

Guidelines to Records Disposal

All official government records must be retained by the responsible government institution for the length of time designated in the applicable records schedule: either ARMS2014 for administrative records, an Institution-specific ORS for operational records or a corporate-wide retention schedule. Once the retention periods established in these schedules are met, official records may be disposed of using the procedures set out by the Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.

Any administrative records closed (inactive) prior to April 1, 2015, that are classified using ARMS2006, can be disposed of in accordance with ARMS2006 or ARMS2014. Records created or active on April 1, 2015, or after that date must be related to ARMS2014.

Disposal includes the destruction of records, as well as appraisal and transfer to the Archives. The disposition process is applicable to **ALL FORMATS**, including electronic records.

The disposal of records that have met their retention should proceed quickly unless the records must be retained to fulfill an official function (a legal hold, a Freedom of Information Request, etc.). The *Overarching Personal Information Privacy Framework for Executive Government* states that “personal information should be retained only as long as necessary for the fulfillment of its stated collection purpose, or as specified by law.”

Disposal Process

Step 1 – Ensure your institution has a Designated Records Officer (DRO) in place.

The head of the institution must assign the responsibility for signing off on the disposal of records to a position or positions at a senior management level.

The Designated Records Officer (DRO) is the person(s) in the Government Institution, designated by the Deputy Minister or President/CEO, who has the final responsibility for authorizing disposal of records. They need not be the person responsible from preparing disposal requests. The Archives must be advised in writing who has been assigned as the DRO. A template DRO Appointment Form is available from our website.

Step 2 – Prepare your Disposal Request and submit it to the SAB.

To begin the disposal process, you will need to prepare an inventory of the records in question. Inventory forms are available from the Archives; however, other inventory forms, such as transfer sheets from the Central Services Records Centre, may be used **providing they contain all the required information, including:**

- ministry/branch name,
- transfer number (if applicable),

- identification of medium used (hard copy or electronic – if electronic provide the application name and version number),
- location of records and, for medium other than paper, how they can be accessed. (It is the responsibility of the Government Institution to have available the necessary hardware and software to make all electronic records accessible for review),
- titles of files or file groupings, including a brief description of records. Generic descriptions like 'general,' 'miscellaneous,' 'correspondence,' etc. do not provide sufficient information to review a disposal request,
- inclusive dates,
- schedule and item numbers,
- identification numbers (box numbers, etc.),
- name and phone number of a contact person.

Before submitting the disposal request, please review the records to ensure that they have been related to the correct schedule and item numbers. Often several years have elapsed from the time of placement in semi-active storage to date of disposal request. It must be determined if a new Operational Records System (ORS) has been approved within that time period or if there have been any relevant changes to the administrative records system (e.g. ARMS 2014 replacing ARMS 2006). The records must be related to a current approved system prior to submission to the Archives.

Once you have determined that records are correctly classified, it is necessary to verify that the records have met the retention requirement specified in the system. To determine disposal dates it is necessary to determine the fiscal year of last action on the file. For example, if a record has an end date of May 15, 2002, its current fiscal year is 2002-2003. If the record in question has a six year retention period, you begin counting those six years AFTER the current fiscal year, i.e. 2003-04, 2004-05, 2005-06, 2006-07, 2007-08, 2008-09. Therefore the date that this record became eligible for disposal was 1 April 2009.

After verifying that all information on the inventory is correct, attach the inventory form to the Disposal Request Form, which has been signed by your DRO, and submit the request to the Archives:

Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan
P.O. Box P.O. Box 1665
Regina SK S4P 3C6

Please note, it is the responsibility of the Government Institution to ensure that records are properly classified and that all required information outlined above is provided. Disposal Requests that lack required information may be cancelled (the processing and review fee will still be charged). If you require assistance at any time during the disposal process, please call our inquiry line at 787-0734 or email us at recordhelp@archives.gov.sk.ca.

Step 3 – Archives Review and Notification of Outcome

Once your request has been received by the Archives, it will undergo two reviews. First, the Disposal Archivist will review the request to ensure records have been classified correctly and have met their required retention periods. If additional information is required, you will be contacted by the Disposal Archivist. After the request has been reviewed by the Disposal Archivist, the request will then be reviewed by an Appraisal Archivist. This appraisal review determines whether a physical appraisal of the records in question is required in order to determine their historical value.

Following the reviews, you will receive a notification form indicating the outcome of your request. The form may authorize destruction of the all records included in the disposal request; authorize destruction of some of the records and advise to retain the remaining records for a physical appraisal; or advise to retain all the records for appraisal.

Once you have received this form, you must arrange for the destruction of any records authorized for disposal by the Archives. In cases where a physical appraisal of the records is conducted, following the appraisal you will again receive a notification form advising which records may be destroyed and which have been selected for transfer to the Archives.

The Records Disposition Process is intended to ensure that government institutions are able to demonstrate accountable records management practises and legislative compliance in the event of a Freedom of Information request or legal action. Retain a copy of each disposal request and inventory, along with all correspondence from the Archives pertaining to the request, under ARMS 2014, item 1525 Records Management – Disposition or the appropriate item of a corporate-wide retention schedule.

Accreditation

Accreditation is a process overseen by the Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan that allows Government Institutions that meet established criteria to destroy or request an appraisal of certain administrative and operational records (based on information included in an applicable retention schedule) without submitting a request for the disposal of the records to the Archives.

For further information on accreditation, please refer to the Archive's [Accreditation Procedures for Government Institutions](#) or [Accreditation Procedures for Crown Corporations](#).