

Government Records Procedure GRO 1

Preparing Records Schedules

PROCEDURE GRO 1: Preparing Records Schedules

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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 Guidance:

[Records Schedules: What Managers Need to Know](#)

[Records Scheduling: The Recommended Approach](#)

Related Procedures:

[GRO 2: Transferring Government Records](#)

[GRO 3: Retrieving Records](#)

AUTHORITY

[The Archives and Recordkeeping Act](#), C.C.S.M. c. A132

POLICY

Records Schedules provide pre-determined retention and disposal rules that enable groups of records to be managed consistently and routinely over time.

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.

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 digital)
- provide ongoing authority for final disposition of records – either destruction or 'transfer to Archives' for permanent preservation
- establish a *timetable* for regular transfer of physical 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 to information according to legislation
- identify records of archival value, to ensure their protection and future availability to government and society

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

FORMS

Please visit the [forms section](#) of the [Government Recordkeeping website](#) for the current forms:

- Records Schedule
- Records Schedule Amendment

SCHEDULING PROCESS

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

Executive Lead

- Identifies scheduling priorities in the department.
- Communicates with the department about recordkeeping policies and practices.
- Authorizes departmental requirements on records schedules.

Program Manager

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

Records Coordinator

- 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. 15).

Government Records Office (GRO)

- Provides expert advice and support to government departments and agencies on recordkeeping best practices, requirements, issues, and challenges including digital 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 have archival value.
- Approves Records Schedules.

RECOMMENDED APPROACH

See [Records Scheduling: The Recommended Approach](#) for a workflow on the scheduling process.

The following provides more details related to management support, project scope, and how to get started:

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 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 be done by knowledgeable program staff.

Schedules are signed by the responsible Deputy Minister or designate (the department's Executive Lead or the program director responsible) 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, and with prioritization defined by the Executive Lead. This will allow for the most effective use of staff time, and permit GRO to plan and schedule its advisory services appropriately.

Preliminary Analysis of Functions and Records

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.

See [Functional Analysis for Records](#) for more information.

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, assigned by 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.

e.g.: J/ATG 0065, CH 0059

Number:

- 4-digit number
- assigned by GRO
e.g.: 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:

e.g.: Workplace Safety & Health Division, Inspections

e.g.: Court of King'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.

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 and descriptive enough to distinguish it from other series.

Standard titles exist for some series that are common to all departments and agencies. These include 'Minister's (or Deputy Minister's) Office Files', 'Attendance Records', '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?"

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

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

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

e.g.: "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 Description (Attachment A):

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 *Attachment A – Series Description*.

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, and/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

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.

e.g.: 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.

e.g.: 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 report preparation.

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

e.g.: 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](#))

e.g.: original payment records

e.g.: copies of payment records (originals in Finance & Administration)

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

e.g.: contracts with consultants for research services

e.g.: copies of environmental impact studies received from Environment and Climate Change

e.g.: correspondence with the 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 retention and disposal provisions.

Where appropriate, describe the conversion process and implications for records

retention and disposal.

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

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

e.g.: Electronic registration documents are output to microfilm (COM) to meet long-term retention requirements.

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.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

4. Physical Medium

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

- paper
- electronic
- photographic
- audio-visual
- graphic
- micrographic

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) check the 'Continuing' box and leave the 'Ended' field blank.

7. Filing System

Indicate how records are arranged.

e.g.: alphabetically by subject or client

e.g.: block-numeric

e.g.: numerically by project number, file number, etc.

e.g.: chronologically

If there is more than one system for different components of the series, indicate "various" and provide details for each component on Attachment A.

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.

e.g.: original registered documents – Land Titles Office

e.g.: 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 (e.g., 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.

e.g.: The Employment Standards Code, E110, s.135.

14. Records Centre Retrievals

For records that will be stored in the Government 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 physical 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.
e.g.: 100 plans

If the series only contains digital records, enter "N/A".

16. Space Releasable: 1st Transfer

Indicate the year of the first transfer of physical 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, or if there are only digital records in this series, enter 'N/A'.

17. Office Locations

Indicate the office address 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.

*e.g.: 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 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 required, to enable disposition of the records at the earliest possible time and to avoid retaining large amounts of records longer than necessary. For more information see [Determining Retention Periods](#).

Specific files that may be needed for longer than the usual period may be retained longer. For records stored at the Government 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 (i.e., 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.

e.g.: [Current Year + 6] *after expiry of contract*

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

*e.g.: [Current Year + *] *immediately after digitization*

*e.g.: *Digital records will be maintained by the department for the full retention period.*

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 B 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 after 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 cross-referenced to field 23.

If the series has separate **components** with different retention periods and/or disposal actions, use the Series Components Attachment B 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 department/agency Deputy Minister, CEO, or designated official (Executive Lead or 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*.

AMENDMENT

Amendments are minor changes that do not require approval by the Archivist of Manitoba.

Amendments can be made by the department responsible for the records or by the Government Records Office.

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.
- *Format* (field 4) 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.
- *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 prepare an Amendment:

1. Enter the Schedule code and number to be amended in the top right corner of the form.
2. Complete the Amendment form – filling in only those fields which require modification.
3. Enter the name and position of the person authorizing the amendment. Amendments can be made by the department responsible for the records or by the Government Records Office.
4. Sign and date the amendment form.
5. Submit the Amendment to the GRO. The GRO will accept a mailed, signed original, or an emailed scan. Address information is on the top left corner.
6. The GRO will review the amendment, process it, and distribute the updated schedule to the department responsible.

Note: Amendments may change the costs associated with the records in storage at the GRC.

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.).

e.g.: 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 on Attachment A – Series Description 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.

Otherwise, 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

email: GRO@gov.mb.ca

GLOSSARY

Terms used in this procedure are defined in the [Glossary of Records and Information Management Terms](#).