

# ARMS 2006 Overview

## Overview

The Administrative Records Management System 2006 is a powerful records management tool for arranging and scheduling administrative records. In contrast to operational records, which relate to mandated functions unique to individual organizations, administrative records are common to all government institutions. ARMS 2006, developed and maintained by the Saskatchewan Archives Board, is designed to accommodate all administrative records created or received by government departments, crowns, boards, commissions, agencies, etc. in Saskatchewan. It is a requirement of *The Archives Act, 2004* that all government institutions implement and use ARMS 2006 as both a classification system and a records retention schedule.

A copy of ARMS 2006 can be obtained from the Saskatchewan Archives Board, Government Records Branch at 787-0734.

## Legislation

There are two main statutes governing information management in Saskatchewan government: *The Archives Act, 2004* and *The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

*The Archives Act, 2004* provides the Archives with the authority to approve destruction of records that are no longer necessary and to acquire historical records for permanent preservation. The Act requires that all government institutions manage their records in accordance with approved records schedules, such as ARMS 2006, and also outlines requirements for the disposal of records.

*The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FOIPP) provides the public with the right to access certain information in government. Under FOIPP legislation, government institutions are given 30 days to deliver requested information to an inquirer. If the information is not available, an institution has to demonstrate that proper records management practices were followed and the records were disposed of following the requirement of *The Archives Act, 2004* or transferred to a different agency. For further information the transfer of records to another agency, please see the information bulletin on [Records and Department Reorganization](#).

## History

In 1991 the government of Saskatchewan passed *The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. The Act emphasized a government institution's accountability for their records and stressed a need for developing reliable records management practices. The Saskatchewan Archives, from its formation in 1945, has played an important role in records management in the provincial government

through the development of retention schedules and by acquiring and preserving records of historical value. Therefore, the Archives was given the responsibility of assisting government institutions in gaining control over their records.

The Archives began this process by identifying and scheduling records common to all government departments. These records are defined as administrative records. The archivists of the Government Records Branch explored various systems used by other jurisdictions in order to decide on one that would be the most practical for government departments and crown corporations in Saskatchewan. The system used by the British Columbia government, which incorporates a retention schedule with a function-based classification system, appeared to be the most adequate.

Based on this system, and in consultation with a number of government departments and crown corporations in Saskatchewan, the archivists drafted the first 5 sections of the Saskatchewan Administrative Records System (SARS). SARS, Schedule 326, became an effective document in 1993 when it was approved by the Public Documents Committee and the Legislative Assembly. Three years later the system was completed by the addition of the 6<sup>th</sup> section, Schedule 329, dealing with information systems and technology. After an extensive review of SARS, the revised and renamed ARMS was approved for use by government departments, boards, commissions and agencies in 2003. Further revisions were made to accommodate the unique records of crown corporations and in March 2006 a new version of ARMS, called ARMS 2006, was approved by the newly created Public Records Committee for the administrative records of all government institutions.

### **ARMS 2006 Manual**

The Administrative Records Management System 2006 is provided to government institutions in hard copy or electronic (Microsoft Word and Adobe pdf) format. The Introduction explains the system and how it works. Following the introduction are the six sections that comprise ARMS 2006. Each section begins with an introductory page, which includes a listing of the subject headings (primaries) covered in the section. Following that are the primaries, each of which includes scope notes, secondaries, retention periods and final disposition information.

The appendices, legislation, glossary of terms and the index are next. The appendices include lists of new primaries and secondaries, a SARS-to-ARMS 2006 concordance table for crown corporations and an ARMS to ARMS 2006 concordance table for executive government (for executive government, ARMS superseded SARS in 2003). The glossary provides definitions for records management terms used in the system. The index is a useful tool which lists various subject headings and provides direction to the primary where records should be classified. It is a useful tool in accessing the system.

### **Basic Terms**

In order to use ARMS 2006, it is necessary to understand the following terms:

**Government Record** - all recorded information that relates to the transaction of government business, regardless of physical form, including documents, maps, electronic records, e-mail, drawings, photographs, letters, vouchers, papers, etc. which are received, created, deposited or held by an office of a department, agency, board, crown corporation, commission, or other institution of the Government of Saskatchewan.

**Administrative Records** - records pertaining to administrative or "housekeeping" activities of the organization not central to the mandated function of the institution in question. For most government departments and some crown corporations, administrative records may include the management of facilities, property, material, finances, human resources, and information systems.

**Operational Records** - records related to the operations and services provided by an office in carrying out the functions for which it is responsible according to statute, mandate, or policy. In most cases, operational records are distinct from common administrative functions and unique to each government institution.

**Records Schedule** – an effective tool for records management which provides a classification system, a concise and convenient description of each record and its required retention period. Records schedules are the authority by which government organizations may dispose of records no longer required. All record schedules must be approved according to the procedures set out in *The Archives Act, 2004*.

For further definitions please refer to the "Glossary of Terms" in ARMS 2006.

### **ARMS 2006 Characteristics**

ARMS 2006 combines a function based classification system with a retention schedule. The classification system simplifies filing, provides flexibility in adjusting to institutional reorganization, and allows for fast retrieval of information. The retention schedule provides the minimum amount of time that records must be kept before disposal is requested. **ARMS 2006 is the only administrative records schedule approved for use by Saskatchewan Government institutions.**

The classification system is based on functional divisions and develops in a hierarchical fashion from a very general to a more specific level of classification. The first level of classification is sections. ARMS 2006 is divided into the following 6 sections representing major administrative functions performed by government institutions: Administration; Buildings and Properties; Equipment and Supplies; Finance; Human Resources; and Information Systems and Technology.

The sections are divided into a number of primaries which describe specific administrative subjects, activities, functions, etc. The primaries are further broken up into secondaries which represent specific records or groups of records. All primaries and secondaries are arranged in the system in a logical order, in most cases alphabetically. The system includes scope notes which briefly describe the records that should be classified in the sections, primaries and secondaries.

ARMS 2006 incorporates a block numeric system. Each section has been allotted a range of numbers. For example, the Administration Section has been assigned numbers from 1000 to 1999, the Building and Properties Section 2000 to 2999, etc. Primaries are identified by a unique number within the range of numbers assigned to the section. For instance, the primaries 1025 - Administration-Organisation and 1080 - Acts and Legislation-External are part of the Administration Section (1000 - 1999). Secondaries are assigned two-digit numbers i.e. 00 - Policy and Procedure, 01 - General, etc.

Retention periods in the schedule indicate the minimum amount of time an office must retain official records. They are assigned to each secondary. The retention periods are based on financial, administrative, legal, and fiscal requirements. Information on additional records can be found in the [Saskatchewan Records Management Guidelines](#).

Also contained within the manual is a final disposition column which provides information regarding the final disposition of administrative records.

### **ARMS 2006 - Implementation of Classification System**

ARMS 2006 implementation is a detailed process that should involve staff on all levels. It requires a good understanding of the system and basic records management practices. Extensive knowledge of the records and functions of the branch/department is also essential. The following are the typical stages of ARMS 2006 implementation:

- conduct a records inventory
- identify records as administrative or operational
- separate administrative records from operational
- relate administrative records to ARMS 2006
- identify and remove inactive records from the filing system
- design, print and apply labels with ARMS 2006 numbers and titles to administrative records
- arrange records according to ARMS 2006

For more information regarding ARMS 2006 implementation please contact the Government Records Branch of the Saskatchewan Archives at 787-0734 or [recordhelp@archives.gov.sk.ca](mailto:recordhelp@archives.gov.sk.ca)