

Official and Transitory Records Directive

Data, Information and Privacy Services Division, Data, Information and Records Services Branch

Version: 1.0

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Directive Statement

All records in the custody and/or under the control of the Government of Alberta must be classified as official or transitory. Classifying a record as 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 transitory or official, 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](#).

Application and Scope

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.

Directive Description

This directive defines transitory and official records for the purposes of the Government of Alberta’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 Government of Alberta’s information is 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.

OFFICIAL AND TRANSITORY RECORDS DIRECTIVE

- 2.1 Official records are required to document actions, recommendations, opinions, decisions, approvals, or the creation of policy instruments and subsequent changes. Official records provide evidence of government activities, events or transactions, and are needed to understand the delivery of programs.
- 2.2 Official records must be retained in official information management systems (e.g., file rooms, enterprise content management systems, etc.) and managed in accordance with the government's information management policy instruments (e.g., records retention and disposition schedules).
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 Sector Information Management Leads and/or Senior Records Officers for information management support as necessary.
4. All records, whether official or transitory, are subject to the FOIP Act, and may be responsive to information access requests and/or litigation.

Compliance

Consequences of non-compliance with this standard could result in the loss of information, damage to Government of Alberta's reputation, exposure of Albertans to harm and/or incurrence of unnecessary costs (including the risk of not being able 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, Information and Privacy Services Division, Corporate Internal Audit Services, Cybersecurity Services, Office of the Information 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](#)

Contact

For information management support, please contact the appropriate [Senior Records Officer](#) or [Data, Information and Records Services Branch](#).