



Guidance on Information Management in a Minister's Office

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d'un ministre

Guidance on Information Management in a Minister's Office

Issue

Information in a minister's office must be managed according to the *Policy on Service and Digital*.

Context

This guidance provides advice on the management of information in ministers' offices in support of section 4.3 of the *Directive on Service and Digital*. While ministers' offices are not government institutions in and of themselves and are not part of a government institution, the *Policies for Ministers' Offices* stipulate that they are subject to Treasury Board policies and regulations unless specifically exempted. As such, the *Policy on Service and Digital* and its various supporting policy instruments, such as the *Email Management Services Configuration Requirements*, must be implemented in these offices. Information of business value must be managed as set out in the *Policy on Service and Digital*.

Guidance

While the language in the *Policy on Service and Digital* and its supporting instruments is directed at deputy heads or departmental chief information officers, ministers must review the requirements for each and develop

processes and mechanisms to attain the expected results. These activities:

- facilitate efficient and effective information management (IM) in supporting program and service delivery
- foster informed decision-making
- facilitate accountability, transparency and collaboration

Note: Similar to agents of Parliament, ministers are solely responsible for monitoring and ensuring compliance with IM policy instruments within their offices and for responding to cases of non-compliance.

Types of information

Ministers will usually have information in their offices that fall into four general categories:

1. Cabinet documents
2. government records
3. ministerial records (as defined in section 2 of the *Library and Archives of Canada Act*)
4. personal and political records

Each of these categories has its own set of considerations under the *Access to Information Act*, the *Privacy Act* and the *Canada Evidence Act*. Ministers must ensure that Cabinet documents, institutional records, ministerial records, and personal and political records are each maintained separately. Advice on this subject can be obtained from Library and Archives Canada's *Guidelines on Managing Records in a Minister's Office (2020)*.

1. Cabinet documents

Special precautions must be taken to guarantee the security of Cabinet documents in accordance with the *Policy on the Security of Cabinet Confidences* and related standards and guidance material established by the Privy Council Office. Access to Cabinet documents is restricted to those who

have a valid need-to-know. When a Cabinet item has been dealt with, the associated Cabinet documents must be returned to the Privy Council Office. Successive prime ministers have agreed that the Clerk of the Privy Council will work with deputy ministers and will ensure that confidences of the King's Privy Council for Canada contained in records left in government custody by Cabinet ministers will be protected from access by successive governments.

2. Government records

Government records in the office of a minister must be managed according to *Policy on Service and Digital*. As set out in Institutional Records in the Office of a Minister (96/021), records in all media (for example, physical, digital, photographic, cartographic) under the control of an institution in a minister's office and that have historic or archival value are required to be transferred to the care and control of Library and Archives Canada, with few exceptions.

3. Ministerial records

Ministerial records must be transferred from the office of the minister to Library and Archives Canada in accordance with schedules approved by the Librarian and Archivist of Canada. Ministers can obtain advice from Library and Archives Canada about this matter.

4. Personal and political records

Upon leaving office, ministers may avail themselves of secure storage facilities and archival services offered by Library and Archives Canada for their personal and political papers.

Records in a minister's office may be subject to the *Access to Information Act*. Advice and assistance on the applicability of the *Access to Information Act* is available from the List of access to information and privacy coordinators by

institution.

Ministers must provide for the proper processing, handling, storage and, where appropriate, disposal of categorized and other sensitive information in their offices, no matter the type of information. Advice and assistance on meeting government-wide standards for physical and digital information security is available from the departmental chief security officer. Names of officers by organization are available by searching Chief Security Officers (accessible only on the Government of Canada network).

Further information

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