



What is Records Management?



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Records management is something that people do every day. Each day we decide what we will do with the paper, e-mail, and computer files that we create and that other people send to us. We decide if we are going to keep these records or throw them out. Then we decide how we are going to organize them so that we can find them again.

The purpose of records management is to help us make the right decision about which records we should keep, and how we should keep them. In other words, records management is concerned with the systematic control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use, and disposal of records.

Records management includes:

- Policies, procedures and standards for handling records.
- Classification systems and retention schedules.
- Creating, using, and keeping track of records in the office.
- Finding ways to store records as cheaply and efficiently as possible.
- Protecting records that need to be kept, and disposing of records that are no longer needed.

Future bulletins will look at the different areas that make up records management.

Benefits of Records Management

The Territorial Government creates and keeps records so that it can keep track of what it has done and what it has decided to do. The role of records management is to make sure that managers and the staff who deliver programs have the information that they need, when they need it.

There are a number of benefits to having a records management program:

- It helps the government provide services in an orderly, efficient, consistent, and equitable way.
- It supports policy and management decisions.

Not “Just the Files”!

Records Management is concerned with records in all media, including:

- Paper
- Computer records, such as e-mail, spreadsheets, presentations, images,
- Photographs and film
- Video and audio tape
- CDs and CD-ROMs



- It supports current and future research and development activities.
- It helps the government meet legal obligations and protects the government in case of lawsuits.
- It helps to protect the rights of the public and keep the government accountable to the public.
- It helps to protect the rights of employees.
- It helps build a corporate memory.
- It helps preserve the history of the NWT.
- It reduces costs by reducing duplication, improving retrieval times, providing more cost-effective records storage options, and streamlining records disposal.



What is a Records Management Program?

Each government department has a records management program. The departmental records management programs are designed to:

- Assign responsibilities for records to employees and management.
 - Design filing systems, classification systems, and retention schedules.
 - Create, organize, and keep track of records in the department.
- Implement retention schedules.
 - Authorize the disposition of records.
 - Coordinate records management activities in the department.
 - Develop and implement procedures for handling records within the department.

A Records Coordinator directs each departmental records management program.

Government-Wide Records Management Program

Each department contributes to the government-wide records management program. The Records Management Unit of Public Works and Services directs and supports the government-wide program.

The government-wide program is designed to:

- Create government-wide policies, procedures, and standards.
- Encourage standardization across government departments.
- Provide educational opportunities for records coordinators and departmental staff.
- Reduce costs by providing central services and standing offers in areas such as off-site records storage and micrographics.

For more information on Records Management, please contact your department's records coordinator, or the Records Management Unit at: 920-3009 or 873-7627

