



## A

**ACCESSIBILITY (ACCESSIBLE RECORD):** The availability and usability of a record, regardless of its format. An accessible record is legible and can be easily retrieved and used with minimal barriers by authorized users. Public records must be accessible throughout their life cycle, according to the *Archives and Public Records Management Act*.

**ACCREDITATION:** A process overseen by the Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan wherein the Provincial Archivist provides a pre-approval to government institutions with records and information management programs that meet established criteria to destroy or request an appraisal review of public records based on instructions included in an applicable retention schedule. Accredited institutions are not required to go through the regular disposal process administered by the Archives. Instead, they follow an expedited process established as part of the accreditation.

**ACQUISITION:** One of the two forms of disposal for public records in Saskatchewan. Acquisition refers to the transfer of records from an institution to the permanent collection of the Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan, where the records can be processed and made available to researchers. Acquisition of public records is conducted through the disposal process administered by the Archives. [See also **RECORDS DISPOSITION**]

**ACTIVE RECORD:** A record that is referenced or used regularly. Active records are usually retained in office spaces close to users.



**ADMINISTRATIVE RECORDS:** Records that pertain to the administration or "housekeeping" activities of an organization not central to its mandate. For most government institutions, administrative records may include the management of facilities, property, equipment, finances, human resources, and information systems.

**ADMINISTRATIVE RECORDS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM 2014 (ARMS2014):**

A government-wide standard for managing administrative records. It incorporates a function-based classification system with a retention schedule. It is applicable to Saskatchewan Government Ministries, Agencies, Boards, Commissions, Officers of the Legislative Assembly, Legislative Assembly Services, and other branches of the Public Service of Saskatchewan, and may be applicable to certain Treasury Board Crown Corporations. ARMS2014 supersedes ARMS2006, ARMS, and the Saskatchewan Administrative Records System (SARS). ARMS2014 is maintained by the Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.

**APPRAISAL** see **RECORDS APPRAISAL**

**ARCHIVAL RECORDS:** Records that have archival value.

**ARCHIVAL VALUE:** Records of administrative, operational, legal, financial, evidential, informational, cultural, or commercial value that have sufficient historical significance to be worthy of permanent preservation.

**ARCHIVES:** An institution engaged in the acquisition, description, preservation, and accessibility of the documentary heritage created or received by a Government Institution, business, organization, individual, or community.

**ARCHIVES AND PUBLIC RECORDS MANAGEMENT ACT (APRMA):** This legislation sets out the requirements for the proper management, retention, and disposal of records for which the Government of Saskatchewan is responsible. It also gives the Provincial Archives authority to acquire and permanently preserve public records deemed to possess historical value and make them available to the public for research purposes (subject to applicable access restrictions).

**AUDIT:** A regular examination and verification of a specific activity.

**AUDIT TRAIL:** A recorded sequence of events that provides documentation for regular examination and verification.



**AUTHENTICITY (AUTHENTIC RECORD):** A record with undisputed origin that is verified to be what it purports to be. For a record to be authentic, its integrity, creator or sender, and the date and time it was created or sent must be verifiable through evidence such as metadata and documented business processes, policies, procedures, etc.

## B

**BACKWARDS COMPATIBLE:** A feature of technology, software, or systems that allow for access to previous iterations of that technology, software, or system. Backwards compatibility assists in ensuring the accessibility of information when upgrading technology that controls or stores electronic records.

**BIG BUCKET:** A records schedule format where records are classified on the records series level and grouped into “buckets” based on business functions that share the same retention period. This format provides a broad classification approach that reduces the number of classification categories for records and makes the system flexible to accommodate different record formats and organizational changes over time.

**BLOCK NUMERIC SYSTEM:** A records classification system based on the assignment of blocks or groups of numbers to records related to the same functions, activities, subjects, etc.

## C

**CASE FILE:** A type of file containing a variety of material relating to a specific action, event, person, place, project, or another subject (e.g., project file, client file, employee file, etc.).

**CENTRALIZED RECORDS STORAGE:** A single location where all records (active and inactive) created or received by an organization are managed.

**CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM:** A logical and systematic arrangement of records or files into groups or categories. This arrangement is based on some definite scheme of natural relationships (e.g., functions, subjects, chronology) using numbers, letters, or keywords for identification.

**CLOUD COMPUTING:** The practice of using internet-based servers to store, manage and process records throughout their lifecycle.



**COLLABORATION PLATFORM:** A type of software or online service that allows the creation of digital workspaces to facilitate collaborative work between individuals or teams on projects, documents, and/or information sharing. Collaboration platforms may allow for communications via voice, video, and text chats/messaging, screen sharing, creation of reference libraries for sharing with multiple users, simultaneous editing of documents, etc. Examples include Microsoft Teams and SharePoint, Google Hangouts and Google Drive, Zoom, etc.

**CONCORDANCE TABLE:** A table used to cross-reference the classification numbers of one records schedule or classification system to another. [See also **CONVERSION LIST**]

**CONDITIONAL RETENTION PERIOD:** A retention period wherein a specific condition must be met before the definite retention that follows can be applied. Conditional retention periods are often used when the records in a records series have ongoing use. An example of a conditional retention period is: “Upon termination of contract + 6 years”. [See also **RETENTION PERIOD** and **DEFINITE RETENTION PERIOD**]

**CONFIDENTIAL RECORD:** A record containing confidential information that requires protection against unauthorized access or disclosure.

**CONVENIENCE COPIES:** Exact copies of an official record where nothing has been added, changed, or deleted, that are produced for convenience of reference. These can be photocopies, electronic copies, or any other copy. Convenience copies are considered transitory records and can be managed as per the [Guidelines for the Management of Transitory Records](#) developed by the Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.

**CONVERSION LIST:** A cross-reference list maintained to facilitate access and retrieval of information. It cross-references the formerly used file numbers/titles with the new ones. [See also **CONCORDANCE TABLE**]

**CONVERSION PROCESS** see **FILE CONVERSION**

**CROSS-REFERENCE:** A notation that directs the user to another location where the record or information may be found or classified.

**CURRENT RECORDS** see **ACTIVE RECORDS**



## D

**DATA:** Representations, in any form, of information or concepts (*The Evidence Act*). [See also **STRUCTURED DATA** and **UNSTRUCTURED DATA**]

**DATABASE:** A structured collection of interrelated data files or an electronic system that manages data files.

**DATA MIGRATION:** The process of transferring electronic data, information, and/or records from one hardware or software system to another, or to subsequent generations of technology in order to ensure continued access to information over time as media, software, hardware, and systems are replaced or become obsolete.

**DEFINITE RETENTION PERIOD:** A retention period that consists of a set, specific number of years (e.g., 6 years). In Saskatchewan government, if records are assigned a definite retention period, the retention is calculated based on the date of file closure. [See also **RETENTION PERIOD**]

**DESIGNATED RECORDS OFFICER (DRO):** An individual in a senior management level position designated by the Deputy Minister/President/CEO of the Institution, who has the authority to sign off on disposal requests on behalf of the head of the institution.

**DESTRUCTION:** An act of disposing of records by obliterating or deleting them permanently, so they can no longer be physically or electronically reconstructed or recovered. Destruction of public records must be formally approved by the Provincial Archivist before any action is taken. [See also **DISPOSAL OF RECORDS**]

**DESTRUCTION NOTIFICATION:** A notification submitted to the Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan stating that records with a Final Disposition decision of 'Destroy' have been destroyed in accordance with an approved records schedule. Institutions must use Destruction Notification Forms provided by the Archives and attach an inventory of the records destroyed. **These notifications are used only by institutions authorized by the Archives.**

**DIGITAL IMAGING:** The process of using imaging technology (e.g., photography, micrographics, scanning, etc.) to capture a representation of the visual characteristics of a document, record,



or object. Digital imaging also encompasses the processing and management of digitally imaged records.

**DIGITAL RECORD** see **ELECTRONIC RECORD**

**DISPOSAL PROCESS:** The process administered by the Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan to ensure government institutions are compliant with the *Archives and Public Records Management Act*. All government institutions must submit disposal requests to obtain approval from the Provincial Archivist for the disposal of public records. For an overview of the process please see the Archives' [Guidelines to Records Disposal](#). [See also **DISPOSAL REQUEST**]

**DISPOSAL OF RECORDS** or **RECORDS DISPOSITION:** Disposal of records or records disposition means either the destruction or the transfer of public records to the Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan. The disposal of public records must be authorized by the Provincial Archivist following the disposal process administered by the Archives before the destruction or the transfer can take place.

**DISPOSAL REQUEST:** A request sent to the Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan requesting authorization from the Provincial Archivist to dispose of records that have met their retention periods as per an approved records schedule. More detailed information about the requirements for disposal requests can be found in the Archives' [Guidelines to Records Disposal](#). [See also **DISPOSAL PROCESS**]

**DISPOSITION** see **DISPOSAL OF RECORDS**

**DOCUMENT:** A single recorded item (letter, memorandum, form, etc.).

**E**

**ELECTRONIC DOCUMENT AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (EDRMS):** A software application or system that is used to manage digital and physical information. It provides functionality for the capture, management, and accessibility of records throughout their lifecycle, according to approved records schedules. EDRMS are designed to integrate with most pre-existing applications such as email, and collaborative platforms, as well as interface with existing paper file systems.



**ELECTRONIC RECORDS:** Data that is recorded or stored on any medium in or by a computer or other similar device; and that can be perceived by a person or a computer or other similar device (*The Evidence Act*). To have a complete electronic record, metadata providing context must also be associated and maintained with the record. Examples of electronic records may include word processor documents, email messages, spreadsheets, scanned documents, hypertext documents, etc.

**ELECTRONIC RECORDS SYSTEMS:** A computer system or other similar device by or in which an electronic record is recorded or stored and includes any procedures related to the recording or storing of an electronic record (*The Evidence Act*).

**ENCRYPTION:** The process of converting data into a code in order to prevent unauthorized access to the information, especially when it is transmitted. Encrypted information can only be decrypted (translated or converted back into the original data) with the use of an algorithm or key.

## F

**FILE CONVERSION:** The process of changing from one electronic file format to another (e.g., word doc to pdf). This can also refer to a process of changing from one system of filing to another (e.g., switching from paper-based filing system to an electronic based filing system).

**FILE PLAN (KEY):** A guide, listing, or index used to assist in the description, classification, filing, retrieval and disposition of files. File plans may include the following types of information: file types, file codes or identification numbers, date ranges, classification numbers, storage locations, retention periods, etc.

**FILE SERIES** see **RECORDS SERIES**

**FINAL DISPOSITION INFORMATION:** Information that indicates whether records that have met their retention period should be destroyed, appraised by, or transferred to the Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan. Final disposition information is only available for Government Institutions that have received specific authorization by the Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.



**FISCAL (FINANCIAL) VALUE:** When referring to records retention, value attributed to records containing evidence of financial transactions.

**FORMAT:** Layout of a record or description of a type of a record in terms of its medium (e.g., text files, electronic data, magnetic tape, microfiche, paper, optical disk, etc.).

**FORMS:** Any documents, which are printed or otherwise produced, with a fixed arrangement of captioned space(s) designed for entering, transferring and extracting prescribed information and data.

**FORMS MANAGEMENT:** Standards for forms and their application that include management techniques for the creation, analysis, design, and revision of all official forms.

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND PROTECTION OF PRIVACY ACT (FOIPP):** An Act respecting a right of access to documents of the Government of Saskatchewan and a right of privacy with respect to personal information held by the Government of Saskatchewan (Office of the Saskatchewan Information and Privacy Commissioner).

**FUNCTION:** A function is what a Government Institution does, or needs to do, in order to achieve its objectives or mandate. It can be a solitary business activity performed by one group, or a group of activities performed by many groups or branches. A function can be performed directly as a result of an Institution's mandate, or it can be an activity or group of activities that facilitates that process.

## G

**GOVERNMENT INSTITUTION:** Saskatchewan Government Ministries, Crown Corporations, Agencies, Boards, Commissions, and other Branches of the Public Service of Saskatchewan.

**GOVERNMENT RECORD** see **OFFICIAL RECORD**

## H

**HISTORICAL VALUE:** The value of a record based on the information it provides





in relation to the history of a government institution or the Province and its people in general.

## I

**IMAGING** see **DIGITAL IMAGING**

**INACTIVE RECORD:** A record that is no longer required to support an organization's activities. Inactive records are eligible for disposal once they meet retention requirements stated in an approved, relevant records schedule. *The terms inactive records and semi-active records are often used interchangeably even though they refer to different life stages of records.* [See also **SEMI-ACTIVE RECORDS**]

**INCLUDES LIST:** In a records schedule (ARMS, ORS, or comprehensive), an includes list is a non-exhaustive listing of the different types of records, or specific examples of records, contained within the records series.

**INDEX:** A systematic guide that provides a point of access to find specific items contained within a larger body of information.

**INFORMATION:** Facts or data that have been given value through analysis, interpretation, communication, or compilation in a meaningful way.

**INFORMATION MANAGEMENT:** The systematic control of information, data, and records from their creation, or receipt, through their processing, distribution, organization, storage, and retrieval to their disposition.

**INTEGRITY:** For a record, integrity refers to the state of being complete and free from tampering or corruption, either purposeful or accidental.

**INVENTORY** see **RECORDS INVENTORY**

## L



**LEGAL VALUE:** Value attributed to a record/records series that provides evidence of government ownership, obligations, and rights, agreements, transactions, etc.

**LIFE CYCLE (OF A RECORD):** The period from a record's creation or receipt, through its useful life, to its destruction or acquisition into the permanent collection of the Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.

## M

**METADATA:** Data that describes the context, content, and structure of a record and enables its searchability/retrieval and management. Metadata is central to maintaining and verifying the authenticity and integrity of a record and ensuring its useability, especially for records in electronic environments. Metadata includes information such as: the context and physical format of a record (e.g., author, date created, date modified, file size, file format, etc.), relationships between the record and other records or systems, its history of creation and use, etc.

**MICROFORM:** Any form, either film or paper, which contains micro-images. Microform is a generic term. Microform includes microfiche and microfilm.

**MICROGRAPHICS:** The techniques associated with the production, handling, and use of microforms.

**MIGRATION** see **DATA MIGRATION**

## N

**NON-GOVERNMENT RECORDS:** Records that do not pertain to any aspect of Government business and therefore are not subject to the requirements of *The Archives and Public Records Management Act* and should not be kept in government records storage systems. Examples of non-government records include personal correspondence, personal photographs, personal research, documentation of professional associations in which one takes part as an individual rather than as a representative of a Government Institution, etc.

## O



**OPTICAL CHARACTER RECOGNITION (OCR):** The use of computer software for the identification and conversion of characters or text in and digital image (e.g., scanned document, photo of a document, etc.) to a machine-readable format, allowing better searchability and manipulation of the data.

**OFFICIAL RECORD or PUBLIC RECORD:** A “public record” means the “official record” made or received by a government institution in carrying out its business transactions and operations. Public records also include ministerial records, records made or received by the Legislative Assembly, the Legislative Assembly Service or an Officer of the Legislative Assembly and courts. An official record can be the original or the only copy of a record regardless of its format, including but not limited to, microfilm, paper or electronic (e.g., digital images, structured or unstructured data, etc.) or any other replacement copy of a record designated as official after verification. Public/official records must be classified, retained and disposed of as per *The Archives and Public Records Management Act*.

**OPERATIONAL RECORD:** Records which relate 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 are unique to each Government Institution.

**OPERATIONAL RECORDS SCHEDULES** see **OPERATIONAL RECORDS SYSTEM**

**OPERATIONAL RECORDS SYSTEM (ORS):** Function-based classification system and retention schedule for operational records of a specific Government Institution. An ORS is supplementary to ARMS2014. An ORS is developed by an individual Ministry or Institution in consultation with the Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.

## P

**PUBLICATIONS:** Any published material with the exception of master copies of internal publications. *The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act* specifies that Government Institutions must deposit eight copies of internal publications with the Legislative Library.

**PUBLIC RECORD** see **OFFICIAL RECORD**

**PUBLIC RECORDS COMMITTEE:** A committee established under *The Archives and Public Records Management Act* which reviews and approves records schedules for all public records.



## R

**RECORD:** Recorded information, regardless of format, medium or characteristics, that is written photographed, recorded, or stored in any manner. Examples of records include but are not limited to: a file folder (paper or electronic) containing a document or a collection of documents, microfilm, maps, drawing, photograph, graphics, microfilm, structured or unstructured data, etc.

**RECORDS SERIES:** A grouping of records that relate to a specific business function and share the same retention requirements. In a big bucket schedule, records series are synonymous with “buckets”.

**RECORDS APPRAISAL:** The process used by the Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan to determine the historical value of records. Records deemed to have historical value are acquired by the Archives and preserved in the permanent collection.

**RECORDS CENTRE:** A facility that provides cost-effective centralized storage for the long-term housing of semi-active and inactive records. A records centre provides secure and environmentally controlled storage for records in paper format or other physical media.

**RECORDS DISPOSITION** see **DISPOSAL OF RECORDS**

**RECORDS INVENTORY:** An analytical list of the records or part of the records of a government institution. The inventory identifies types of records and provides a description of records/records series. At a minimum, it should include titles of records, description of records’ contents including purpose and function, format, physical extent, and date range of the records. It may also include any other information which may have bearing on the records’ classification, retention, and disposal. Inventories can be used for the purposes of disposal of records, development of records schedules, tracking active and inactive records, etc.

**RECORDS MANAGEMENT** see **INFORMATION MANAGEMENT**

**RECORDS RETENTION** see **RETENTION PERIOD**



**RECORDS SCHEDULE:** An official policy document that incorporates a classification system with a retention schedule and intellectually arranges records into logical groupings (generally referred to as records series or “buckets” in a big bucket schedule) based on business functions.

**REQUEST FOR APPRAISAL:** A request submitted to the Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan to instigate an archival review of records that have met their retention period in accordance with an approved records schedule and have been assigned a Final Disposition decision of ‘Appraise’. **These requests are used only by institutions authorized by the Archives.**

**RETENTION PERIOD:** The length of time a record must be retained to meet business, fiscal, and legal requirements. Retention periods are indicated in approved records schedules.

## S

**SASKATCHEWAN ADMINISTRATIVE RECORDS SYSTEM (SARS):** The former Government-wide retention schedule for administrative records. SARS is no longer applicable and was superseded by ARMS, ARMS2006, and, most recently, by ARMS2014.

**SCHEDULE** see **RECORDS SCHEDULE.**

**SCOPE NOTES:** A description of the subject and/or functional content of a record series.

**SECTION:** The major divisions within ARMS2014, ORS, or comprehensive schedules representing groupings of related administrative or operational functions.

**SEMI-ACTIVE RECORDS:** Records which are referred to infrequently and are not required currently for constant use. They are retained to satisfy administrative, operational, fiscal, or legal retention requirements but may be removed from expensive office space to a lower-cost storage facility until the retention period has expired. *The terms inactive records and semi-active records are often used interchangeably even though they refer to different life stages of records.* [See also **INACTIVE RECORDS**]

**SOCIAL MEDIA:** Electronic communications through public-facing platforms that allow users to create and share content such as textual information, messages, videos, images, etc., and participate in networking and social communities. Examples of social media platforms include Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.



**SOURCE RECORD:** The original form of a record where the format of the official record has been changed (e.g., scanning a paper document to create an electronic version which will then be designated the official record). For information on the management of Source Records, refer to the Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan's [Source Records Disposal Guidelines](#).

**STRUCTURED DATA:** Data that is arranged and stored in a predefined format that allows for it to be easily inputted, manipulated, analyzed, and retrieved. Information captured in defined fields, such as in databases and spreadsheets, is an example of structured data. [See also **DATA**]

**SUBJECT FILES:** Files containing records relating to specific subjects or functions that are arranged according to common informational content. The purpose of subject files is to bring together records and information on the same topic in order to facilitate information retrieval.

## T

**TRANSITORY RECORDS:** Records of temporary usefulness that are needed only for a limited period, to complete a routine task, or to prepare an ongoing document, but are not required to meet statutory obligations or to sustain administrative or operational functions. For information on the management of Transitory Records, refer to the Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan's [Guidelines for the Management of Transitory Records](#).

## U

**UNSCHEDULED RECORDS:** Records that are not included in an approved retention schedule and for which a retention period has not yet been determined. Unscheduled public records are considered permanent records in Saskatchewan Government until they are captured by an approved records schedule.

**UNSTRUCTURED DATA:** Data that is not easily organized or searchable, stored in a manner that is not pre-defined, or falls under a pre-defined data model. Examples of unstructured data include word-processor documents, textual records, audio, video, emails, social media posts, etc. [See also **DATA**]

**USEABILITY (USEABLE RECORD):** The characteristic of being easily located, retrieved, presented legibly, transferred, migrated, and interpreted within a reasonable time period. A



useable record must also possess context, meaning that it must be able to be linked back to the business activity or original purpose and other associated transactions (e.g., using metadata with electronic records).

## V

**VITAL RECORDS:** Records that are essential to the operations of an organization and allow business continuity under abnormal circumstances. Vital records contain information needed to conduct emergency operations, resume services following a disaster, and re-establish the legal, financial, and functional responsibilities of the institution.

## W

**WORKING COPY:** A duplicate or copy of a document that may be marked up or annotated.

**WORKING PAPERS:** Material used in the development of agreements, contracts, policies, or any other documents. Includes drafts, working copies, background information, reference material, etc.