

POLICY NAME:	ELECTRONIC SIGNATURES
Effective Date:	March 12, 2025
Rescinded Policies:	N/A
Document Owner:	CAO
Required Review Date:	March 1, 2029, or as required.
References:	Municipal Government Act s. 213 Electronic Transactions Act s. 7(1a-h)

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish the acceptance and usage of Electronic Signatures within the business operations of the County, ensuring they are legally valid and enforceable. By providing flexibility in the execution of municipal records, this policy enhances operational efficiency while maintaining effective internal controls, approval processes, and full compliance with applicable legal and regulatory requirements. County departments may use e-signatures as a valid and legally binding method of authentication and approval, expediting workflow processes, reducing record-keeping requirements, and improving customer service.

POLICY STATEMENT

Woodlands County is committed to modernizing its business operations while ensuring compliance with the *Municipal Government Act* and other applicable legislation. This policy establishes the acceptance and usage of Electronic Signatures in municipal business processes, ensuring that Electronic Signatures applied to County-generated Records are legally valid, enforceable, and aligned with governance best practices.

Electronic Signatures shall be used to enhance efficiency, streamline workflows, and support secure and transparent municipal operations. The County recognizes its responsibility to uphold legal and regulatory standards while leveraging technology to improve service delivery. All Electronic Signatures must meet authentication, security, and verification requirements to maintain the integrity of municipal records.

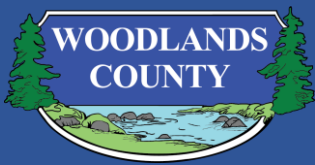
DEFINITIONS

CAO means the Chief Administration Officer for Woodlands County in the Province of Alberta.

County is the County of Woodlands County.

Director(s) are senior management Employees of the County.

Elected Official(s) are persons who are officials by virtue of an election in Woodlands County.



Electronic includes created, recorded, transmitted or stored in digital form or in any other intangible form by Electronic, magnetic or optical means or by any other means that have similar capabilities for creation, recording, transmission or storage.

Electronic Agent means a software program or any other Electronic mechanism means used to initiate an act or to respond to Electronic information, Records or acts, in whole or in part, without review by an individual at the time of the initiation or response.

Electronic Signature means Electronic information that a Person creates or adopts in order to sign a Record and that is in, attached to or associated with the record, and includes Digital Signatures.

Electronic Submission refers to a Record submitted through Electronic means including but not limited to email, web form, facsimile, text messages, external device (i.e. Compact disc, hard disk, and USB flash drive).

Employee(s) is an Employee of Woodlands County.

ETA means the *Electronic Transactions Act, Statutes of Alberta, 2001, Chapter E-5*, and amendments made thereto.

FOIP means the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, Revised Statutes of Alberta 2000, Chapter F-25*, and amendments made thereto.

Handwritten Signature means the adopted and executed scripted name or legal mark of a Person, handwritten by that Person in a preserved ink, with the intention to authenticate a Record.

MGA means the *Municipal Government Act, Revised Statutes of Alberta 2000, Chapter M-26*, and amendments made thereto.

Person(s) refers to Natural Person Power as defined in the MGA, meaning the capacity, rights, powers and privileges that of a natural Person.

Record means a Record of information in any form and includes notes, images, audiovisual recordings, x-rays, books, documents, maps, drawings, photographs, letters, vouchers and papers and any other information that is written, photographed, recorded or stored in any manner, but does not include an Electronic Agent, the software or any mechanism that produces Records.

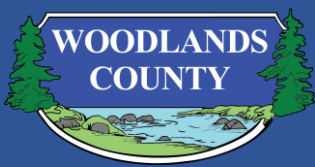
ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITY

All County staff.

GUIDELINES

The County may, for the purposes of respective business operations, establish processes to accept the Electronic Submission of Records bearing Electronic Signatures.

Standards and procedures for Electronic Signature use may vary depending on the process implemented and it will be the responsibility of each department to establish and maintain specific procedures to ensure privacy, security, and reliability are met.



This Policy applies to all County processes that are adopting and implementing Electronic Signature technologies to sign Electronic Records. The technology selected must comply to meet all corresponding legal and legislative requirements. Further, the Electronic technology must be in compliance with all County Bylaws, Procedures, Standards and the Retention and Disposition Schedule and Procedure requirements in each respective process to achieve any necessary Record or security requirements.

No Person shall be compelled or required to use Electronic Signatures. Consent is a mandatory requirement as per legislation and must be reflected in each County process. Where a Handwritten Signature is requested, the County must comply in a physical form relevant to the transaction.

No routine acknowledgement of receipt from the County is required in conjunction with an Electronic Submission. It is the sole responsibility of the Person transmitting an Electronic Submission to ensure that the submission has been received.

The manner in which Electronic Submissions bearing Electronic Signatures are received must be reliable for the purpose of identifying the person(s). No person through the transmission of an Electronic Submission bearing an Electronic Signature shall represent themselves in a way that is false or misleading. Where an Employee believes a misrepresentation has occurred the submission must not be processed and their respective Director must be informed. Either the Director responsible for the business process or the CAO must provide appropriate instruction to the Employee to resolve the transaction. Electronic Signatures shall be accepted or declined at the sole discretion of the responsible Director or CAO. If an Electronic Signature or Electronic Submission is deemed to be false or misleading, the County will refuse the Electronic Signature and Electronic Submission.

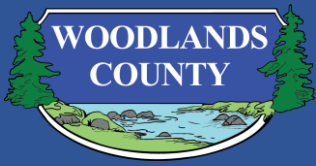
Employees are required to review their Records for accuracy and completeness prior to attaching their Electronic Signature to any Electronic Submission or Record. Further, they are to ensure the Records generated with Electronic Signatures are maintained in accordance with the appropriate retention period.

Non-compliance with this Policy may result in the potential for legal challenges and/or penalties to Woodlands County, its Elected Officials and Employees. Non-compliance with this Policy made by an Employee will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. Breaches made by an Elected Official will be subject to the Council Code of Conduct Bylaw.

Exceptions

The following exceptions to this Policy shall apply:

- This policy must comply with the ETA Section 7(1a-h) Exemptions, as amended therein.
- Electronic Signatures must not be used for the following County Records:
 - Bylaw;
 - Registered Documents;
 - Council Minutes; or
 - Any other Records requiring a Corporate Seal.



ORIGINAL SIGNED

CAO Signature

END OF DOCUMENT