**Compliance**

**Complying with all rules regulations and legislation.**

A major part of compliance is record-keeping. If the station is efficient in keeping records, then reporting requirements to regulatory bodies is made easy. More importantly, in many radio stations people come and go. Keeping good records means that the station’s history is not lost when long-serving workers walk out the door. Good record-keeping also plays a major role in establishing transparency and supporting good governance at the station.

Good recording keeping begins with the Board or Management Committee at the station. The Board plays a vital role in setting the standards of record keeping and ensuring that everyone abides by these standards. Boards should keep clear and concise records of their decisions.

Here are some of the main points that boards should keep in mind:

* Keep clear and concise minutes which include all decisions.
* Keep as attachment to minutes, all of the reports tabled at the meeting (i.e. financial reports, programming committee reports, etc.).
* Keep up-to-date versions of all policies, procedures and forms associated with the station’s business.
* Keep the membership records of the station up-to-date.

A good way of keeping track of the most recent version of a document is to start a version control system in your station. All you need to do is make sure each document has a footer which gives the following information: name of document/date created/date of last review. It is a good idea to review all documents annually. You can create a “master document control log” which is basically a table with all your documents listed and when they are due for review.

Financial record-keeping is also extremely important to the efficient operation of the radio station. The treasurer or person responsible for the financial management of the station should be keeping organised records

These include:

* bank statements
* periodic income expenditure statements including balance sheets
* outstanding bills
* paid bills, receipts and cheque requisitions
* an up-to-date assets list with all instructions and guarantees
* receipt or cash book which documents all money collected on behalf of the station
* insurance policy documents
* lease documents
* funding agreements
* budget
* constitution and annual reports
* correspondence relating to finances, including ATO and ASIC
* GST records and bas statements
* petty cash records

Another area of risk for community radio stations is record-keeping regarding complaints which the station receives.

It is important, according to the Codes of Practice, for all community radio stations to handle complaints efficiently. All stations need a complaints process for internal and external complaints. It is important to keep a complaints register for phone complaints, written complaints and complaints from people within the station. The register entry should enable anyone to track when the complaint was received and what the response was to it (including the date of the response). It should also include whether any further action was required including further responses and internal changes.

It is important to note that many community radio stations have been found in breach of the Codes of Practice because they failed to follow the correct procedure for complaints handling! Check the ACMA website [www.acma.gov.au] if you want to read the details of these cases.

Monitoring what is on air is also part of the responsibility of all community radio stations. Logging everything that goes to air is one form of record-keeping. A radio station must keep these “records” for a specified period in order to be compliant. The technician or technical committee should keep a log of all technical faults. Fault report forms should be available for anyone who uses equipment to fill out. These should be kept in studios and other relevant spaces.

Other areas where you may need to keep records are related to music and copyright. While APRA and other copyright fees are calculated as a percentage of the station income, from time to time you may need to monitor what music is actually being played in a sample week. The dreaded APRA form is a thing of the past if your station has digitised a lot of its music properly. This means including APRA details in any computerised catalogues your station creates.

Finally, where and how you keep all these records is a decision for everyone involved to make. It is important to set rules about access to files if you want to keep them tidy. It is also important to make it clear to everyone that the station owns the documents and they should be kept on the premises at all times. Keeping files on a computer hard drive is acceptable, but you need to address the risk of the computer losing the data (always have a backup) and sometimes you need documents with original signatures. You can’t avoid paper files altogether. Establish a good filing system in your office and arrange the access as appropriate.