

Records Management Program Standard

Data and Content Management Division, Enterprise Content Management Branch

Version: 1.3

Approved by: Executive Director, Enterprise Information Management, Service Alberta	Owner: Executive Director, Enterprise Content Management	
Approval Date: October 2016	Last Reviewed: February 2025	Next Review: February 2027
Contact: GoA.InformationManagement@gov.ab.ca	Policy Instrument type: Standard	

Standard Statement

This standard provides the foundation for establishing a records management program in the Government of Alberta (GoA)¹.

Authority

This standard 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 standard 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 standard.

Standard Description

This standard will help to ensure:

- the integrity of the records management program;
- the authenticity and reliability of records;
- that appropriate attention and protection is given to all records; and
- that evidence and information contained within those records can be retrieved efficiently and effectively.

Standard Specification

This standard is specified by:

- ISO 15489-1:2016 (E): Information and documentation – Records management – Concepts and principles

ISO 15489-1:2016 (E) is published by the International Organization for Standardization and applies to the management of records in all formats and/or media that are created for and/or received in the conduct of government activities.

Principles of Records Management

Outlined below are the foundational principles for records management programs. For additional information, please consult ISO 15489-1:2016 (E).

¹ Legislative requirements and definitions (e.g., the Records Management Regulation's definition of 'record') are paramount to this standard.

RECORDS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM STANDARD

- the creation, capture and management of records are integral parts of conducting business, in any context;
- records, regardless of form or structure, are authoritative evidence of business when they possess the characteristics of authenticity, reliability, integrity and useability;
- records consist of content and metadata, which describes the context, content and structure of the records, as well as their management through time;
- decisions regarding the creation, capture and management of records are based on the analysis and risk assessment of business activities, in their business, legal, regulatory and societal contexts; and
- systems for managing records, regardless of their degree of automation, enable the application of records controls and the execution of processes for creating, capturing and managing records. They depend on defined policies, responsibilities, monitoring and evaluation, and training in order to meet identified records requirements.

ISO 15489-1:2016 (E) provides the GoA guidance that:

- assists government employees with routine, yet critical, records management tasks;
- establishes a framework to support the management of records;
- establishes a monitoring framework, so that compliance can be measured;
- ensures that records are created, captured, and managed;
- determines the responsibilities of organizations for records and records policies, procedures, systems, and processes; and
- supports the design and implementation of a records system.

This standard does not include the management of archival records collections within the Provincial Archives of Alberta.

Definitions

Authenticity: An authentic record is one that can be proven to:

- be what it purports to be;
- have been created or sent by the agent purported to have created or sent it; and
- have been created or sent when purported.

Integrity: A record that has integrity is one that is complete and unaltered.

Record(s): “Records” 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.

Source: [Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act](#)

Records management: Field of management responsible for the efficient and systematic control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use and disposition of records. Includes processes for capturing and maintaining evidence of, and information about, business activities and transactions in the form of records.

Reliability: A reliable record is one:

- whose contents can be trusted as a full and accurate representation of the transactions, activities or facts to which they attest; and
- which can be depended upon in the course of subsequent transactions or activities.

Useability: A useable record is one that can be located, retrieved, presented and interpreted within a time period deemed reasonable by stakeholders.

Compliance

Non-compliance with this standard 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 the Data and Content Management Division, Corporate Internal Audit Services, Cybersecurity Services, 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

- ISO 15489-1:2016 (E): Information and documentation – Records management – General

Permission to use extracts from ISO 15489-1:2016 (E) was provided by the Standards Council of Canada (SCC). No further reproduction is permitted without prior written approval from SCC.