

# Deputy Minister Recordkeeping Responsibilities

## Introduction

Reliable records are needed by deputy ministers to carry out their responsibilities effectively. Records provide important evidence of actions taken and decisions made and allow government to account for its actions. Ultimately, these records will form part of Manitoba's archival heritage.

Under [The Archives and Recordkeeping Act](#) (ARA), the Archives of Manitoba is responsible for setting government recordkeeping policies, standards, and guidelines. Deputy ministers' offices, like all other government offices, are responsible for knowing the policies to ensure that records are effectively created and managed.

Deputy ministers and their offices have unique recordkeeping responsibilities in the Manitoba government. The purpose of this guidance is to provide:

- a high-level understanding of deputy ministers' obligations as the head of their department, to support their departmental recordkeeping requirements
- information about managing the records that a deputy minister and their office staff create and receive

## Departmental Recordkeeping Responsibilities

As the administrative head of the department, deputy ministers have a responsibility to ensure their organization is meeting the requirements of the ARA and the [Recordkeeping Framework for Departments and Agencies: Policies and Requirements](#). It is recommended that deputy ministers review the entire Framework, with particular focus on Policy 1.

To assist, the key requirements relevant to a deputy minister are summarized in Table 1 below. They are the foundation for digital government, a mature recordkeeping culture, and building capacity for the remaining policies to be cascaded down to the department. The Government Records Office (GRO) has set these expectations with the understanding that departments will be working towards continual improvement.

Policy 1: Governance - Departments are responsible for records and information management		
#	Requirement	Example
1.1	Recordkeeping is the responsibility of senior management.	Establish visible senior support. Assign an executive lead.
1.2	Recordkeeping must be directed by department-focused strategy and policy.	Develop department-specific governance, strategy, and priorities for meeting recordkeeping best practices.
1.3	Departments must have skilled records management professionals.	Work cross-government to build skills capacity.
1.4	Division, branch, and program area management must take responsibility for integrating recordkeeping into work processes, systems, and services.	Cascade responsibilities down to the department, ensuring recordkeeping requirements are being integrated.
1.5	All staff understand their recordkeeping responsibilities.	Staff complete the <a href="#">Introduction to Records and Information Management</a> course through Public Service Commission, Learning Services.
1.6	Contracts and agreements must consider recordkeeping requirements.	Contracts, agreements, and service arrangements include recordkeeping requirements, where applicable.
1.7	Recordkeeping activities must be monitored and reviewed.	Processes and systems are regularly reviewed to ensure recordkeeping practices meet best practices and business needs.

Table 1: Recordkeeping Framework, Summary of Policy 1

## Records in Deputy Ministers' Offices (DMO)

Records in the DMO include all records made or received in the course of carrying out government duties and responsibilities. DMO records, whether in paper, digital, or any other form, are **government records** and subject to the ARA.

Note: the term 'Deputy Minister's Office' includes the deputy minister and all office staff.

DMO records typically include:

- records documenting departmental operations, policy development and delivery, briefings, authority-seeking and approval records, interdepartmental relations, stakeholder relations, and other activities of the department
- all correspondence sent and received by the deputy minister's office about departmental business
- records pertaining to the deputy minister's involvement in committees
- records relating to communications and issues management
- records relating to financial and administrative functions such as human resources, FIPPA requests, estimates, financial submissions and approvals, travel, and expenses

Note regarding ‘non-records’: published material or other reference material common to every deputy minister’s office are *not* records under the ARA and are therefore not subject to records management requirements.

## DMO Recordkeeping Requirements

Deputy ministers must be aware of and in compliance with recordkeeping legislation, policies, and standards. They should ensure that all staff in their office understand the requirements, that appropriate responsibility is assigned, and that records management activities are monitored.

### Creating and capturing records

It is expected that deputy ministers’ offices will create full and accurate records of all actions, decisions, communications, and other activities related to the official business of the office. This is often referred to as the “duty to document.” Full documentation is needed for continuity and effective government administration. It also enables government to account for its actions – not just to the public under freedom of information laws, but also to the legislature, auditors, public inquiries, and the Courts.

### Organizing and using; protecting and managing records

Not all program areas in government need to keep paper records; however, areas with functions that are considered [high-risk/high-value](#) may be required to do so. **Please note: All records created and received by DMOs are high-risk/high-value because they have been designated as archival and will be preserved for future generations.**

Currently, paper [recordkeeping systems](#) continue to be needed to protect the integrity, reliability, and authenticity of Deputy Ministers’ Office Records. There are two reasons for this requirement:

1. The current document management system (AIMS or SIMS) does not have the full range of capabilities needed to support digital recordkeeping and long-term preservation of the archival records.
2. At this time, the Archives is not yet able to ingest digital records.

Deputy ministers depend on complete and reliable records to carry out their duties. The Archives must be able to care for and protect records of archival value. To ensure both goals are met, DMOs continue to use AIMS for their day-to-day work, but must print to file and maintain a logical and well-structured paper recordkeeping system. A good practice is to have an established [file structure](#) that groups related records together and cross-references the documents to the AIMS system.

AIMS may contain information that is not duplicated in a paper file system, as well as descriptive and tracking information needed to understand and access deputy ministers’ records. These digital records are an essential part of the Deputy Ministers’ Office Records and must be managed accordingly (see “Transferring digital records” section below).



*Recordkeeping lifecycle*

Office procedures for creating, filing, and tracking both paper and digital records should be established to ensure that:

- all records of a related activity or issue are maintained together, or persistently linked, so that they can be accessed and viewed as a whole
- a full set of records is retained, as required by the records schedules for Deputy Ministers' Office Records
- deputy ministers responsible for more than one department should identify and maintain the distinct records separately

### Retaining and disposing of records

Record schedules are the mechanism used in the Manitoba government to identify records and recordkeeping requirements. They establish policy for how long and under what conditions the records must be kept and whether, at the end of the retention period, the records may be destroyed or must be retained permanently as archival records.

The following records schedules apply to records in deputy ministers' offices:

- **Deputy Ministers' Office Records** – Each office has a records schedule (usually called 'Deputy Minister's Office Files') which covers the records of the deputy minister's departmental responsibility. All records schedules at the DM level set out the same mandatory provisions for retention and disposal of the records. **These schedules do not permit destruction of the records: the final disposition of all Deputy Ministers' Office Records is transfer to Archives.**
- **Transitory Records** – Each office has a records schedule for transitory paper records (usually called 'Non-Filed Office Paper') which authorizes immediate destruction of the records. For transitory digital records, there is a government-wide General Records Schedule which authorizes deletion. For more information on transitory records see "Destruction of Records" section below.

### Transferring paper records

DMOs must use their approved records schedules and follow the Government Records Office procedure to transfer records due for storage or disposal. The established transfer process is designed to control and document authorized retention and disposal of the records. For more information, see [GRO 2: Transferring Government Records](#).

### Transferring digital records

Digital records in DMOs are also archival but cannot yet be transferred to the Archives of Manitoba. For the time being, all digital records in the AIMS system will be managed within that system *and must be printed to file*.

All records in Outlook, shared drives, phones, and other collaborative works spaces such as Teams and SharePoint must also be printed and filed with related records based on their content (what they are about), not their format. For more information, see: [Recordkeeping Systems, Text & Instant Messages](#) and our [Microsoft Teams Recordkeeping Guidance](#).

## Destruction of Records

In the Manitoba government, an approved records schedule is the sole authority for destroying records. It is an offense under the ARA for any person to alter, conceal, remove, or destroy a record with an intent to deprive government of the use of or access to the record.

### Transitory records

The *only* DMO records that are authorized to be destroyed are transitory records. Transitory records are government records that have short term use only and do not need to be filed. The [Transitory Records fact sheet](#) provides important advice on how to correctly identify these records. Destruction of transitory records must be done according to Government Records Office procedures. Office paper shredders **should not be used** in deputy ministers' offices.

### Hold on destruction

In exceptional circumstances, records normally due for authorized destruction, including transitory records, may be needed for a legal proceeding, investigation, or *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA)* request. A hold on destruction may be placed, and regular, authorized destruction is not permitted until the hold has been removed.

## Change of Government

### Information for Deputy Ministers following a change of government

When the incoming government needs information from the previous administration, new ministers are asked to consult with their deputy minister, who will prepare the necessary information from records in the deputy minister's office and department program files. In exceptional circumstances where access to specific ministerial records is required, this may be requested through written application to the Clerk of the Executive Council. See [Managing Minister's Office Records](#) for more information about how a change of government and the Westminster tradition affects the Minister's Office.

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