
SECTION 5

RECORDS AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

5.03 CORE PROGRAM ELEMENTS

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PUBLIC ARCHIVES AND RECORDS OFFICE

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5.03 CORE PROGRAM ELEMENTS

The elements which a public body must have in place in order to operate a basic records and information management program and satisfy the requirements of the Public Archives and Records Office (PARO) are as follows:

- (1) Records and Information Management Implementation Plan;
- (2) Records and Information Management Designates;
- (3) Public Body Records and Information Management Policies and Procedures Manual;
- (4) an up-to-date inventory of all records held by the public body;
- (5) a File Classification Plan;
- (6) records retention and disposition schedules for all records;
- (7) filing centres; and
- (8) Electronic Records Management Plan.

(1) RECORDS AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Records and Information Management (RIM) Implementation Plans, also known as RIM Strategic Plans or RIM Action Plans, serve as the foundation for all RIM achievements of public bodies. Public bodies are requested to consult with the PARO to initiate a records and information management implementation plan. This plan will outline the goals and objectives of the public body in its endeavour to incorporate records and information management into the daily operations. Each public body should outline a strategy on how it plans to reach its goal.

Standards:

- (a) All plans should include ways to accomplish the objective, a timetable for the planned action, and a cost projection, if feasible.
- (b) The implementation plan shall be reviewed periodically for revision or amendments.

(2) RECORDS AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT DESIGNATES

Public bodies are required to designate staff to be responsible for the public body's RIM program and to serve as a primary contact with the PARO.

Designates have been identified at two levels:

Senior Management Level (Accountability)

This Senior Management Designate has overall accountability for the public body's records. The designate is assigned by the public body's Deputy Head or equivalent and should be at minimum an employee at the director level or equivalent.

Activity Level (Responsibility)

The activity level designate is responsible for the daily implementation, maintenance and administration of the public body's records and information management program. The designate may be a RIM Coordinator assigned to the public body by the PARO or a RIM Coordinator employed by the public body itself.

Standards:

- (a) The RIM Coordinator(s) assigned by the PARO will report to the Provincial Archivist, or designate, and will also have a matrix reporting relationship to the Senior Records Management Designate assigned by the public body.
- (b) The RIM Coordinator(s) employed by a public body should have a direct, or indirect, reporting relationship with the Senior Records Management Designate assigned by the public body. The RIM Coordinator(s) will also liaise with the Provincial Archivist, or their designate, and a Records Analyst with respect to all aspects of the public body's RIM program.
- (c) The Provincial Archivist must be notified in writing by the public body's Deputy Head, or equivalent, of the names of all designates and be kept informed when staff changes to these positions are made.

(3) PUBLIC BODY RECORDS AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

Written policies and procedures must be made available to all staff to explain the public body's records and information management program. These internal policies and procedures should clarify employees' responsibilities in regard to records and information management and define specific procedural guidelines appropriate to each public body. It should also include internal policies and procedures concerning the operation of filing centres.

The public body's policies and procedures should take the form of a policy and procedures manual.

Standards:

- (a) Public bodies must have a public body records and information management policy and procedures manual. It should be maintained by the RIM Coordinator and issued

and endorsed by the Senior Records Management Designate or the Deputy Head or equivalent.

- (b) Records and information management policy and procedures manual should be reviewed and updated on a regular basis to ensure its relevance.
- (c) Records and information management policy and procedures manual should contain the PARO RIM policies and procedures which have been issued for use by all public bodies.
- (d) No policies and procedures created by a public body may contravene any policies, procedures, guidelines, templates and forms issued for use by the PARO.

(4) UP-TO-DATE INVENTORY OF ALL RECORDS HELD BY THE PUBLIC BODY

An inventory of information holdings is the first step in establishing a RIM program. An inventory provides the basis for long-term RIM planning, efficient organization of records and records scheduling. It also allows for the subsequent identification of defunct and new record series.

Public bodies undertake two types of inventories: a locations inventory, which is an inventory of the physical location of records housed in all public body worksites (that is, central filing centres, filing cabinets, desk drawers, storage rooms), and a detailed file inventory, which records the name and specific location of every individual file (that is, lists of the names of all files located in a box or filing cabinet).

Standards:

- (a) All records in all offices of public bodies must be inventoried.
- (b) The information collected about the records must include all those elements on the “Inventory Template” commonly used by the PARO.
- (c) The inventory should be kept current with annual updates.

(5) FILE CLASSIFICATION PLAN

A file classification plan identifies and organizes records into categories in order to facilitate their retrieval, description, control and disposition. In Government, these categories typically correspond with business activities or functions. Public bodies are required to have file classification plans. They often have two types of file classification plans, one for administrative records which are common to all public bodies and one for their own specific operational records. Record systems and retention schedules are organized according to the file classification plans.

Standards:

(a) Administrative Records:

All public bodies should organize and schedule their administrative or common records according to the plan provided in the **Classification Plan and Retention Schedules (CPRS)**.

Public bodies with an established system should use the scheduling information found in the CPRS and develop plans to convert their existing file plan. When new systems are being established, the CPRS is to be used.

(b) Operational Records:

All public bodies must create Operational Records Systems (ORS) which include classification systems used to code the retention schedules and records series. The most common classification system in use by Government is the block-numeric system and it is recommended for the organization of operational records.

(6) RECORDS RETENTION AND DISPOSITION SCHEDULES FOR ALL RECORDS

All records created and/or maintained by a public body must be identified and described with a records retention and disposition schedule. The schedule determines the length of time the records should be maintained within the public body (the active stage), how long they should be maintained at the Provincial Records Centre or other storage area under control of a public body (semi-active stage), and what their final disposition should be (destruction or transfer to the Public Archives). Under the authority of the *Archives and Records Act*, the Public Records Committee approves records retention and disposition schedules for use by a public body. The schedules come into effect when approved by the Public Records Committee.

Standards:

- (a) all operational records created and/or maintained within a public body must be scheduled;
- (b) all administrative records should be scheduled under the Classification Plan and Retention Schedules (CPRS) published by the PARO;
- (c) semi-active records must be transferred to a Provincial Records Centre or a public body controlled facility for storage on a timely basis, according to the records retention and disposition schedule;
- (d) all records should be securely destroyed or safely transferred to the Public Archives in accordance with their approved final disposition as set out in the appropriate records retention and disposition schedule(s); and

- (e) public bodies must use the PARO approved guidelines, procedures, templates, and forms when implementing records retention and disposition schedules.

(7) FILING CENTRES

Each public body should have recognizable filing centres* (whether centralized or decentralized, in head office and in satellite offices) which are under the control of the public body's RIM Coordinator (directly or indirectly).

*NOTE: Filing centres can hold any single type of records: paper, microforms, maps, plans and drawings, photographs, films, videos, etc.- or any combination of types.

Standards:

- (a) all records (apart from working files) are to be maintained in a filing centre rather than in private offices;
- (b) filing centres must be adequately staffed to allow the provision of sufficient opening hours throughout the day;
- (c) procedures must be in place to accommodate after-hours use of records;
- (d) adequate accommodations and modern equipment and supplies must be provided to the filing centre. For example: the current standard file folder is 14-point, kraft, 9 1/2 X 14 3/4";
- (e) filing centres should be secure areas with physical barriers in place to prevent general access; and
- (f) access to information must be controlled by the use of a charge-out system. Access to confidential information must also be restricted.

(8) ELECTRONIC RECORDS MANAGEMENT PLAN

An electronic record or electronic file is information recorded by a computer and is produced or received in the initiation, conduct or completion of a Government activity. It is intended to be used as a record in electronic form and/or printed output. Electronic records may take the form of text or word processing files, email messages, spreadsheets, data stored in databases, website pages, content on social media sites, mobile device messages such as text messages or voice messages, digital photographs/images, CAD files, or digital sound or video recordings.

All electronic records, including email messages, created or received by public bodies must be managed, preserved, or disposed of in accordance with the *Archives and Records Act* as well as with any approved records management policies, procedures, guidelines, and records retention and disposition schedules.

Standards:

- (a) Public bodies must ensure that the electronic records in their control and custody are accessible, legible, understandable, usable and transferable throughout the life cycle of the records, from creation to final disposition.
- (b) Public bodies must maintain and organize electronic records in their control and custody in accordance with approved records retention and disposition schedules, either within Government-controlled network drives or within an electronic document and records management system.
- (c) Public bodies must transfer to the Public Archives all records which have been deemed to be of archival value in a manner which ensures the records are accessible and legible.
- (d) Public bodies must securely dispose of electronic records in accordance with timelines outlined in approved RIM processes and records retention and disposition schedules.

(9) INTERPRETATION

In cases where an interpretation is required, such should be referred to the Public Archives and Records Office, who will make the interpretation, or refer the matter to the Secretary to Treasury Board to determine if a Treasury Board decision is deemed necessary.