



PROVINCIAL ARCHIVES
OF SASKATCHEWAN



Glossary of Records Management Terms

A

ACTIVE RECORD: A record that is referenced or used on a regular basis. Active records are usually retained in offices close to users.

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

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, material, finances, human resources, and information systems.

ADMINISTRATIVE RECORDS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM 2014 (ARMS2014): A Government-wide schedule for 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 ACT: *The Archives and Public Records Management Act* sets out the requirements for the proper disposal of all public documents. It also gives authority to collect the records of the Government of Saskatchewan deemed to possess long term historical value to the Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.

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

AUDIT TRAIL: A procedure that provides documentation for regular examination and verification.

B

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.

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 other subject (i.e. project file, client file, employee file, etc.).

CENTRALIZED RECORDS STORAGE SYSTEM: A system providing housing for all active records in one location.

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 (i.e. functions, subjects, chronology) using numbers, letters or key words for identification.

CONCORDANCE TABLE: A table used to convert the item numbers of one classification system to another.

CONDITIONAL RETENTION PERIOD: A retention period that is ongoing until a specific condition has been met. Typically, a definite retention period begins when the condition has been met. Conditional retention periods are often used when the records in a records series have an ongoing use.

CONFIDENTIAL RECORD: A record containing information that requires protection against unauthorized access or disclosure in accordance with a security classification system.

CONVENIENCE COPIES: Copies of records produced for short-term reference. These can be photocopies, electronic records or any other copy provided an official copy, classified and scheduled, exists and has been identified.

Convenience copies do not need to be scheduled. They can be disposed of

without written authorization from the Provincial Archivist.

CONVERSION LIST/CONCORDANCE TABLE: A list maintained to facilitate access and retrieval of information until a new classification system is adopted. It cross-references the formerly used file numbers/titles with the new ones.

CONVERSION PROCESS see **FILE CONVERSION**

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

CURRENT RECORDS see **ACTIVE RECORDS**

D

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

DESIGNATED RECORDS OFFICER (DRO): A position, at the senior management level within an Institution, which has the final responsibility for authorizing the disposal of records. The DRO must be designated by the Deputy Minister/President/CEO of the Institution.

DESTRUCTION: Destruction occurs when records have met their required retention period, have been reviewed by the Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan, have been determined to possess no long-term historical significance, and have received authorization for destruction from the Provincial Archivist.

DESTRUCTION NOTIFICATION: A notification submitted to the Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan stating that records with a Final Disposition of 'Destroy' have been destroyed in accordance with an approved records schedule. A Destruction Notification Form provided by the PAS must be used.

These notifications are used only by accredited institutions.

DIGITAL RECORD see **ELECTRONIC RECORD**

DISPOSAL OF RECORDS: Disposal means either destruction of records by an Institution or the transfer of records to the Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.

DISPOSAL REQUEST: A request sent to the Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan requesting authorization to dispose of records that have met their retention periods.

Disposal requests must be made on a Disposal Request Form provided by the Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan. An inventory must accompany the request.

DISPOSITION see **FINAL DISPOSITION**

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

DRAFT: A version of a document that is not finalized.

E

ELECTRONIC RECORDS: Any records communicated and maintained by means of electronic equipment, including word processor documents, emails messages, spreadsheets, scanned documents, hypertext documents, etc.

F

FILE CONVERSION: The process of changing from one filing system to another.

FILE OPERATIONS: The activities necessary to maintain a records classification system. File operation functions include: mail management, sorting, registration, classification, indexing and cross-reference, location control, filing, charge-out, distribution, recall and search, re-filing, physical maintenance, purging, retention and disposal.

FILE SERIES see **RECORDS SERIES**

FILING: The action of sorting records into predetermined sequences.

FINAL DISPOSITION: Information that indicates whether records that have met their retention period may be destroyed or must be appraised by the Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan. Final Disposition Information is only available for Government Institutions that have received accreditation.

FISCAL VALUE: Value attributed to a record/records series that provides documentation of use of governmental funds necessary for audit or operational purposes, data necessary to compile the annual report or to complete the organization's tax return, or documentation of other financial transactions (i.e. purchases and sales).

FORMAT: Layout of a record or description of a type of a record in terms of its storage medium (i.e. electronic data, magnetic tape, microfiche, paper, optical disk, CD Rom, 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: The centralized establishment of standards for forms and their application. This includes management techniques for the creation, analysis, design and revision of all official forms. Forms management assures better quality forms through controls on their design and production, greater efficiency in gathering and processing of information, and the economical and efficient distribution of forms.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND PROTECTION OF PRIVACY ACT: Legislation that creates a general right of public access to information held by Government Institutions. While providing the right of access, it ensures the protection of private information.

FUNCTION: A function is anything 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 something that facilitates that process.

G

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

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, vouchers, papers, etc. which are received, created, deposited or held by an office of the Government of Saskatchewan.

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, as determined by the Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.

I

INACTIVE RECORD: A record that is no longer required for an organization's activities. Inactive records are eligible for disposal once they meet retention requirements stated in an approved, relevant records schedule. Disposal of government records requires the authorization of the Provincial Archivist.

INDEX: A systematic guide which allows access to specific items contained within a larger body of information.

INFORMATION: Data that has been given value through analysis, interpretation or compilation in a meaningful way.

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

INVENTORY see **RECORDS INVENTORY**

K

KEYWORD: A significant word in the abstract, title or text of a work which is used as a descriptor.

L

LEGAL VALUE: Value attributed to a record/records series that documents government ownership, agreements, transactions, etc.

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

M

MICROFICHE: A type of microform in the shape of a rectangular sheet, having one or more microimages usually arranged in a grid pattern.

MICROFILM: A type of resolution film used in micrographics containing an image greatly reduced in size from the source document.

MICROFORM: Any form, either film or paper, which contains microimages. Microform is a generic term.

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

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*. The following are considered to be non-government records and can be disposed of without reference to a retention schedule when no longer needed: external publications and non-work-related records.

O

OFFICIAL RECORD: The official copy of a record that is retained within a Government Institution for legal, fiscal, operational or historical purposes. It exists to fulfill long-term financial, legal and/or audit requirements. It can be the original and only copy of the record or a replacement copy that is designated as official.

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 RECORDS see **GOVERNMENT RECORDS**

PUBLIC RECORDS COMMITTEE: Committee established under *The Archives and Public Records Management Act* which reviews and approves records schedules.

R

RECORD: Recorded information, regardless of medium or characteristics. A record can refer to a single document or a group of documents in a file folder. It most commonly refers to a file folder (paper or electronic) which may contain a single document or many documents.

RECORDS SERIES: A grouping of records that relate to a specific business function and share the same retention requirements.

RECORDS APPRAISAL: The process used by the Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan to determine the historical value of records. Records deemed to have historical value will be acquired by the PAS.

RECORDS DISPOSITION: Either the destruction of records or the transfer of records to the Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan. The disposition of records cannot proceed until the retention period has been met and approval of the Provincial Archivist has been received.

RECORDS INVENTORY: An analytical list of the records or part of the records of a unit of Government. A records inventory may have various applications (i.e. development of a records schedule, disposal of records, conversion to ARMS2014 or ORS, etc.) 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, date range of the records. It may also include any other information which may have bearing on the records' classification, retention and disposal.

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 arranges records into logical groupings (generally referred to as records series) based on business functions.

REQUEST FOR APPRAISAL: A request for archival review of records that have met their retention period and been designated 'Appraise' by Final Disposition information. **These requests are used only by accredited institutions.**

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

SASKATCHEWAN ADMINISTRATIVE RECORDS SYSTEM (SARS): Former Government-wide standard for administrative records. SARS is no longer applicable and has been superseded by ARMS, ARMS2006 and, most recently, by ARMS2014.

SCHEDULE see **RECORDS SCHEDULE.**

SCOPE NOTES: A description of the subject content of a record series, including a listing of the different types of records contained within the series.

SECTION: The major division of ARMS2014 or ORS representing the general 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. (See also ACTIVE RECORDS and INACTIVE RECORDS).

SOURCE RECORD: The original form of a record where the format of the official record has been changed (i.e. 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](#).

SUBJECT FILES: Files containing records relating to specific subjects or functions and 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 of time, 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 records pertaining to programs or functions which are ongoing are considered permanent records in Saskatchewan Government until a schedule is developed for them.

V

VITAL RECORDS: Records of the Government which contain information essential to conduct of emergency operations during and immediately following a disaster, resumption/continuation of Government services or operations, reestablishment of the legal, financial and functional responsibilities of Government, and re-establishment of the rights and obligations of individuals, corporate bodies and other governments with respect to the Government of Saskatchewan.

W

WEBSITE: A generic term that refers to all types of web-based sites, including public websites, extranets and intranets.

WORKING COPY: A duplicate or copy of a document which 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.