



# **One Box at a Time:**

## **Records and Information Management (RIM) Strategy and Three-Year Plan 3.0**

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Prepared by  
**Public Archives and Records Office**



## Background

Under the mandate of the [\*Archives and Records Act\*](#), the Province of Prince Edward Island is bound to ensure records created and kept by government offices are managed effectively and disposed of responsibly. Since the implementation of the *Recorded Information Management (RIM) Strategy and Three-Year Plan* in 2017, government continues to increase the level of compliance with its records management responsibilities outlined in *the Archives and Records Act*. As part of the strategy, government created and reviewed existing legislation, policies, and procedures, hired full-time records management staff, developed mandatory records management training, increased storage capacity for non-electronic and electronic government records, and developed a compliance monitoring system.

## Goal

The goal of the *Records and Information Management (RIM) Strategy and Three-Year Plan 3.0* is to build on the success of the previous two strategies and to continue to modernize government's records management practices. The strategy also helps to increase the level of RIM compliance in government departments, agencies, and commissions and to ensure that the records of government are maintained and preserved.

## Strategy

Government's approach to RIM for the period covered by this strategy includes the following seven elements:

- 1. Existing legislation, policies, and procedures will be reviewed to ensure they are relevant, practical, and enforceable, and any necessary new policies will be created;**
- 2. Retention and disposition schedules will be created/revised, approved, and implemented in all sections within government;**
- 3. Government staff will be required to have records management training to ensure compliance;**
- 4. Continue to monitor capacity to provide safe and secure storage for government records in all formats;**
- 5. An Electronic Document and Records Management System (EDRMS) will be adopted and implemented;**
- 6. Government records management policies and procedures will be introduced to affiliated public bodies; and**
- 7. Progress in records management practices will be tracked and submitted for each government department, agency, and commission in annual assessments.**

**1. Existing legislation, policies, and procedures will be reviewed to ensure they are relevant, practical, and enforceable, and any necessary new policies will be created.**

Since 2017, more than 100 new records management policies, procedures, guidelines, forms, and templates have been created and adopted.

Since the last strategy, a review of the “Records and Information Management (RIM)” section of the *Treasury Board Policy and Procedures Manual* took place, with updates and revisions becoming effective in December 2023. This manual is a consolidation of approved financial, personnel and management policies, procedures and guidelines for the Government of PEI and is intended to provide a basis for their consistent application throughout all government departments and reporting entities.

New internal documentation was created to further define, identify and assist in effective records management throughout government. Examples include:

- *Records Transfer Guide*: Created for employees and highlights how to properly move records between locations.
- *Records Retention and Disposition Schedule Guide*: Created for RIM employees and highlights how to properly create records retention schedules.
- *Government Transition Guide*: Created to assist employees in navigating the changes created by department reorganizations and changes in minister.
- *RIM Assessment Guide*: Created to assist RIM employees in completing the annual RIM Assessment.
- *Incident Reporting Guide and Form Template*: Created to ensure full and complete documentation around incidents involving records.
- *Archives and RIM Definitions Guide*: Created for employees to help improve communication around RIM practices.

A review of current Tobacco Litigation practices is also underway to clarify the role of departmental Tobacco Representatives, the procedures for reviewing file lists and the process for hold exemptions. The ability to accept and use digital signatures for Records Centre forms is also being examined.

Future reviews on topics such as texting/instant messaging, and vital records are needed.

**2. Retention and disposition schedules will be created/revised, approved, and implemented in all sections within government.**

Records retention and disposition schedules are the foundation of an effective records management program. A records retention and disposition schedule is a document that defines:

- 1) how long to keep records (i.e. how long the record is active or semi-active);
- 2) when, or if, to move records into storage (Provincial Records Centres); and
- 3) what happens to records at the end of their life cycle (i.e. destruction or transfer to the Public Archives).

These documents enable public bodies to effectively use, maintain, destroy or archive records according to their legislative, financial, administrative and historical values.

Since 2017, 296 schedules have been created, reviewed and approved by the Public Records Committee. However, 110 sections within government either require new retention schedules or a review of existing schedules. Having approved retention schedules in place is essential to the implementation of an EDRMS.

### **3. Government staff will be required to have records management training to ensure compliance.**

Government employees are required to complete the government's mandatory *RIM Basics 101* course in order to have the basic knowledge needed to meet their personal records management responsibilities. The course is available in both French and English and in both in-person and online formats. New employees should complete the course as part of their onboarding orientation, and existing employees need to complete the course if they have not already done so.

A revised RIM Basics 101 course will be released in the 2024-2025 fiscal year. This course was revised in order to help improve course completion rates and employee information retention by offering a more user-friendly and succinct RIM overview. A more in-depth RIM Basics 102 course is in development for employees whose work involves more substantial records management responsibilities. Unlike RIM Basics 101, this proposed 102 course will be optional.

PARO is also developing SRMD (Senior Records Management Designate) training. Each public body appoints a SRMD to act as its senior support person for RIM activities. They provide support to their body's RIM Coordinator and ensure that their public body meets RIM objectives and legislated requirements. Training to new and existing SRMDs will be provided in person by senior PARO staff.

### **4. Continue to monitor capacity to provide safe and secure storage for government records, both paper and electronic.**

PARO operates two Provincial Records Centres, one in Charlottetown and one in Slemmon Park (also known as the Summerside Records Centre), for non-electronic records. The Records Centres provide secure off-site records storage and retrieval services for all government

departments and approved agencies, including Health PEI. The Charlottetown facility has been at capacity since 2015 and the Slemon Park site, which opened in October 2017, reached capacity in 2022. Since that time, many departments and agencies have been renting/leasing their own off-site locations as temporary storage options.

In the 2022-2023 fiscal year, funding was approved to expand the current Records Centre at Slemon Park. Work on this expansion project began in January 2024 and it is anticipated that it will be completed during the Fall of 2024. It is likely that the site will re-open in early 2025 and it will be able to start accepting new acquisitions at this time. The issue of having adequate storage space for paper records will need to be continuously monitored, particularly due to the ongoing Tobacco Litigation Hold that has been in place since 2012.

With regard to electronic records, government's Information Technology Shared Services (ITSS) continues to increase server storage to accommodate electronic documents. The demand for server space increases annually.

## **5. An Electronic Document and Records Management System (EDRMS) will be adopted and implemented.**

The implementation of an EDRMS is becoming standard practice in both government and corporate environments as a component of their records management programs. These systems track the creation, revision, classification, retention, circulation, and final disposition of all connected electronic records created by employees.

Since the records to be managed by the EDRMS exist in a variety of electronic environments, the implementation of any EDRMS software needs to be a collaborative effort between government's Information Technology Shared Services (ITSS) and PARO. Before adopting an EDRMS, ITSS recommended the following:

1. Conducting a **Proof of Concept (PoC)** – i.e. an extended period of systematic testing to evaluate the capability of the proposed EDRMS; and
2. **Hiring a temporary Project Manager** to create detailed plans for evaluating the PoC and, if successful, implementing the EDRMS in public bodies.

In 2021, PARO and ITSS issued a public request for proposals (RFP) for an EDRMS. A vendor was selected, and preparations are underway for a period of in-depth proof-of-concept testing. In Spring 2024, a Project Manager was hired by ITSS and a Project Charter document for an EDRMS was developed. In addition, 3 Electronic Records Coordinators have been hired under PARO in preparation for the EDRMS' implementation.

It is anticipated that this initial testing phase will conclude early in the 2025-2026 fiscal year with a go/no-go decision regarding the vendor's solution. If the decision is a "go," the earliest live implementation of any electronic records management system is anticipated to be in late 2025 or early 2026. The rollout of this software will have to be phased – i.e. focusing on 1 specific department, division or agency at a time – to ensure adequate support and training are available to users.

The system-wide rollout of an EDRMS to all government departments and approved agencies will be a long-term, multi-year endeavour.

## **6. Government records management policies and procedures will be introduced to affiliated public bodies.**

In addition to core government departments, the *Archives and Records Act* applies to many affiliated public bodies. The head of a public body is not only responsible for the records in the care and custody of the core department but also is ultimately responsible for the records in the care and custody of any of their affiliated public bodies as defined by *the Archives and Records Act*.

Before introducing records management policies and procedures to affiliated public bodies, work still needs to be done to adequately identify what affiliated bodies are required to follow the *Archives and Records Act*. A review of possible affiliates has been conducted and future revisions to the Act and/or its Regulations may be required before the implementation of RIM practices in affiliates can occur.

Special agreements between PARO and designated public bodies may also be needed prior to RIM practices being implemented. For example, work is currently underway to create an agreement between PARO and the Provincial Courts of Prince Edward Island. This agreement would allow PARO to provide storage and records management services to the Provincial Courts.

## **7. Progress in records management practices will be tracked and submitted for each government department, agency, and commission in annual assessments.**

Government departments, crown corporations, approved agencies, etc. are required to submit RIM Assessments on an annual basis. These assessments are documents created by a public body's RIM Coordinator in consultation with their SRMD (Senior Records Management Designate). Their purpose is to review the activities of the public body, identify their level of overall RIM compliance, and provide recommendations for future improvement. The assessments apply a scoring system that gives each body an overall percentage out of 100%. These documents are tabled annually in the Legislative Assembly of PEI.

## Three-year Development Plan

This strategy will be implemented over the next three years so that government records are managed effectively and disposed of responsibly.

### Year 1:

- Continue to review/create required records management legislation, policies, agreements and procedures;
- Create, revise and approve retention schedules for government bodies;
- Continue implementing the Classification Plan and Retention Schedules (CPRS) for Administrative Records and applying new operational schedules to government records, regardless of format;
- Continue to monitor space needs at the two Provincial Records Centres;
- Continue to work on implementing an EDRMS (Electronic Document and Records Management System) to effectively manage electronic government records including email. Continue cleaning up shared drives in preparation for future EDRMS adoption;
- Achieve a RIM Basics 101 course completion rate of 95% of employees. This percentage covers employees for all departments, agencies, commissions, etc. that fall under the *Archives and Records Act*;
- Introduce an updated RIM Basics 101 course to government employees (including in-person and online options) and new training for SRMDs (Senior Records Management Designates).

### Year 2:

- Continue to review/create required records management legislation, policies, agreements and procedures;
- Create, revise and approve retention schedules for government sections;
- Continue implementing the Classification Plan and Retention Schedules (CPRS) for Administrative Records and applying new operational schedules to government records, regardless of format;
- Continue to monitor space needs at the two Provincial Records Centres;
- Continue to work on implementing an EDRMS (Electronic Document and Records Management System) to effectively manage electronic government records including email. Continue cleaning up shared drives in preparation for future EDRMS adoption;
- Maintain a RIM Basics 101 course completion rate of 95% of employees. This percentage covers employees for all departments, agencies, commissions, etc. that fall under the *Archives and Records Act*;

- Introduce a new RIM Basics 102 course (including in-person and online options) for government employees whose positions contain more in-depth RIM responsibilities. This course would be optional.

**Year 3:**

- Continue to review/create required records management legislation, policies, agreements and procedures;
- Create, revise and approve retention schedules for government sections;
- Continue implementing the Classification Plan and Retention Schedules (CPRS) for Administrative Records and applying new operational schedules to government records, regardless of format;
- Continue to monitor space needs at the two Provincial Records Centres;
- Continue to work on implementing an EDRMS (Electronic Document and Records Management System) to effectively manage electronic government records including email. Continue cleaning up shared drives in preparation for future EDRMS adoption;
- Maintain a RIM Basics 101 course completion rate of 95% of employees. This percentage covers employees for all departments, agencies, commissions, etc. that fall under the *Archives and Records Act*.



## **PARO's RIM Staff Structure**

### **Provincial Records and Information Management (RIM) Officer – Level 19 (1 new)**

- Responsible for the development, implementation and management of PARO's government-wide records and information and management (RIM) program
- Provides leadership and direction to RIM staff and RIM operations across government and oversees the province's two Records Centres

### **Records Analysts – Level 16 (4 existing)**

- Supervises the work of multiple RIM staff
- Supports the RIM Coordinators in developing records retention & disposition schedules for all records and media types
- Advises the RIM Coordinators in researching relevant statutes and analyzing information for proper retention
- Oversees periodic review of retention schedules
- Develops and provides training on RIM practices to RIM team
- Assists with the development of records management policies
- Provides administrative support for the Public Records Committee

### **Electronic Records Coordinators – Level 15 (3 existing)**

- Responsible for overseeing any EDRMS software
- Inputs and maintains retention schedules in the EDRMS
- Inputs and monitors final disposition in the EDRMS
- Assists in the creation of final disposition policies and procedures for the EDRMS
- Sets up electronic folder structures in accordance with retention schedules
- Trains staff in electronic document management
- Provides guidance in the clean-up of shared drives, personal drives, and emails

### **Records Centre Supervisor – Level 15 (1 existing)**

- Supervises the staff and operation at the province's two Records Centres
- Reviews, develops and implements procedures for the safety and control of records at both Provincial Records Centres
- Develops and provides training in Records Centre practices to RIM team
- Liaises with government departments to establish secure transfer and destruction procedures

- Researches and recommends facilities, equipment and supplies appropriate for sorting and storing record material

#### **RIM Coordinators – Level 13 (15.5 existing)**

- Communicates and trains government staff in RIM policies and procedures
- Signs off on records for transfer to storage
- Develops a uniform file classification system
- Tracks all active and inactive records for departments and public bodies
- Develops records retention and disposition schedules for all records and media types
- Ensures long- term accessibility of records regardless of format, including electronic records
- Researches relevant statutes and analyzes information for proper retention
- Helps to develop RIM Policy and Procedures Manuals for departments and public bodies
- Assists in the implementation of EDRMS software within departments and public bodies
- Guides Records Clerks in implementing retention schedules
- Liaises with records staff of affiliated public bodies

#### **Records Management Assistants – Level 10 (2 existing)**

- Assists the Records Centre Supervisor in maintaining the two Provincial Records Centres
- Undertakes file retrievals and returns
- Receives and accessions boxes of records
- Provides first point of contact for Records Centre services
- Prepares and verifies file recall lists
- Prepares and distributes final disposition notices

#### **Records Clerks – Level 8 (4 existing)**

- Implements retention schedules under the guidance of the RIM Coordinators
- Undertakes records clean-up projects
- Conducts and maintains records inventories of all departmental records
- Creates and labels files for department records
- Prepares boxes and paperwork for records transfers