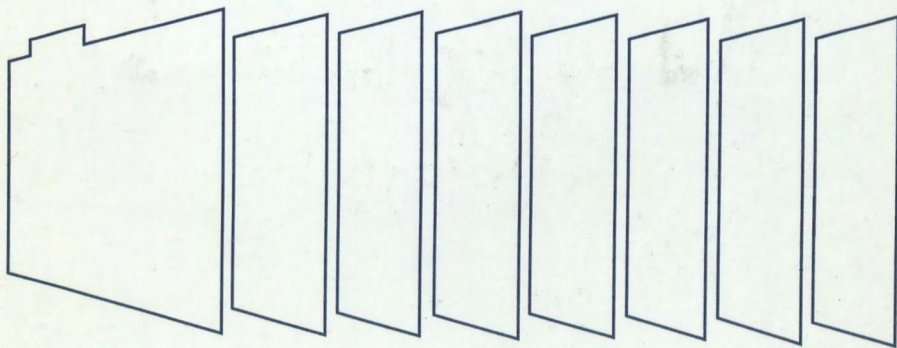




Department of Justice
Canada

Ministère de la Justice
Canada

A GUIDE TO RECORDS MANAGEMENT SERVICES



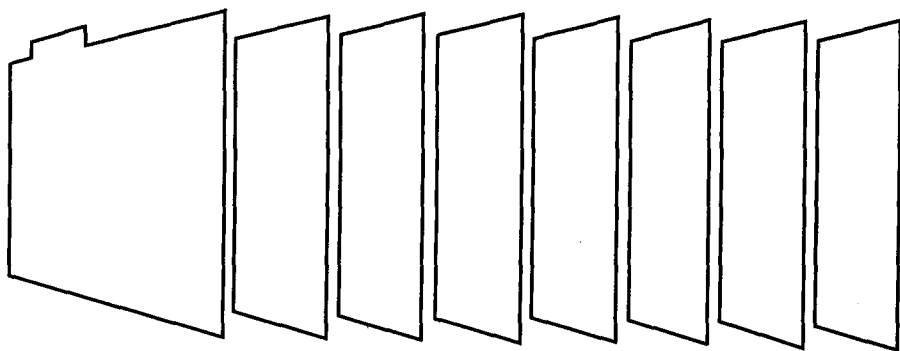
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JUSTICE CANADA

A GUIDE TO RECORDS MANAGEMENT SERVICES



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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this guide is to provide employees with an overview of the Records Management Section and the operating procedures required to support it. To receive maximum benefits from the system and ensure the integrity of Departmental information holdings, the understanding and full cooperation of employees is essential.

The primary function of Records Management Services is to establish and maintain uniformity in the management of records holdings within the Department of Justice.

Records Management provides various services and programs. The most visible of these are mail and messenger services, files control, classification and indexing, and information retrieval. Other programs include records scheduling and retirement, and records systems implementation and revision.

AUTHORITIES AND REFERENCES

Records management policies and procedures have been developed in accordance with the:

- Management of Government Information Holdings Policy
- *Access to Information Act and Privacy Act*
- *National Archives of Canada Act*

MISSION STATEMENT, POLICY AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Mission

To manage the Departmental Records Management program to ensure information contained in records is available to officials in support of decision-making; to comply with the provisions of the Access to Information and Privacy legislation involving the effective identification, classification and retrieval, storage and protection, receipt and transmission, retention and preservation or disposal of records; and to manage the policies, systems, procedures, operations, space, equipment and staff to administer the records.

Policy

It is the policy of the Department that a high standard of records management be achieved and maintained to fulfill operational requirements and ensure the most economical use of resources by:

- increasing the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of records operations through reduction of paperwork and institution of technical improvements;
- attaining uniformity of practices and procedures according to operational and administrative requirements;
- responding to priorities and initiatives by instituting or revising procedures and allocating staff and resources; and
- identifying and retaining valuable and precedential records for long-term reference.

Responsibilities

The Manager, Records Management Services has:

- line responsibility for all records management, mail operations and messenger services at headquarters and decentralized units; and
- functional responsibility for records management in regional offices and Departmental Legal Services Units.

MAIL AND MESSENGER SERVICES

These services include:

- receipt and distribution of incoming mail;
- dispatch of outgoing mail by various methods; and
- distribution of urgent "by-hand" messages in the National Capital Region.

a) Receipt of mail

All correspondence addressed to the Department is received in the Mailroom. Mail for headquarters personnel is sorted and delivered to the addressee or the senior officer responsible for assigning correspondence. In most cases, mail stations are serviced four times daily at set times during regular working hours. Contact the Mailroom supervisor for information regarding pick-up and delivery service to your office.

b) Sending internal mail

All internal correspondence should be placed in interoffice (economy) envelopes and clearly addressed with the name and room number of the recipient. Material of a sensitive nature should be placed in a sealed envelope and normal procedures for security-classified correspondence applied.

c) Scheduled pick-ups and deliveries in the National Capital Region

Mail is picked up from and delivered to Departmental Legal Services Units, decentralized sections and other offices in the National Capital Region daily, according to the schedules outlined in Administrative

Bulletin No. 1990-3. All by-hand requests, including those with "urgent" tags, will be delivered on the next scheduled run, except in unusual circumstances. A "Pick-up and Delivery Order" form is not required for scheduled service.

d) Scheduled deliveries to regional offices

The Montreal and Toronto offices are serviced every working day. All other regional offices are serviced Monday, Wednesday and Friday. A specific request is required for additional service. Material for dispatch to regional offices must be received in the Mailroom before 4:00 p.m. Please indicate the name of the recipient and the regional office on the envelope.

e) Special by-hand deliveries: local, national, international

If scheduled services are not adequate for a particular situation, the Mailroom supervisor must be informed of the urgency and operational requirements in order to select alternative services. Material for urgent dispatch must be received by 4:00 p.m. if it is to be processed that day. These services require the completion of a "Pick-Up and Delivery Order" form. Please include the following information on the form:

- i) name and complete address (deliveries cannot be made to a postal box number);
- ii) telephone number of addressee, where possible;
- iii) return address, bearing sender's name, room number and telephone number; and
- iv) any special instructions.

In addition, all items must be properly wrapped or inserted in appropriate envelopes.

HEADQUARTERS RECORDS OPERATIONS PROCEDURES

File Control

a) Requesting a file

If the file number is known, the file may be requested from the File Control Centre. Files may be obtained through either a telephone call or a visit to the File Control Centre. If the file number is not known or

a new file is required, please refer to the section on information classification and retrieval.

b) Requesting a bring-forward

A bring-forward (B.F.) system allows staff to have files sent to them automatically on a stipulated date. The inside cover of every file jacket contains a B.F. column. If you currently have the file, fill in the date on which you require it, with your initials, and return it to the File Control Centre. If you do not have the file, simply contact the File Control Centre and inform them of the file number, the date it is required, and your name.

c) Passing a file

It is crucial that Records staff know the location of all files at all times. When passing or transferring a file to another person or office, please be sure to inform the File Control Centre by telephone or in writing. Include the file number, the date and names of persons from whom and to whom the file is being passed.

Information classification and retrieval

a) Requesting a new file

Records Management Services must be notified when there is a need to create a new Departmental file. It is the responsibility of Records Management to assign file numbers, assemble the files, and enter the relevant information in the database.

Please provide as much information as possible so that the file may be comprehensively indexed : names of parties, facts pertaining to the case, relevant statutes, and any key words or phrases which would assist in retrieving the file.

It is preferable to submit requests in writing, with the original material or copies attached.

b) Information retrieval

If a particular file, opinion or item of information is required, and the file number is not known, classifications staff should be contacted by telephone or in person. The database may be searched by name,

subject, statute or term, from the earliest existing Justice file to the present.

As in the procedures for requesting a new file, as much information as possible must be provided to Records staff to assist them in retrieving accurate information from the more than 300,000 files in the index.

RECORDS SYSTEMS IMPLEMENTATION AND IMPROVEMENT

Another service offered by Records Management at headquarters, Departmental Legal Services Units and regional offices, is records systems implementation and improvement. Records staff will enhance or revise both automated and manual systems when:

- the current records system has proven ineffective through faulty design or neglect;
- the Department undergoes a major organizational change;
- new priorities or activities have been assigned to a specific section of the Department;
- an increase in activities necessitates a major expansion in pertinent records; or
- results of periodic audits conducted by Records Management indicate a need for improvement.

For further information on Records Systems Implementation and Improvement, please contact the Records Manager, Assistant Manager or Project Officer.

RECORDS RETENTION AND DISPOSAL

Records Management is responsible for the systematic scheduling, retention, and disposal of files which are no longer active or current for operational purposes. These procedures are governed by Departmental retention and disposal schedules approved by the National Archivist and senior Justice officials.

When you have determined that documents or files may be placed in semi-active or dormant storage, the Records Retirement Unit must be notified. Staff will make arrangements to have material properly catalogued, boxed, stored and/or preserved. Important records are

retained in dormant storage facilities, National Archives storage centres or the Historical Branch of Archives. Access to these records may be obtained by telephoning the Records Retirement Unit.

For further information, please contact the Records Scheduling and Disposal Officer.

DEPARTMENTAL LEGAL SERVICES UNITS AND REGIONAL OFFICES

The Manager, Records Management Services, has functional responsibility for records management in DLSUs and regional offices, including implementation and improvement of records systems and procedures.

The General or Senior Counsel is ultimately responsible for maintenance and control of the system. Administrative officers, assisted by records support staff, have responsibility for records and mail operations in their respective offices.

CLIENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Every Departmental employee is responsible for following proper procedures in accessing, using and returning files. Once a file has been charged out to an individual, that person becomes fully responsible for its safekeeping until it is returned to Records Management or officially transferred to another staff member. Responsibility for finding a misplaced file rests with the person whose name appears last in the charge-out records.

When you use a file, you are also responsible for:

- putting an appropriate file number on every piece of officially generated correspondence;
- ensuring that the original or a copy of every piece of officially generated correspondence is placed on file in chronological order or, if the file is not in your possession, is forwarded to Records Management for filing;
- ensuring, through enquiries to Records Management staff, that every new or unclassified piece of official correspondence has a corresponding Departmental file; and

- consulting with Records Management staff prior to establishing, revising or amending office procedures respecting records or mail activities.

CONCLUSION

If you have any questions or would like to arrange for a tour of the Records Management facilities, the staff will be more than willing to assist you. You are also encouraged to contact the Records Manager concerning any suggestions or problems you may have.

BASIC OPERATIONS OF A RECORDS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

