: To quickly communicate significant audit issues or concerns about fraud, waste, or abuse which have come to the attention of the Division through an audit or otherwise which require immediate action or review by management.

April 29, 2009



Dennis J. Gallagher
Auditor

City Records Storage Site Security and Privacy Risks

Key Issue:

Audit work conducted as part of a citywide Records Management audit determined security and privacy risks related to various court, historical, and personnel files in the basement of the City and County Building.

These risks are a concern for the following reasons:

- Confidential juvenile court case files are exposed to public access;
- Personnel files are stored among public records;
- Access is not monitored; and
- High possibility of original, historical City documents being inappropriately removed and permanently lost.

Overview:

The City and County of Denver's Office of the Auditor initiated a citywide Records Management audit in February 2009. The scope of the audit is to determine if City processes and policies and procedures related to records management are in accordance with laws and regulations and effectively preserve, safeguard, and prevent the improper destruction or disposition of City records and archives.

In order to accomplish our audit objectives, our office conducted initial research to obtain an inventory of the various types of records and files throughout the City. During this process, we identified a storage area consisting of two rooms housing records for various agencies located in the basement of the City and County Building. The Clerk and Recorder Division maintains the key to the storage room. The key can be checked out by members of the general public. An escort is not required to enter and review records in the storage room and there is no monitoring equipment inside the room. Further, there is no copy machine available for members of the public to make copies of public documents housed within the room. This increases the risk that important city records can be removed or altered in an unauthorized manner.

The records in the main storage room contain original deed books, bond certificates, blueprints owned by the City Engineering Office, and other various files. We also identified boxes of City personnel files that contain social security numbers and addresses. These boxes are owned by the Clerk and Recorder's office. The adjacent storage room contains confidential, legally protected juvenile case files maintained by the Courts. While the door

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to this room has a sign indicating that only authorized personnel are permitted inside, the door is unlocked, allowing public access.



City Personnel Files



Juvenile Court Case Files

Recommended Action(s):

We recommend immediate action is taken to secure the confidential records in the storage room in the basement of the City and County Building.

Next Step(s):

The Auditor's Office will complete and issue the citywide Records Management performance audit later this year. The report will include detailed information and recommendations identifying possible records management improvements. It should be noted that this Audit Alert addresses only one component of the objectives related to the audit. Upon completion of audit testing and validations, we expect to identify and report additional issues related to record management.

Contact:

If you have any questions, please contact me at 720-913-5029.

Office of the Auditor

Audit Services Division
City and County of Denver

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "K. Memmott".

Kip R. Memmott, MA, CGAP, CICA
Director of Audit Services

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