
Managing Information in Ministers' Offices

July 2022



Agenda



Introduction



Records



Safeguarding Government Information



Access Requests

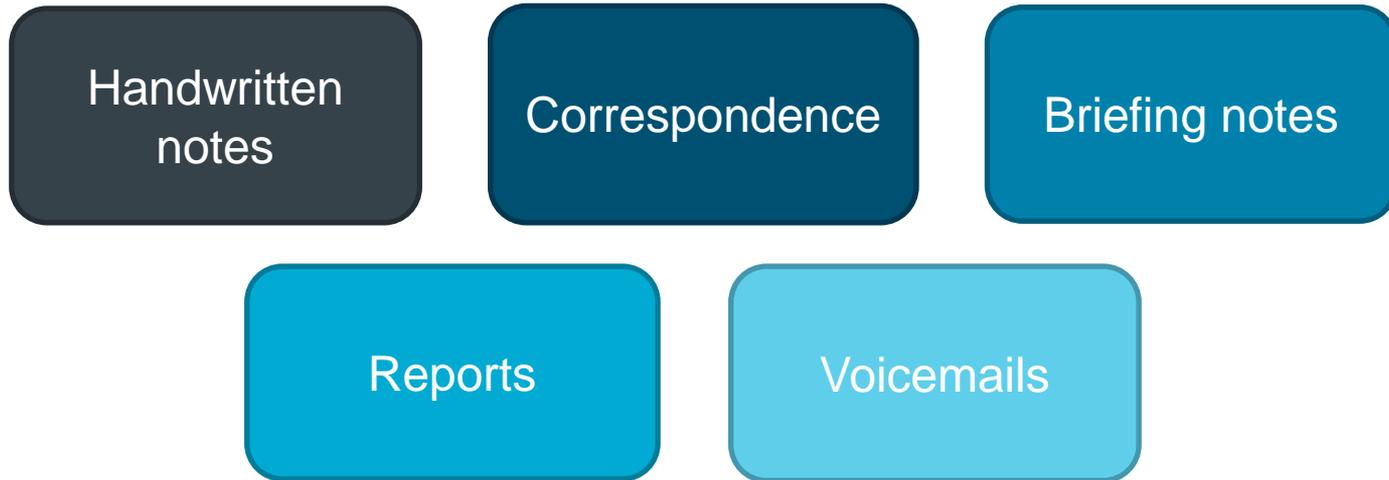
Introduction

- Value of information
- Managing Information – right information is available to the right person, in the right format, at the right time
- Ministerial legacy

Records

Records in the government

A record is recorded information in any form

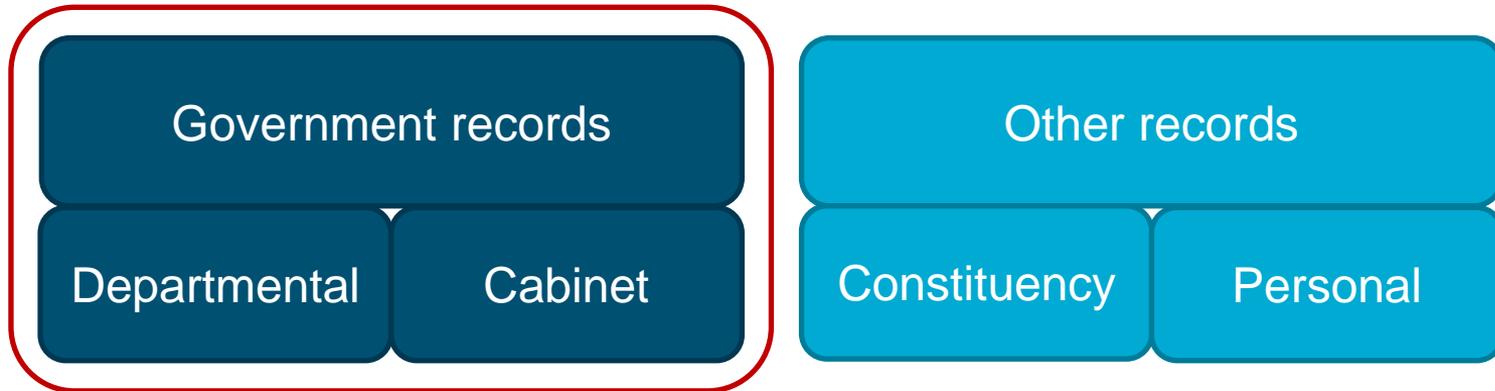


Relevant legislation

Records Management
Regulation (RMR)

*Freedom of Information and
Protection of Privacy (FOIP)
Act*

Types of records in ministers' offices



Official Records

- Enduring value
- Capture decisions and transactions of government
- Must be scheduled
- Are responsive to FOIP requests

If there is any doubt about the status of a record, treat it as official.

Transitory Records

- No long-term value
- Must fit within the scope of the Transitory Records retention scheduled
- Are responsive to FOIP requests

If there is any doubt about the status of a record, do not treat it as transitory.

In practice

Emails

Text or instant
messages

Social Media

Calendar Items

- Are government records (official or transitory)
- Are potentially responsive to litigation
- Are subject to the FOIP Act
- Are subject to the RMR

Capturing email and text message records

- Capture text messages and social media interactions as screenshot(s)
- Forward screenshot(s) to your government email
- Ensure government emails are stored in official repositories

Records disposition



Destroy



Archive

The disposition process stops in the case of a legal hold or a FOIP request.

Safeguarding Government Information

Maintaining confidentiality

Alberta Public
Service Oath of
Office

Code of
Conduct

Employees may not directly or indirectly release information, regardless of its sensitivity, unless they are expressly authorized to do so.

Applying security classification

Public

Protected A

Protected B

Protected C

FOIP Act - Protection of Privacy

- Applies to “personal information”
- Collect personal information only for business needs or other legislated authority
- Limit use and disclosure of personal information to only the circumstances stated in the FOIP Act

Three Key Cybersecurity Protections

- Information technology security services
- Information technology and software support
- Prevention

Physical security



Threats to Information

- Email phishing
- Weak passphrases
 - Example of a strong passphrase: Br1ng me Maple syrup!

GoA Service Desk - (780) 427-1GOA (1462)
Cybersecurity – Cybersecurity@gov.ab.ca
Privacy Services – privacy@gov.ab.ca

Access Requests

Freedom of Information

- Establishes the right to request access to records
- Some records are exempt from the FOIP process
- Disclosure subject to specific limitations
- Initiated by an access request under the FOIP Act
- Formal process in place
- Does not replace other ways to obtain information

Exceptions to Access

- Cabinet or Treasury Board confidences
- Advice from Officials (includes employee deliberations)
- Harm to third party business
- Harm to personal privacy
- Privileged Information (reporter or legal)
- Harm to government relations
- Personal Information

Approval process for access requests

- FOIP delegations
 - Decision-making delegated to one Assistant DM – the delegated decision maker (DDM) – and the departments FOIP coordinator
- FOIP access requests are processed by the FOIP Central Intake Unit assigned to the department
 - Program areas provide records and are consulted on disclosure of information
- Approval process for disclosure
 - Approval package sent to DDM for approval

Roles for political staff

- Communications with minister's office
 - DMs inform MOs and Executive Council about requests of significance
 - DMOs communicate with MOs about FOIP access requests
- Political staff
 - May be required to search for responsive records
 - Ensure FOIP access requests received are efficiently transferred to the FOIP Unit supporting the MO, or to the DMO

Roles of ministers'/deputy ministers' offices

Ministers' offices

Minister

Deputy Minister

Executive Council
and Premier's
Office

Common FOIP myths

- “Confidential” stamp or watermark prevents disclosure
- FOIP Unit releases all records provided by business areas
- FOIP does not apply to transitory and draft records
- Post-it notes or handwritten notes are not subject to the FOIP Act
- FOIP Act does not apply to records provided by an external party
- “Privileged” or “confidential” records cannot be requested

Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner

- Independent oversight
- Monitors administration of the FOIP Act
- Conducts reviews of decisions
- Can issue binding orders
- May conduct investigations

Contacts

ADMO – Data, Privacy and Innovation

FOIP Operations

SA.FOIP-Centralintake@gov.ab.ca

Information Management

SA.InformationManagement@gov.ab.ca

Cybersecurity Office

Cybersecurity@gov.ab.ca

Other Key Contacts

- [Information Management Professionals](#)
- [Information Security Contacts](#)

Training

Online training courses available to GoA employees through the 1GX Learning Management System

- Information Management
- Cybersecurity
- Physical Security
- FOIP

Other Resources

- [Safeguarding Government Information](#)
- [Official and Transitory Records: A Guide for Government of Alberta Employees](#)
- [Official and Transitory Records Flowchart](#)

Related Websites

- [Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy](#)
- [FOIP: Focus on Privacy \(Training\)](#)
- [Personal Information Protection](#)
- [Information management resources](#)
- [Cybersecurity in Alberta](#)
- [PAA Guide to Personal and Family Records](#)

Questions?

