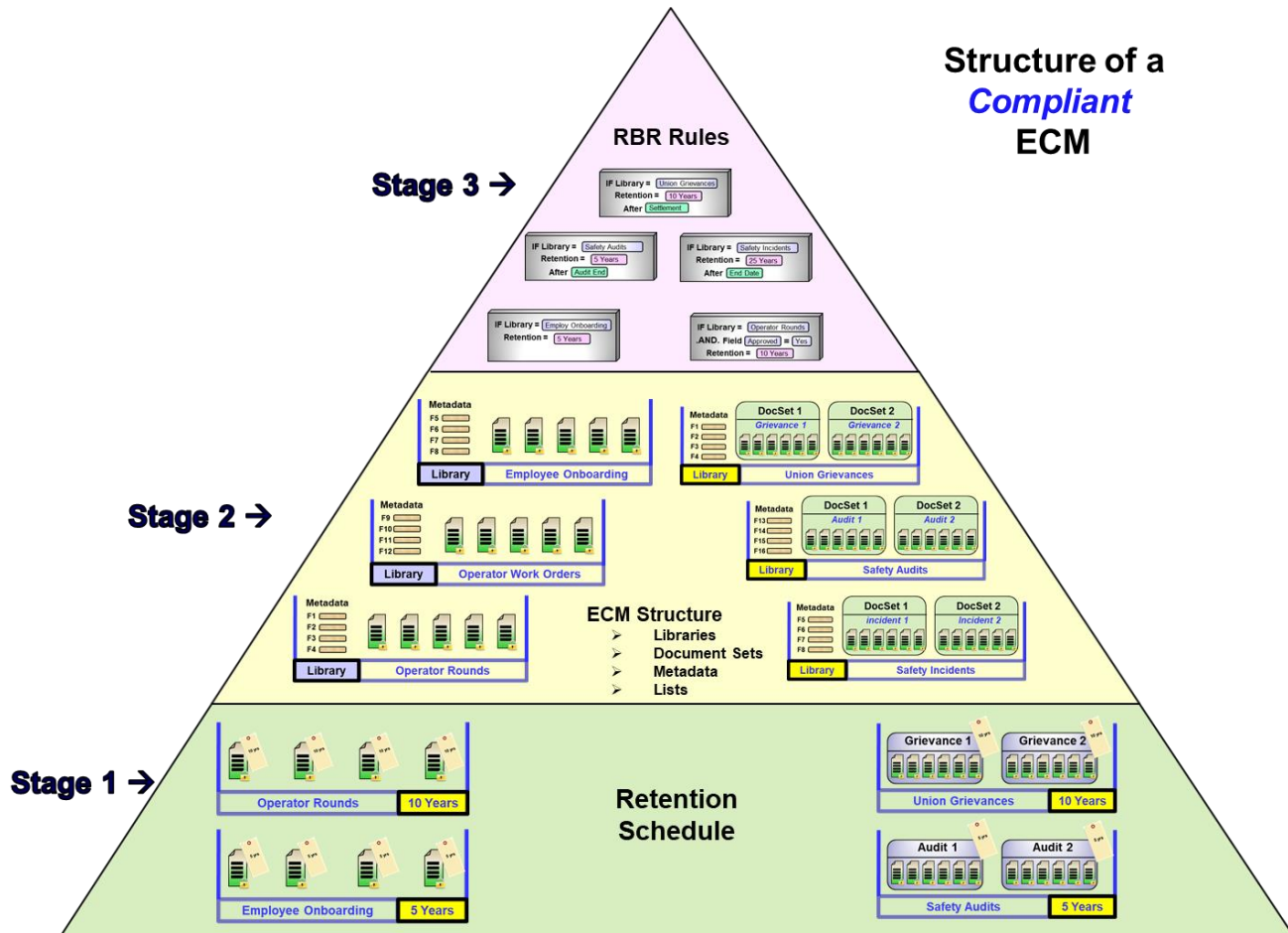




Six “Must-Do’s” for Electronic Recordkeeping Compliance

Why is it so difficult to implement an enterprise-wide **EDRMS** (Electronic Document/Records Management System)? Despite having the technology for years, few organizations have been able to deploy these systems to achieve true recordkeeping compliance. There are three fundamental reasons for this lackluster track record to date:

1. **User Dependence.** We assume that users will invest the time and effort into administrative recordkeeping processes such as deciding which documents to treat as records. Experience has shown that users will **not** contribute to recordkeeping to the extent expected – this is not a safe assumption! We need to automate recordkeeping processes to eliminate this dependence.
2. **Lack of Knowledge.** Once built and deployed, someone has to “drive” these systems. Complex EDRMS systems are difficult to truly master to the level needed for proper pre-implementation design, or for the sustained care and feeding they require once implemented. Too few of the RIM professionals tasked with this key role are provided the resources, technology know-how, or tools necessary to ensure a successful deployment.
3. **Lack of Measures.** Vague descriptions of the benefits of good information governance will not tell you if the system is complying with your recordkeeping requirements. Well-defined, measurable key performance indicators are essential to proving compliance, ongoing health, and overall success of an EDRMS system.



EDRMS systems are absolutely essential in order to achieve recordkeeping compliance, but initially are extremely disruptive to users. They represent a very different *place* to store documents. It takes more *time and effort* to store documents. Documents are *organized* differently. There are new *rules* to follow. Documents are even *deleted*! No wonder most users resist this highly disruptive change. And therein lies the principle challenge to successful implementation – *user adoption*. In reality, EDRMS systems are easy to implement successfully, as long as a content management platform has been successfully deployed, and recordkeeping has been suitably automated in conjunction with the content management platform. The organization must first be switched from existing file shares to a modern content management platform – with full user adoption. Then recordkeeping practices must be embedded in such a manner that users do not have to participate in recordkeeping processes. The key to a successful EDRMS system is **document metadata**, which must be properly leveraged to support necessary RIM compliance. Only then can true, measurable RIM compliance be achieved.

The following six Must-Do's will go a long way to help ensure user adoption and recordkeeping compliance is achieved:

- 1. Modernize Your Retention Schedule.** Most retention schedules are not suitable for EDRMS. A modern EDRMS requires that the schedule specify explicit retention types, handle case records in a certain manner, and allow multiple retention rules per category. The retention schedule can now leverage document-level metadata to implement declaration and retention rules.
- 2. Automate the Recordkeeping.** Use modern Rules-Based Recordkeeping (**RBR**) technology and methods to automate end user recordkeeping processes such as the identification of target records, classification against the retention schedule, and storage location.
- 3. Measure Relentlessly.** Measure the three EDRMS Key Performance Indicators, and measure them often. React before they slip out of range. They are *Qualification* (which documents should be treated as records), *Declaration* (how many documents are being managed as records), and *Classification Accuracy* (what percentage of records are correctly classified).
- 4. Link IT and Records.** In an effective EDRMS setting, the IT and RIM functions must work as a single unified effort – they cannot be separated into distinct roles. RIM compliance specifies that the underlying ECM platform must be configured in a specific, highly prescribed manner. The ECM platform must be structured such that it supports the higher-level rules and behaviours required for compliance. There are many co-dependencies between the ECM platform and the RIM capabilities that must be constructed, perfected, and maintained over time.
- 5. Define the Metadata.** Metadata is the secret to a successful Enterprise Content Management System success. Invest the time to define all the metadata your business could possibly need for operational and retrieval needs. This can be very tedious, and can take months, however it is absolutely essential, as it tailors the system to your business, makes documents far more searchable, and leverages the foundation formed by the retention schedule.
- 6. Build an Acceptable User Experience.** Inevitably, some degree of ongoing end user effort is required to achieve the needed level of user participation – not everything can be automated away. This effort is mostly on the input side—getting documents into the system as well-defined records. The output side – retrieving documents, is a rewarding experience for most users, however everyone needs to make a small investment of effort each time they place a document into the system. Build highly customized document ingestion methods and techniques that minimize this effort, while maintaining the overhead burden required for recordkeeping compliance.

As a general rule of thumb, these Must-Do's should consume a minimum of two thirds of the effort and resources of any modern EDRMS system implementation. In doing so, the odds of a successful implementation, defined by user adoption, compliance with requirements, and proven performance against quantitative measures is virtually assured.

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