



Vermont State Archives and Records Administration

Office of the Secretary of State

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REFERENCE ROOM RULES AND PROCEDURES (Last Updated: 01/05/2010)

VSARA welcomes the opportunity to serve the public and provide access to records in the State Archives and, when authorized, agency records stored in the State Records Center. Records in the State Archives and State Records Center do not circulate and may only be accessed through VSARA's Reference Room. Please note that some records may not be readily accessible and may take 1-2 days for retrieval.

To ensure the accessibility, security and preservation of records, VSARA has an established set of rules and procedures for its Reference Room. Failure to comply with VSARA's *Reference Room Rules and Procedures* will result in the limitation or loss of Reference Room access and services.

ACCESS AND SECURITY

1. **Registration is required** to enter the Reference Room and access records.
 - Researchers must sign in and out at the Reception Desk.
 - Researchers visiting for the first time must complete a Researcher Registration Form.
 - Visitor badges must be worn at all times.
 - All researchers must check in at the Reference Room upon arrival into the room.
2. **Prohibited items must be stored in the lockers** located in the Reception Area prior to entering the Reference Room.
 - Lockers are for day use only and researchers may only use VSARA issued locks.
 - i. All researchers are offered a key to secure their belongings in a locker.
 - ii. Researchers are responsible for removing their items from the locker and returning the key to the Reception Desk upon leaving the building.
 - The **following items are prohibited from the Reference Room and must be stored:**
 - i. All food and drink, including gum and candy.
 - ii. Purses, briefcases, bags, envelopes, and other enclosed items.
 - iii. Outdoor wear and gear including coats, hats, umbrellas, etc.
 - iv. Office supplies such as pens, markers, colored pencils, highlighters, scissors, rulers, paper "stickies" or tabs, etc.
 - Electronic devices such as laptops and cell phones are permitted but must be shown to the Reference Room staff upon entry into the Reference Room.
 - i. All cell phones must be on vibrate or silence; Researchers may not answer or use their phones in the Reference Room. Please take all calls in the lobby.
 - ii. All devices must remain on the research tables at all times.
 - VSARA is not responsible for any lost or stolen items.
3. **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 Records Center must have written authorization (Form VSARA-03) completed and signed by agency's head, records officer or records liaison prior to visiting VSARA's reference room. These forms must be faxed 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. State employees must have their state issued badge.

REFERENCE ROOM RULES AND PROCEDURES (cont.)

4. 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.**
 - a. 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.
 - i. Researchers may not mark or otherwise alter any record at any time.
 - b. If records are particularly fragile and/or susceptible to further damage, Reference Room staff reserve the right provide alternative means for accessing records or require researchers to use VSARA supplied gloves, whichever is deemed necessary to preserve the records.
 - c. In circumstances where both the paper and a microfilm copy exists 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 Room staff.
 - d. For microfilmed records, proper use of equipment is required at all times to reduce scratches and other damage to the film. If unsure how to use equipment, contact the Reference Room staff for instructions.
 - i. Rewind all film when finished and return to the correct film container.
 - ii. For self-serve films, do not refile films to the cabinet when finished. Place all films in basket at Reference Desk when done.
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 and **only one film or box of records may be used and inspected at a time.**
 - a. For paper records, original order must be maintained at all times. Please notify the Reference Room staff of any apparent disarrangement.
 - i. Only one folder may be removed from a box and accessed at a time. File separators must be used to mark the removed folder's location.
 - ii. If copies are needed, please see Reference Room staff for assistance on how to proceed.
 - b. For self-service microfilm, researchers are limited to five (5) reels at a time. Reference Room 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 staff.

COPIES

1. **Records in their original paper format, including maps, may not be photocopied by researchers** unless special authorization to do so has been granted by the Reference Room staff.
2. **Reference Room staff will arrange for photocopies to be made;** however, same day service may not be available. Photocopying requests must be submitted to staff by 3:00 PM to attempt same day service.
 - Fees for photocopies will be assessed using the *Uniform Schedule for Public Records*. There is no charge if the daily total for copies does not exceed \$1.00.
3. **Self-service photocopiers for microfilm and permitted items are available** in the Reference Room.
 - Payment is on the honor system and should be made at the Reception Desk upon leaving the building.
 - Researchers photocopying material from books and other publications should comply with United States copyright law.
5. Hand-held cameras to take photographs of original, paper records are permitted but must be shown to the Reference Room staff upon entry into the Reference Room.

REFERENCE ROOM RULES AND PROCEDURES (cont.)

- Prior to photographing any records, researchers must notify the Reference Room staff of their intentions and receive permission to proceed.
- Flash photography and additional lighting or equipment may not be used unless special authorization to do so has been granted by the Reference Room 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.
 - a. **Reference Room staff reserve the right to limit the amount of time researchers may use computers and equipment.**
2. Researchers may not use their own microfilm, CDs, software, flash drives, or other media in any VSARA computer without prior approval from Reference Room staff.
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 prohibited. Inappropriate use includes, but is not limited to:
 - a. Unauthorized copying or distribution of State records, information or data.
 - b. The creation, transmission or retrieval of material defined as illegal by Federal, state or local laws or regulations;
 - c. Infringement of copyright or other intellectual property laws and regulations.
 - d. Conducting personal or business related activities that are unrelated to the use and inspection of records or materials accessible through the Reference Room.
 - e. Modifications to any computer or equipment, including software, settings, peripherals, etc.

HOURS OF OPERATION

1. The Reference Room is open to the public from **9:00 AM until 4:00 PM on Tuesday through Friday.**
 - a. The Reference Room is closed on Mondays and all State holidays and days in which the State government is closed or has a reduced workforce situation due to emergencies or inclement weather.
2. Researchers will not be permitted into the Reference Room until 9:00 AM.
3. Researchers must be **prepared to exit the Reference Room at 4:00 PM.** Reference Room staff will remind researchers that the Room is closing approximately 15 minutes prior to closing.
4. Requests for photocopies must be submitted to the Reference Staff by 3:00 PM to attempt same day service; however same day service may not be available.
5. Requests for records from the State Records Center must be submitted to Reference Staff no later than 3:15 PM.
6. The Vermont State Archives and Records Administration (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.