



Government Records Procedure GRO 1

Preparing Records Schedules

**Government Records Office
Archives of Manitoba**

PROCEDURE GRO 1: *Preparing Records Schedules*

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CONTENTS

PURPOSE	3
AUTHORITY	3
POLICY	3
RECORDS SCHEDULES	4
FORMS	4
SCHEDULING PROCESS	5
ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	5
RECOMMENDED APPROACH	6
CHECKLIST OF STEPS	7
SCHEDULE FIELDS	8
KEY DESCRIPTIVE FIELDS	8
PRACTICAL INFORMATION	11
RETENTION AND DISPOSITION	14
SIGNATURES	15
CHANGING RECORDS SCHEDULES	16
AMENDMENT	16
REVISION	17
CONTACT	17
GLOSSARY	18

PURPOSE

This Procedure is intended for use by departmental/agency staff assigned with responsibility for preparing Records Schedules.

It provides basic guidance on how to prepare Records Schedules, to assist government bodies in meeting the requirements of *The Archives and Recordkeeping Act*.

Related Procedures:

GRO 2 *Transferring Government Records*

GRO 3 *Retrieving Records*

AUTHORITY

The Archives and Recordkeeping Act, A 132.

POLICY

Records Schedules are the official record of department and agency records and recordkeeping requirements.

Under *The Archives and Recordkeeping Act*:

- Each department or agency must prepare Records Schedules for approval by the Archivist of Manitoba.
- Records Schedules must be prepared for *all* government records.
- Records must not be destroyed without the authority of an approved Records Schedule.
- Records of archival value are identified as part of the scheduling process, and the authority for permanent protection of the records is provided by an approved Schedule.

Only records covered by an approved Schedule may be transferred to the Government Records Centre for semi-active storage and final disposition.

RECORDS SCHEDULES

Records schedules are a standard method for managing records of organizations from the time of the records' creation until they are ready for final disposition. In the Manitoba government, schedules are a basic recordkeeping tool for departments and agencies, and the foundation of the government's archival records program.

Records Schedules:

- identify and describe *records series* (groups of related records) that are created and maintained to support government functions and activities;
- establish the required minimum retention period for the records (paper and electronic);
- provide ongoing authority for final disposition of records – either destruction or 'transfer to Archives' for permanent protection;
- provide a *timetable* for regular transfer of records to the Government Records Centre for semi-active storage and disposition;
- provide an inventory of records held by government, to support retrieval and use of the records as well as administration of access under the laws governing access to information;
- identify records of archival value, to ensure their protection and future availability to government and society.

Schedules provide pre-determined retention and disposal rules for continuing series of records. Instead of ad hoc, one-time approval to destroy specific records, the Schedule provisions are determined in advance and applied consistently and routinely over time.

Schedules remain in effect until they are replaced by a new (revised) Schedule or terminated when the records series has ended.

FORMS

The following forms are in Word format on the [Government Recordkeeping](#) web site:

- Records Schedule (now including attachments for Series Description and Series Components – Retention and Disposition with help text for users)
- Records Schedule Amendment

SCHEDULING PROCESS

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

Program Managers

- Ensure that all records (paper and electronic) created and maintained in the office are scheduled and that Records Schedules are kept up to date as records and recordkeeping requirements change.
- Provide necessary information about the records, and related program functions and activities, and determine retention periods to meet the program and recordkeeping requirements of the office.

Records Officer

- Communicates GRO procedures within their department/agency.
- Tracks and maintains the department/agency master copy of approved Records Schedules and coordinates the transfer of records to the Records Centre for storage and disposition.
- Assists the department/agency with minor changes (amendments) to Records Schedules (see p. 17).

Government Records Office (GRO)

- Provides expert advice and support to government departments and agencies on recordkeeping best practices, requirements, issues and challenges including electronic recordkeeping, records scheduling and a variety of program-specific recordkeeping needs.
- Sets policies and procedures for records scheduling.
- Reviews draft Records Schedules and provides consultation and advice to departments and agencies.
- Assesses archival value of records, and makes recommendations on disposition to the Archivist of Manitoba.

Archivist of Manitoba

- Designates which records are of archival value.
- Approves Records Schedules.

RECOMMENDED APPROACH

Management Support

Successful records scheduling requires the support and involvement of management in the records-creating office. Only responsible staff in the program area itself can provide essential information about agency activities and the records that support them. The GRO analysts will need to consult with managers and staff who have knowledge of agency programs and business processes, and can recommend records retention periods based on the program's operational, legal and fiscal requirements. Drafting of records schedules should also be done by knowledgeable program staff.

Schedules are signed by the responsible Deputy Minister or designate (usually the program director) and are considered the department's submission to the Archivist of Manitoba. They should accurately reflect the program's recordkeeping requirements.

Program-Wide Scope

Normally, records of an entire office or program area should be scheduled at once. Separate series of records are often related, and need to be viewed as a whole to determine appropriate retention periods and to evaluate which records may have long term (archival) value. Periodically, and whenever program activities have changed, a comprehensive review of Schedules should be conducted.

Project Basis

Scheduling work is best undertaken as a defined project with the necessary planning and allocation of resources. This will allow the most effective use of staff time, and permit GRO to plan and schedule its consulting services.

Preliminary Analysis of Functions and Records

To describe records and determine appropriate retention periods, it is necessary to understand the context in which the records are created and used. Records are created or received as part of a business process or activity, and are maintained as long as needed to complete the activity, satisfy obligations and provide evidence of the actions or transactions that took place.

The first step in preparing Records Schedules is to understand the functions and activities of the program area. This will provide the basis for identifying the records to be scheduled, and for describing the context and purpose of the records in the Schedules themselves.

A scheduling project should always start with this first phase of gathering information (from written sources and interviews with program managers) about the mission & mandate of the office, the functions it performs, and its day-to-day activities and work processes. The next step is to determine, *for each function*, what records series are created and maintained, and other necessary information about their contents, arrangement and use. The last step is to draft the Records Schedules.

Additional advice about conducting an analysis of functions and records is available from the [Government Records Office](#).

CHECKLIST OF STEPS

1. Department/agency initiates preparation of Records Schedules.
2. Preliminary analysis of functions and records is carried out by department/agency. This may require advice and guidance from the GRO.
3. Draft Schedules are prepared by assigned program staff in the office responsible for the records. The office responsible determines necessary retention periods based on business requirements.
4. Draft Schedules are forwarded to GRO in electronic form for review and consultation. Changes or additions to draft Schedules are usually required at this stage. Meetings with department/agency staff may be held to analyze records systems and requirements, or to provide related advice on managing records. GRO assesses the archival value of the records and advises the office on the disposition.
5. GRO advises the office responsible for the records when the Schedules are ready for signing and submission to the Archivist of Manitoba.
6. Approved Schedules are signed by the Archivist of Manitoba. At this point the Schedules are in effect, and provide authority for retention and disposal of the records according to the provisions of the Schedule.
7. Copies of the approved, signed Schedules are sent by the GRO to the office responsible for the records and to the department/agency Records Officer for the department's master set of Records Schedules.

SCHEDULE FIELDS

This section explains what information is required in each numbered field of the Records Schedule. The fields have been grouped logically, under the following headings: [Key Descriptive Fields](#); [Practical Information](#); [Retention and Disposition](#); [Signatures](#).

Links to fields in numerical order:

[1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [4](#), [5](#), [6](#), [7](#), [8](#), [9](#), [10](#), [11](#), [12](#), [14](#), [15](#), [16](#), [17](#), [18](#), [20](#), [21](#), [22](#), [23](#), [24](#)

KEY DESCRIPTIVE FIELDS:

1. Code/Number

The Schedule Code and Number together provide a unique identifier for each Schedule.

- Code:**
- department/agency alpha identifier, established by the Government Records Office (GRO).
 - Where the department name or department responsibility for the records has changed, will show current department/agency code, followed by original department/agency code.
eg: J/ATG 0065, CO/CCA 0059

Number:

- 4-digit number
- assigned by department (Records Officer) in consecutive order
eg: the 10th schedule in Education is E 0010
- revised schedules: same number with alpha suffix – A, B, etc. (see Amendment, Revision)

2. Department/Agency, Branch

Name of current department or agency responsible for the records (at time of scheduling).

Branch – name of administrative unit, program area, office responsible for records. Where appropriate provide more than one level of administrative structure:

eg: Workplace Safety & Health Division, Inspections
eg: Court of Queen's Bench, Probate

Information about departments/branches previously responsible for the records should be provided in field 10, [Series Context](#).

3. Series Title

A series is a group of records maintained together (for example, in an organized file system) to support a function or activity. Records in a series are often related or interdependent. Together they provide evidence of a program or administrative activity,

or of a sequence of related events or transactions.

Typical examples include: Case Files, ABC Project Files, XYZ Program Files, (Board or Commission) Minutes, Hearing Records, Director's Office Files, Branch Office (Administration) Files.

Records series often have a common retention period, based on the requirements of the activity they support – but not always. A series **may** consist of separate, identifiable components with different retention or disposition requirements. (See field 10, [Series Contents](#))

The **series title** should be the one normally used to refer to the records in the creating office. If there is no commonly used title, choose one that is meaningful to users.

Standard titles exist for some series that are common to all departments and agencies. These include 'Minister's (or Deputy Minister's) Office Files', 'Employee Files' (at both departmental and branch levels), 'Office Files', 'Non-Filed Office Paper'.

6. Series Function

A brief statement indicating the **purpose** of the records series. It should answer the question, "Why are these records kept?"

eg: "To record licenses issued to regulate the sale of liquor in the province."

eg: "To record the proceedings and decisions of the Advisory Committee."

eg: "To record the general and financial administration of the Branch."

eg: "To record the direction and management of the Division."

The Series Function is **not** a description of the program itself. This information belongs in field 10, [Series Context](#).

10. Series Consists of:

This field is used to provide important descriptive information about the records and the context in which they are created and used. The amount of information may vary depending on the type and complexity or uniqueness of the records. For example, routine administrative records require less description than unique program records.

The information should be organized under two broad headings: [Series Context](#) and [Series Contents](#) on *Series Description Attachment A*

Series Context:

May include information about:

- the mandate of the creating office,
- the program or function that the records support,
- changes in the program and records over time, or changes in administrative responsibility,

- relationships to other records series (in the program area or elsewhere),
- how the records are used, and reasons for recommended retention periods,
- separate components of the series.

Series Contents:

*If a series consists of two or more sub-series, or **components**, the contents of each component may be described under sub-headings. These descriptions may correspond to numbered components listed in a Series Components Attachment B (see [RETENTION & DISPOSITION](#)).*

Summary description of the **range** of documentary contents normally found in the series. This is **not** a complete list of the contents, since individual documents may change over time. It is **not** a list of file titles.

eg: Series Contents: Records of day to day administration of the office including budgets, commitment accounting reports, copies of purchase records for equipment and supplies, memos and directives re: staffing and personnel administration, copies of departmental correspondence, staff meeting minutes, work plans and reports.

eg: Series Contents: Director's files include memos, reports and working papers relating to all program activities of the branch, strategic planning documents, policy documents, copies of submissions and briefing notes, estimates working papers, annual reports.

If the records are created as part of a regular work process, the description of contents may follow the order of the process.

eg: Series Contents: includes application forms, supporting documentation, applicant contact and interview notes, site visit reports, internal review and approval documents, letters of acceptance or denial.

Where significant or relevant, indicate:

- whether records are originals or copies (see field [9](#)).

eg: original payment records

eg: copies of payment records (originals in Finance & Administration)

- the parties to the transaction, or the routing of records.

eg: contracts with consultants for research services

eg: copies of environmental impact studies received from Conservation

eg: correspondence with the general public regarding....

Indicate if the series or components of the series are converted to other formats, such as microfilm or digital images, for working use or security back-up. Such copies should be included as a component of the series, with appropriate retention and disposal provisions. Where appropriate, describe the conversion process and implications for records retention and disposal.

eg: Legal document pockets are scanned after closure to provide a convenient working copy. Original documents must be retained until the property is disposed of.

eg: Insurance claim records are microfilmed on completion of claim. After verification of microfilm, original records are no longer required.

eg: Electronic registration documents are output to microfilm (COM) to meet long-term retention requirement.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

4. Physical Medium

Indicate the physical medium of the records. May be one or more of the following:

- paper
- electronic
- photographs
- film
- video
- audio
- maps/plans
- microfilm

5. Dates

Dates of **existing records** in the series. (*Not* of the program or function.)

Began: enter year of earliest records in the series.

Ended: for discontinued series, enter year of last records. For continuing series (most records series) leave blank.

7. Filing System

Indicate how records are arranged.

eg: alphabetically by subject or client

eg: block-numeric

eg: numerically by project number, voucher, etc.

eg: chronologically

If there is more than one system for different components of the series, indicate “various” and details may be provided in field 10.

Retained by:

Refers to annual closure date of files. This is used to calculate transfer and disposal dates of records.

Fiscal Year: standard government fiscal year, April 1 – March 31

Calendar Year: January 1 – December 31

Other: any other year-end such as academic year or other fiscal year.

8. Information Published

Where part or all of a series is published, give the name of the publication.

9. Location of Copies/Originals

Refers to other offices/program areas, or other records series, in which copies or originals of documents in this series are located.

eg: original registered documents – Land Titles Office

eg: reports, briefing notes – Deputy Minister, Minister, Treasury Board, Cabinet

Do not provide the address of the office location of the records being scheduled; this is indicated in field 17.

11. Existing Authority

Cite Schedule number(s) of any existing (previously approved) Schedules for these records.

If this is a revised Schedule (eg., E 0010A) cite previous Schedule number (E 0010).

If two or more previously scheduled records series are being combined into one, cite each of the existing schedule numbers.

12. Statutory/Regulatory References

An entry in this field is only necessary if a statute or regulation refers to retention requirements for records in this series or states specifically what records must be created and maintained. Cite the relevant sections of the statute or regulation, or enter “None”. An explanation of the requirement may be provided in field 10.

eg: E110 Employment Standards Code, s.135.

14. Records Centre Retrievals

For records that will be stored in the Records Centre during the retention period (see field [20](#)), estimate the number of retrievals to be requested by the office annually.

15. Annual Accumulation Rate

Estimate the volume of new records added to the series each year. This is normally measured in cubic feet (the equivalent of 1 Records Centre box).

For purposes of calculation: 1 full drawer of a lateral file cabinet = 3 cu. ft.

For records in specialized formats, other measurements may be used.

eg: 100 plans

16. Space Releasable: 1st Transfer

Indicate the year of the first transfer of records under this Schedule, and estimate the anticipated volume of records to be transferred. (Note: a transfer is a group of records moved to the Records Centre for storage or disposition, in accordance with the retention and disposal provisions of the Schedule.)

If this is a revised Schedule and records from this series have previously been transferred, enter "N/A".

17. Office Locations

Indicate address of office where the records are located. If the series is located in more than one office, attach a list of the office names (where applicable) and addresses.

*eg: Brandon Court Office,
Court House, 1104 Princess Ave., Brandon*

*Dauphin Court Office,
114 River Ave. W., Dauphin*

22. Archives Access

This field refers **only** to records that will be transferred to Archives at the end of the retention period (see field [20](#)). Check "Not Applicable" if the disposal action (field [21](#)) for all records in the series is Destroy.

For records that will be transferred to Archives:

If there is an established practice of allowing general public access to the records, check "Yes". The Archives will continue this practice once the records have been transferred to the Archives, as provided by s.3(a) of *The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

If there is no such practice, check “No”. Access will continue to be administered by the department responsible for the records, in accordance with *FIPPA* or other legislation governing access to information.

RETENTION AND DISPOSITION

20. Retention Period

Determine the overall retention period for the series, based on the requirements of the program. These include operational, legal, fiscal and audit requirements.

The overall retention period is a *minimum* period. It should reflect the minimum period of time that the records are normally required, to enable transfer and disposition of the records at the earliest possible time and to avoid retaining large amounts of records longer than necessary. Specific files that may be needed for longer than the usual period may be held back and transferred at a later date. For records stored at the Records Centre which are due for destruction on the disposal date, the department may request a “Hold”, and destruction will be deferred and reviewed annually.

The overall retention period may be divided between the Department (ie., the creating office) and the Records Centre:

Department:

Indicate the number of years the records need to remain in the office for active or frequent use. The retention period runs for the full number of years specified, following the end of the year in which the records were created (the “current” year).

Qualifications may be noted by adding an asterisk in this space, and providing the explanation in field 23. These may include identification of an event or condition that triggers the retention period, or explanation of a retention period that is not expressed in years.

eg: [Current Year + 6] *after expiry of contract*

eg: [Current Year + 5] *after completion of project.*

*eg: [Current Year + *] *immediately after microfilming*

Records Centre:

Indicate the number of years the records will be stored off-site at the Government Records Centre. The Records Centre provides “semi-active” storage during the remainder of the required retention period, for records that are not used frequently. While stored in the Records Centre, the records may be retrieved for use by the office responsible. *Note:* If Records Centre storage is not required, leave this space blank.

The number of years entered in Department and Records Centre should add up to the total required retention period.

If the series has separate **components** with different retention periods, use the Series Components Attachment in place of fields 20-21.

21. Disposal Action

Disposal Action means the action to be taken at the end of the total retention period: **either** Destroy **or** Transfer to Archives. Only one of these options will be completed.

Note: Most government records are scheduled for destruction at the end of the approved retention period. A small percentage of records series are appraised as having archival value, and will be scheduled to be transferred to the Archives, where they will be permanently preserved. A disposal action of 'Transfer to Archives' is based on the Archives' appraisal of the records, in consultation with the department responsible for the records.

Enter the total number of years specified in field 20, in the appropriate space. If the retention period is not expressed in years and is explained in field 23, add an asterisk in this space to be picked up in field 23.

If the series has separate **components** with different retention periods and/or disposal actions, use the Series Components Attachment in place of fields 20-21.

23. Qualifications

This field is used for any qualifications or explanation of the retention period or disposal action. See fields [20-21](#).

SIGNATURES

18. Deputy Minister, CEO (or designate)

Following consultation with the Government Records Office and editing/revision of the draft schedule, the final schedule should be signed by the designated Department or Agency official. This is normally the manager responsible for the program area and the records. This signature indicates the Department's concurrence with the provisions of the Schedule. The signed schedule is the Department's submission to the Archivist of Manitoba.

24. Archivist of Manitoba

The approved Schedule is signed by the Archivist of Manitoba. Once signed, the Schedule is in effect.

CHANGING RECORDS SCHEDULES

Records Schedules should be kept up to date to reflect changes in program responsibilities, the records themselves or retention requirements. Changes can be made in one of two ways: by *amendment* or *revision* of the Schedule.

AMENDMENT

Amendments are minor changes that do not require approval by the Archivist of Manitoba. The [Amendment form](#) may be used to change the following fields:

- *Schedule Code* (field 1) when responsibility for the records is transferred from one department or agency to another. Enter the new department's code, which will be added as a prefix to the existing schedule code and number (see examples of amended codes, [1](#)).
- *Department/Agency name and/or Branch name* (field [2](#));
- *Series Title* (field [3](#)) when the change is minor and does not reflect a significant change in the records series;
- *Dates* (field [5](#)) to indicate the last year of records when the records series has ended;
- *Series Filing System* (field [7](#));
- *Retained by Fiscal Year/Calendar Year/Other* (field [7](#));
- *Retention Period* (field [20](#)) to change the distribution of time between the Department and Records Centre. May not be used to change the overall retention period.

The *Notes* field may be used to provide explanation, where needed, of one of the above changes, or to provide new descriptive information about the records series that would normally be included in field [10](#) of the Schedule.

To submit an Amendment form, enter the existing Schedule number in the top right, then **complete only those fields which require amendment**. The form must be signed and dated by the department/agency Records Officer, and forwarded to the Government Records Office. The Records Officer and staff responsible for the records should attach a copy of the completed Amendment form to their copy of the Records Schedule. The Amendment is effective as soon as it has been received and noted by GRO.

REVISION

Revision of a Records Schedule involves preparing a new Schedule which is submitted to the Archivist of Manitoba for approval, and replaces one or more previously approved Schedules. A revised Schedule is required when there are any major changes to the records series or the retention and disposition requirements, such as:

- a change to the overall (total) required retention period (field [20](#));
- a change in the disposal action (field [21](#));
- the addition of one or more new series components, which require approval of new retention and disposition provisions;
- significant change in the records series (purpose, contents);
- amalgamation of two or more scheduled records series.

To revise a Schedule, follow the [steps](#) for preparing Records Schedules. Note the following additional requirements for certain Schedule fields:

Field 1: Use the number of the original Schedule, but add an alpha suffix (A for a first revision, B for a second, etc.).

eg: AG 0003 is revised to AG 0003A.

Field 12: Cite the original Schedule number. If the revised Schedule replaces more than one existing Schedule, cite all of the relevant numbers.

Field 10: Explain the reason for the revision under [Series Context](#) or [Series Content](#), as appropriate.

Note: a revised Schedule may totally replace the original schedule so that it applies to all existing records in the Office or Records Centre. In this case, any records previously transferred to semi-active or archival storage will be processed according to the retention and disposal provisions of the new schedule.

Alternatively, it may only apply to records after a specified date (for example, where a new retention period applies only to records post-dating introduction of a new system). This should be indicated in field 10.

CONTACT

For more information contact:

Government Records Office (GRO)
 phone: (204) 945-3971
 fax: (204) 948-2008
 email: GRO@gov.mb.ca

GLOSSARY

Archives – the Archives of Manitoba.

Archivist – the **Archivist of Manitoba**.

Archivist of Manitoba – the official responsible for direction of the Archives of Manitoba.

Amendment – one of the ways of making formal changes to a Records Schedule. An Amendment form is used to record minor changes that do not require approval by the Archivist of Manitoba.

components – separate, identifiable groups of records within a **records series**. Components may have different retention periods and/or disposal actions.

current year – the actual year of the records. Referred to in fields 20 – 21 of the **Records Schedule** as part of the retention period.

disposal action – the action to be taken at the end of the total retention period: either Destroy or Transfer to Archives. Also referred to as **disposition**.

disposition – see **disposal action**.

Government Records Centre (GRC) – the facility operated by the **Government Records Office (GRO)**, that provides centralized records storage, retrieval and destruction services for all government departments and agencies.

Government Records Office (GRO) – a unit of the **Archives** responsible for the government's records management program.

records of archival value – records identified by the Archives as having lasting significance to the government or society. These records are identified when records are scheduled, and the Records Schedule authorizes their permanent preservation.

Records Officer – the person responsible for communicating GRO procedures within their department/agency and for coordinating the transfer of records to the Records Centre for storage and disposition.

Records Schedule – a formal document that identifies government records, establishes their retention periods and provides for their disposition. Also referred to as a **Schedule**.

records series – a group of records maintained together to support a function or activity. Records in a series are often related or interdependent. A series may consist of separate, identifiable **components**.

retention period – the minimum time that records must be retained prior to **disposition**, as set out in the Records Schedule.

Revision – one of the ways of making formal changes to a Records Schedule. A revised

Schedule is a new Schedule, approved by the **Archivist of Manitoba**, that replaces one or more previously approved Schedules.

Schedule – see **Records Schedule**.

semi-active storage – the off-site storage provided by the Government Records Centre for government records during their scheduled retention period. Records in semi-active storage are no longer in ‘active’ (frequent) use by the creating office, and therefore may be moved to less costly, off-site storage at the GRC. The records may be retrieved from the GRC for use by the creating office when needed.

series – see **records series**.

Transfer to Archives – one of the possible **disposal actions** authorized by a Records Schedule. **Records of archival value** are scheduled for Transfer to Archives, which means they will be permanently preserved. This *should not be confused* with the transfer of records to the Government Records Centre for **semi-active storage**.