

Official and Transitory Records Directive

Data and Content Management Division, Enterprise Content Management Branch
Version: 1.1

Approved by: Alberta Records Management Committee	Owner: Executive Director, Enterprise Content Management Branch	
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Contact: GoA.InformationManagement@gov.ab.ca	Policy Instrument type: Directive	

Directive Statement

All records in the custody and/or under the control of the Government of Alberta (GoA) must be determined as either official or transitory. Whether a record is official or transitory impacts the information management (IM) requirements and obligations to which the record is subject—including who is authorized to dispose of the record.

Regardless of whether a record is official or transitory, all records must be managed in accordance with government IM policy instruments (e.g., relevant records retention and disposition schedules).

Authority

This directive is issued under the authority of the [Government Organization Act](#) and the [Records Management Regulation](#).

Under the Records Management Regulation, Technology and Innovation has the authority to establish, maintain, and promote the enterprise policies, standards, and procedures for the creation, handling, control, organization, retention, maintenance, security, preservation, disposition, alienation, and destruction of records in the custody and/or under the control of a Government of Alberta department or departments.

Application

This directive applies to all departments defined under section 14 of Schedule 11 of the *Government Organization Act* and agencies, boards, and commissions as defined in Schedule 1 of the [Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Regulation](#).

Agencies, boards, and commissions that are not contained within Schedule 1 of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Regulation are encouraged to align with this directive.

Definitions

Record: As per the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP) Act*. “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 software or any mechanism that produces records.

Transitory records: As per the [Transitory Records Schedule](#), transitory records contain information in any format that is of temporary or limited usefulness. Transitory records may be used in the preparation of more complete records such as those that document actions, recommendations, opinions, decisions, approvals, or the creation and modification of policy instruments. However, transitory records are not relied on as evidence of government activities, events or transactions or to understand the delivery of programs or services.

Official records: Established by specification 2 of this directive.

NOTE: The GoA Content Management Policy includes additional definitions (e.g., disposition, destruction, records retention and disposition schedules, etc.) of key content management concepts that can support a common understanding and implementation of the directive.

Directive Description

This directive defines official and transitory records for the purposes of the GoA's records management program and reinforces established IM requirements.

The statements in this directive are expanded upon in the [Identifying Official and Transitory Records Guideline](#) and the [Retention and Disposition of Official and Transitory Records Guideline](#).

Directive Specification

1. The GoA's records are legally the property of the Crown in right of Alberta, with some exceptions (e.g., licensed intellectual property).
2. Any record that is not transitory must be managed as an official record.
 - 2.1 Official records are relied on as evidence of government activities, events or transactions, or are needed to understand the delivery of programs. Official records are required to meet legal or financial obligations, or to provide evidence of decision-making activities.
3. If there is any doubt about the status of a record, do not treat it as transitory. Contact a supervisor for clarification. Supervisors may reach out to the appropriate records management contact for information management support as necessary.
4. Official records must be retained in official information management systems (e.g., SharePoint Online, 1GX, enterprise content management systems, file rooms, etc.) as approved by the Information Controller.
 - 4.1 Information Controllers may reach out to the appropriate records management contact (e.g., IM Programs, applicable Senior Records Officers, etc.) for consultation on official information management systems.
5. All records, whether official or transitory, are subject to the FOIP Act, and may be responsive to information access requests and/or litigation.
6. All records, whether official or transitory, must be retained and disposed of in accordance with an approved records retention and disposition schedule.
 - 6.1 The final disposition for all transitory records is destruction. This directive empowers all GoA staff to destroy or delete transitory records in alignment with the Transitory Records Schedule. Transitory records containing sensitive or confidential information must be securely destroyed or deleted.
 - 6.2 The final disposition of official records must be completed by, or in consultation with, the Enterprise Content Management Branch, which is the business area responsible for administering the GoA's records management program.
 - 6.3 The disposition of official records must be:
 - authorized by the Information Controller;
 - documented; and
 - completed in a manner that guarantees complete destruction and adheres to any security or access restrictions.

Compliance

Non-compliance with this directive could result in the loss of content; breach of confidentiality; breach of privileged information; significant impact to GoA's proprietary rights; damage to GoA's reputation; exposure of Albertans to harm; and/or incurrence of unnecessary costs (including, but not limited to, inability to respond appropriately to a claim in court).

Depending on the severity of non-compliance:

- either informal or formal requests and/or follow-ups may be made by Data and Content Management Division, Innovation, Privacy and Policy Division, Corporate Internal Audit Services, Cybersecurity, Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner, Office of the Auditor General and/or Public Service Commission, and
- legislated disciplinary action (i.e., [Public Service Act](#)) may be taken.

References and Supporting Resources

- [Identifying Official and Transitory Records Guideline](#)
- [Retention and Disposition of Official and Transitory Records Guideline](#)
- [Information Controller and Information Custodian Directive](#)
- [Content Management Policy](#)

Contact

For information management support, please contact [IM Programs](#) or GoA.InformationManagement@gov.ab.ca.