



# Vermont State Archives and Records Administration

Office of the Secretary of State

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## REFERENCE ROOM GUIDELINES

The Vermont State Archives and Records Administration (VSARA) welcomes the opportunity to provide public access to records in the State Archives and, when authorized, agency records stored in the State Records Center. To preserve and protect these important records, VSARA has adopted the following guidelines. Your cooperation will help us ensure that these records will be available for the benefit of future researchers.

### HOURS OF OPERATION

1. The Reference Room is open to the public from **9:00 AM until 4:00 PM Monday through Friday**. It is closed on State holidays and days on which the State government is closed or has a reduced workforce due to emergencies or inclement weather.
2. **Requests for records must be submitted to Reference Staff no later than 3:30 PM**. No records will be pulled for researchers after this time.
3. VSARA reserves the right to close the Reference Room without notice; however, when possible, every attempt will be made to keep the room open during normally scheduled hours and provide advance notice of any closings.

### ACCESS AND SECURITY

1. The Reference Room is available to researchers of all ages; however, researchers under the age of sixteen (16) must be accompanied by an adult. The Reference Room unfortunately cannot accommodate individuals who are not conducting research, including any children accompanying a parent or guardian.
2. Registration is required to enter the Reference Room and access records.
  - Researchers visiting for the first time must complete a Researcher Registration Form.
  - Please check in at the Reference Room desk upon arrival.
3. Records in the State Archives and State Records Center do not circulate and may only be accessed through VSARA's Reference Room.
4. The following items are prohibited in the Reference Room:
  - All food and drink, including gum and candy.
  - Purses, briefcases, bags, envelopes, and other enclosed items.
  - Outdoor wear and gear including coats, hats, umbrellas, etc.
  - Pens, markers, colored pencils, highlighters, scissors, rulers, paper "stickies" or tabs, etc.

5. Lockers are available in the Reception Area for patrons to store items that are not allowed in the Reference Room.
  - Lockers are for day use only and locks are available at the Reception Desk.
  - Researchers are responsible for removing their items from the locker and returning the key to the Reception Desk upon leaving the building.
  - VSARA is not responsible for any lost or stolen items.
6. Electronic devices such as laptops, cell phones, and digital cameras are permitted in the Reference Room but must be shown to the Reference staff upon entry into the room.
  - Please turn off or silence all cell phones while in the Reference Room. Please take all calls in the lobby.
  - All electronic devices must remain on the research tables at all times.
7. Agency authorization is required for records in the State Records Center unless VSARA has a written agreement with the agency to open records for public use and inspection.
  - Researchers wishing to access agency records stored in the State Records Center must have written authorization (Form VSARA-03) completed and signed by the agency's head, records officer or records liaison prior to visiting VSARA's reference room. These forms must be faxed or emailed directly to VSARA by the agency prior to the researcher's arrival.
  - In addition to the receipt of Form VSARA-03, a photo ID must be presented and verified by Reference Staff prior to reviewing records.
8. All researchers must permit the inspection of research materials upon leaving the Reference Room if requested.

## HANDLING OF RECORDS, MICROFILM AND OTHER MATERIALS

1. **All records, regardless of format, must be handled with the utmost care.**
  - Original records may not be traced, written upon, or used any place other than the research table. Records must remain on the table at all times.
  - Researchers may not mark or otherwise alter any record at any time.
  - If records are particularly fragile, Reference staff reserve the right to provide alternative means for accessing the records and/or require researchers to use gloves in order to preserve the records.
  - In circumstances where both the paper and a microfilm copy exist for a set of records, researchers must use the microfilm copies unless special authorization to access the paper originals has been granted by the Reference staff.
  - For microfilmed records, proper use of equipment is required at all times to reduce scratches and other damage to the film. Please ask the Reference staff for instructions if you are unsure how to use the equipment.
2. While multiple boxes or films may be requested, only five (5) boxes of records or microfilm reels may be brought to a desk at any given time. **Only one film or box of records may be used and inspected at a time.**
  - For paper records, original order must be maintained at all times. Please notify the Reference staff of any apparent disarrangement.
    - Only one folder may be removed from a box at a time. File separators must be used to mark the removed folder's location.
    - If copies are needed, please ask Reference staff for assistance on how to proceed.
  - For self-service microfilm, researchers are limited to five (5) reels at a time. Reference staff reserve the right to request researchers to return microfilm at any time.
3. Books on the shelves in the Reference Room are available for researcher use. **Please reshelve books in their proper location when finished.** If unsure, please return books to the Reference Desk.

## COPIES

1. **Reference staff will arrange for copies to be made unless the records are on microfilm.** Under limited circumstances, researchers may receive special permission from the Reference staff to do their own copying.
2. Copying requests must be submitted to staff by 3:00 PM to attempt same day service; however, same day service may not be available.
3. Self-service copiers for microfilm and permitted items are available for researcher use in the Reference Room.
4. All fees for copies will be assessed using the [Uniform Schedule of Public Record Charges for State Agencies](#). There is no charge if the daily total for copies does not exceed \$1.00.
  - Payment is on the honor system and should be made at the Reception Desk upon leaving the building.
5. Researchers should be aware of and comply with United States copyright law as it relates to the copying and use of books, publications, and other material which may be subject to copyright restrictions.
6. Researchers may photograph original records with the permission of the Reference staff. Please notify staff if you intend to photograph records.
  - Flash photography and additional lighting or equipment may not be used unless special permission to do so has been granted by the Reference staff.
  - Researchers may not take photographs of other researchers.

## COMPUTERS AND EQUIPMENT

1. The Reference Room has a limited number of microfilm readers, computers and copiers available for researcher use. **Reference staff reserve the right to limit the amount of time researchers may use computers and equipment.**
2. Researchers may use their own microfilm, CDs, software, flash drives, or other media in any VSARA computer with the prior approval of the Reference staff. Please notify staff if you intend to use your own media.
3. Researchers may not use the computers or equipment for any reason other than the use and inspection of records or materials accessible through the Reference Room. Inappropriate use of the computers and equipment is strictly prohibited.