Guideline

Classification Plan for Operational Records

Governance

Authority:	Management of Information Act (MOIA)
Audience:	Information Management professionals and other resources responsible for the implementation and operation of a records and information management system (also referred to as an Information Management Program) within a department or other public body, as defined in the Management of Information Act.
Compliance Level:	Recommended
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	Application and Information Management Services
	Information Management Services
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Forward questions and/or comments related to this document to IM@gov.nl.ca.

Table of Contents

1.0   Overview

This Classification Plan for Operational Records Guideline outlines requirements necessary to develop and implement a classification plan for a department and/or other public body's business functions. Operational records are typically records of programs, projects, or those related to service delivery. A records classification plan identifies and organizes records by business functions according to standard conventions, methods and procedural rules.

This guideline includes information and recommendations on developing a classification plan for operational records and preparing the classification plan for use. Its purpose is:

—— To provide a guideline for departments and other public bodies to develop a classification plan for operational records that complements existing standards including the Corporate Records and Information Management Standard (CRIMS); and

—— To ensure that a department's and public body's classification plan accurately represents their mandated functions and that it can easily support good IM practices.

Guidelines are recommended actions, general approaches and operational behaviors. Generally, guidelines are a description that clarifies what should be done and how to achieve the objectives set out in policies, directives and standards.

Guidelines issued by the OCIO provide a recommended approach, as they take into consideration the varying nature of information management programs.

2.0   Purpose

The Classification Plan for Operational Records Guideline provides a recommended approach that will serve to drive the design, development, implementation and management of an effective IM Program. This Guideline is part of a broader GuideBook that supports the requirement set forth in the MOIA for permanent heads of departments and other public bodies to implement a records and information management system.

The GuideBook, also known as the Guide to IM for Public Bodies, includes the following guidelines.

1.0 Foundation

- 1.1 IM Governance, Accountability and Organization
- 1.2 IM Vision, Mission and Guiding Principles
- 1.3 IM Legal and Regulatory Framework
- 1.4 IM Program Plan

2.0 Components

- 2.1 IM Policy Instruments
- 2.2 IM Performance Measurement
- 2.3 Service Continuity
- 2.4 Education and Awareness for IM Professionals
- 2.5 IM Education and Awareness for Employees
- 2.6 Records Storage and Imaging
- 2.7 Information Protection

3.0 Tools

- 3.1 Records and Information Inventory
- **3.2 Classification Plan for Operational Records**
- 3.3 Disposal of Records

Graphic: 1 - GuideBook Contents

Expected Deliverable(s)

1) The development and implementation of a classification plan for operational records will provide access to vital information more efficiently to support decision-making.

3.0 Definitions and Acronyms

A complete listing of terms are located on the OCIO website - Information Management and Protection (IM&P) Glossary of Terms.

Corporate Records Information Management Standard (CRIMS) – an information management standard (classification plan and records retention and disposal schedule) used for the management of corporate records of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador's departments and other public bodies, as defined under the Management of Information Act (MOIA). (Source: OCIO)

Disposition – processes associated with implementing the final stage in the life cycle of a record. Disposition could include destruction, transitory, transfer decisions and permanent retention by departments or other public bodies. (Source: OCIO). Further information can be referenced in ISO 15489-1:2016.

Disposition Authority – written authorization for a public body to carry out the range of processes associated with the final stage in the lifecycle of a record, including retention, destruction, transfer, or transitory functions. (Source: OCIO).

One Time Disposal Submission – a disposition authority, which applies to records in any format and authorizes, once approved, disposal of records in a legal manner. The OTD can be for records of a specific branch, division or program within a department or other public body. It can encompass all types of records within an organization, or may be limited to specific record types or record series but does not include active or semi active records. (Source: OCIO)

Public Body – As defined under the MOIA is:
i) a department created under the Executive Council Act or a branch of the executive government of the province,
ii) a corporation, the ownership of which, or a majority of shares of which, is vested in the Crown,
iii) a corporation, commission, board or other body, the majority of the members of which, or the majority of members of the board of directors of which, are appointed under an Act of the province, the Lieutenant-Governor in Council or a minister of the Crown,
iv) a court established under an Act of the province, and
v) the House of Assembly and committees of the House of Assembly. (Source: MOIA)

Record – means a correspondence, memorandum, form, paper, parchment, manuscript, map, plan, drawing, painting, print, photograph, magnetic tape, computer disc, microform, electronically produced document and other documentary material regardless of physical form or characteristic. (Source: MOIA)

> **Corporate Record** – often referred to as an administrative record, are those created by all organizations to support administrative functions, including human resources, general administration, facilities management, financial management, information and information technology management, and equipment and supplies (material) management. (Source: CRIMS)
>
> **Government Record** – a record created by or received by a public body in the conduct of its affairs and includes a Cabinet record, transitory record and an abandoned record. Disposal of a government record must be sanctioned by a records retention and disposal schedule (RRDS) that has been approved by the Government Records Committee (GRC). (Source: MOIA)
>
> **Operational Record** – a record that reflects the unique mandate of an organization. Records of programs, projects, and service delivery are examples of operational records. Unlike corporate records, these will be different in each organization. (Source: OCIO)
>
> **Transitory Record –** a government record of temporary usefulness in any format or medium having no ongoing value beyond an immediate and minor transaction or the preparation of a subsequent record. Transitory records can be securely destroyed when no longer of value without authorization of the Government Records Committee. (Source: MOIA)

Records Retention and Disposal Schedule (RRDS) – a disposition authority that supports the lifecycle management of a government record. The Management of Information Act (MOIA), OCIO and the Government Records Committee (GRC) approve two types of RRDS submissions (RRDS for Operational Records and One Time Disposal) for use by departments and other public bodies for the legal retention, transfer and disposal of government records. A RRDS:

— defines the content of the record series or types;
— links the records to the organizational unit and business process;
— dictates how long the records need to be retained in active and semi-active storage to meet operational and legislative requirements; and
— authorizes the disposal of information in a legal manner through secure destruction or transfer to The Rooms Provincial Archives. (Source: OCIO)

The table below includes common abbreviations used by OCIO as well as acronyms found within this document.

Abbreviation	Description
CRIMS	Corporate Records Information Management Standard
GRC	Government Records Committee
IM	Information Management
IM&P	Information Management and Protection
IP	Information Protection
MOIA	Management of Information Act
OCIO	Office of the Chief Information Officer
OTD	One Time Disposal
PRC	Provincial Records Centre
RRDS	Records Retention and Disposal Schedule

4.0   Recommended Approach

The intent of this Guideline is to provide recommended actions, general approaches and operational behaviors that when implemented will serve to drive the design, development, implementation and management of an effective IM Program through the development of a classification plan for operational records.

After reading this document, a department or other public body should be able to begin to classify operational records created, received, processed and used by a department or other public body.

The phases detailed in this section describe the planning, research, communications and training required for the successful implementation of a classification plan for operational records.
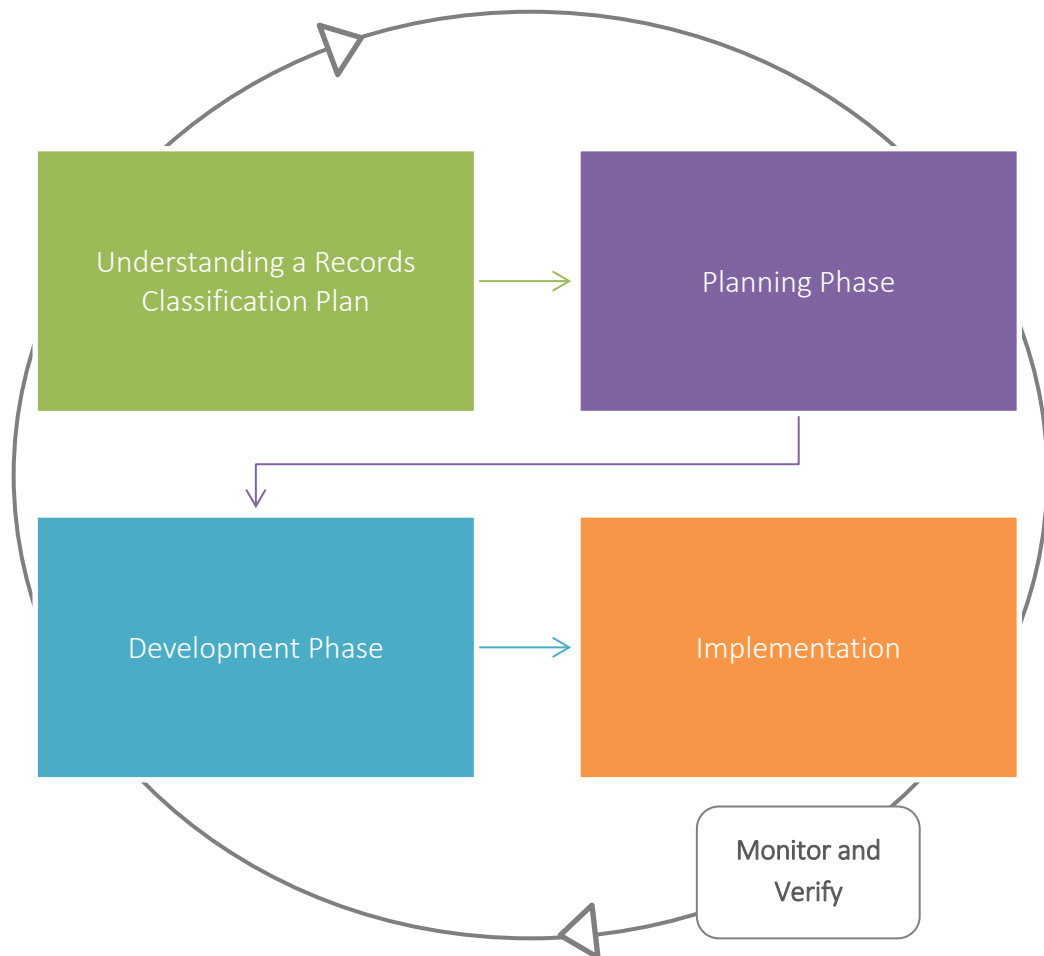
Graphic: 1 - Recommended Approach

4.1 Understanding a Records Classification Plan

The process of classification helps describe, organize and control records and information. It creates order in understanding what a department or other public body does and how it does it.

A classification plan systematically arranges business functions and/or records into categories according to logically structured conventions, methods and procedural rules. A classification plan is critical to a successful IM program. If information is not organized and accessible, it cannot be effectively managed. Implementing a records classification plan requires time, planning and resources.

Before a department or other public body develops a classification plan, it is recommended they complete a records inventory. An inventory will provide an understanding of the types of the records created and collected in an organization and how best to classify them.

4.2 Planning Phase

Creation of a records classification plan is often managed as a project, with milestones and timelines specifically laid-out for a successful outcome. A department or other public body should develop a project plan that outlines the effort and resources necessary to complete the classification plan for operational records. The project plan should contain:

— Executive Support and Approval
— Preliminary Research
— Strategy/Scope (outlining how project will be achieved)
— Communications Strategy
— Backlog Elimination

4.2.1 Executive Support and Approval

Prior to developing a classification plan, discussion and approval with executive is critical. Attaining executive approval is one of the most important steps when developing a classification plan. It ensures that there is interest in the project, that executive will support your efforts, and that employees will assist and accept the project.

Once Executive support is obtained for a classification plan, IM staff should begin discussions with subject matter experts on the various business functions in the

organization. The knowledge that staff can offer who create and use operational records daily, is invaluable to deciding how to classify them effectively.

4.2.2   Preliminary Research

When planning for a classification plan for operational records, preliminary research is best gathered from organizational charts, legislation, regulations, policies, annual reports and strategic plans. If the classification involves corporate records, those functions common across government, it may be necessary to consult government-wide policies and processes (e.g., CRIMS).

Preliminary research provides background and insight into the organization, functions and business culture, and is necessary for understanding how records and information should be organized and categorized. This information will provide context for understanding the information requirements and relationships within the department or other public body, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador and the department or other public body's stakeholder community. Information gathered will also be useful for future development of Records Retention and Disposal Schedules.

4.2.3   Strategy/Scope

During the planning phase, it is important to identify a list of stakeholders in various business units who will be involved in the development of the classification plan. Especially at the Executive level, where support and approval of the classification plan is required.

Consultation with business units to determine timelines and to fully understand the challenges when managing records is critical to the success of the project. Involving subject matter experts that have specialized knowledge of business units will ensure the classification plan aligns with the overall goals of the organization.

4.2.4   Communications Strategy

For a classification plan to be successful, an effective communication strategy is imperative. A clear communication strategy involves how information is generated and communicated to others (e.g., in-person meetings, remote, non-verbal, and written communication). Though one is not necessarily better than the other, some will be more effective at relaying information depending on what business units you are communicating with.

A new classification plan may change the way employees conduct their daily business functions. Having consistent and timely communications and change management processes will ease the transition to the new plan. Furthermore, it will keep those directly involved in the project engaged.

4.2.5   Backlog Elimination

The goal of the backlog elimination will be to remove records that are no longer useful from your holdings prior to the implementation of the records classification plan. Planning this review and disposal first will result in a reduction in the overall volume of records that will require reclassification during development.

Backlog elimination should focus on the following disposition authorities:
— Transitory Records;
— One Time Disposal;
— Corporate Records and Information Management System (CRIMS); and
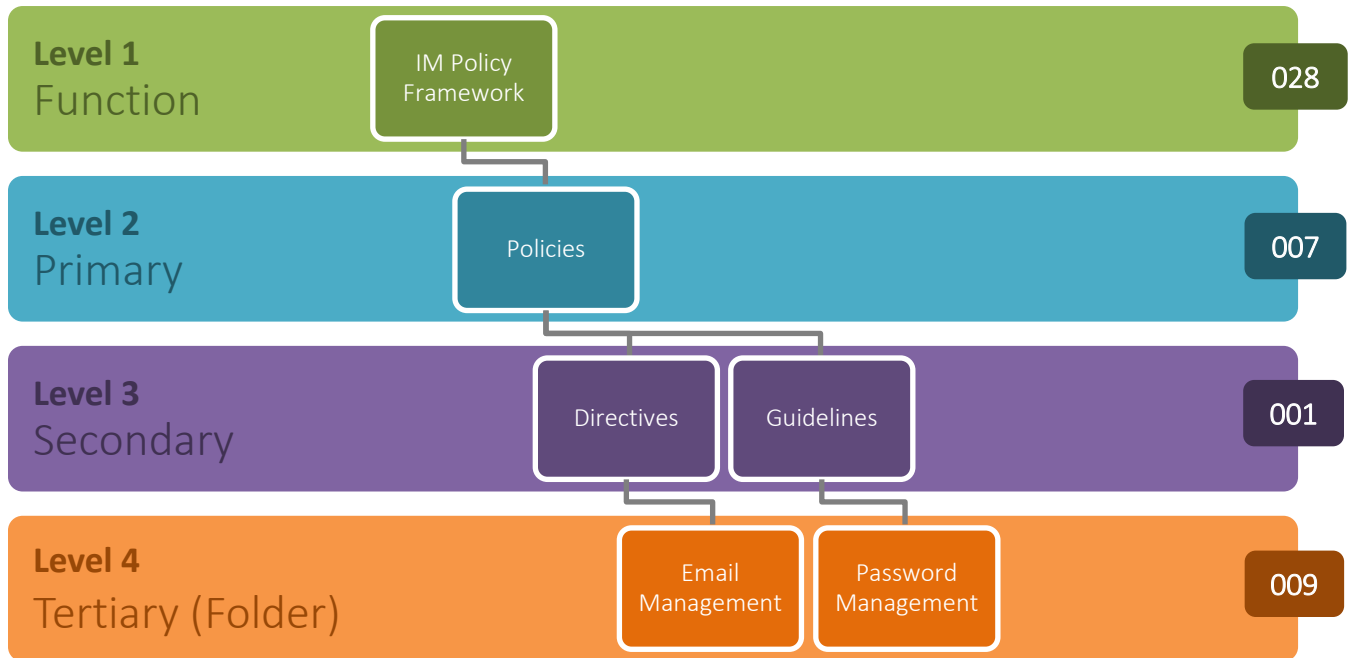— Records Retention and Disposal Schedules

4.3   Development Phase

A classification plan will assist in managing both paper and electronic records by making storage, retrieval and disposition of records manageable. A classification plan provides a broader understanding how records can be organized so that they can be retrieved effectively.

4.3.1   Hierarchical Structure

A hierarchical classification plan organizes records in a fashion that makes it easier to manage them through their life-cycle. Generally, hierarchical structures are preferred to any other structural association in the IM field. They allow common characteristics between records to be organized together. This type of classification plan captures business functions relevant to a department or other public body, rather than subjects.

The hierarchical classification plan is three-tiered, with each tier representing a different classification level (e.g., function, primary, secondary), with relevant folders/records typically stored at the secondary level as shown in the following graphic.

Level 1 Function	IM Policy Framework			028
Level 2 Primary		Policies		007
Level 3 Secondary		Directives	Guidelines	001
Level 4 Tertiary (Folder)		Email Management	Password Management	009

4.3.2 Function

The function is the highest level on the classification plan and group together the underlining levels, or functions relating to that function. It represents a grouping of key functions required to meet a particular mandate in a department or other public body. For example, the Primary **Policies** are a part of the overall **IM Policy Framework** function.

4.3.3 Primary

The primary is a grouping of functions and functions that support a higher classification. For example, the activity of **Policy** type instruments support the secondary **Directives** in an operational classification plan.

4.3.4 Secondary

The secondary is a grouping of functions performed that support the higher classification. For example, under **Directives** are different types of directives (i.e., Email Management).

4.3.5 Tertiary (File/Folder Level)

The file or folder is the lowest most specific level of the classification plan, where the record (or information) exists. It represents a container or "folder" of documents and information.

For example, under **Guidelines** there would be containers or files of various guideline documents (i.e., Password Management).

4.3.6 Scope Notes

Scope notes provide users with enough information to assist them in making the correct decision for identifying and capturing records. This information is also important when developing an RRDS. Descriptions in scope notes should be easily understood and consistent with terminology used in a department or other public body.

The description should contain a statement that includes the following types of information:

— a definition of the function, primary or secondary;
— a summary of the primaries or secondaries or records series beneath that level in the hierarchy; and
— the types of information and records found in that specific classification.

As you move down the level, additional information may be included (e.g., specific filing arrangements or a cross-reference to another classification).

4.3.7 Arrangement and Classification Numbers

As shown in table below, a common method of numbering in a classification plan is the block numeric system. Each level in the hierarchy is assigned a string of numbers that indicate how the records are linked to the main function. The function number is at the beginning followed in order by the primary, secondary and tertiary file numbers. For example, 028-007-001-009 is the classification number which represents IM Policy Framework (028) – Policies (007) – Guidelines (001) and Email Guideline Folder – (009), see graphic on page 13.

Numbering Scheme	000	000	000	000
Classification Type	Function	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
Example	028	007	001	009

Example: 028-007-001-009

When assigning numbers it is advisable to leave reasonable sized gaps to allow for additional functions, primaries and secondaries that may be required as part of new business functions for your department or other public body.

4.4 Implementation

For a department or other public body, implementation plays a crucial role when executing a classification plan. Implementation typically answers who, what, when, how, and why of a project. Therefore, during implementation, the questions of who will use the classification plan; what records should be considered for a classification plan; when should a classification plan be used; how do you use a classification plan; and why should a classification plan be used, should all be answered for employees during implementation.

The implementation phase will be different for every department or other public body as each has unique business needs.

4.4.1 Education and Awareness

Education and awareness for a newly developed classification plan for operational records is a key to employees accepting the plan. Ensuring employees have the knowledge to understand the classification plan will secure success.

An education and awareness plan should be created prior to implementation of the classification plan.

Individuals can contact their department or other public body's IM division at any point to request specific information or training on a particular IM issue.

4.4.2 Reclassification

Reclassification involves the reorganization of existing records into the components identified in the records classification plan. The level of effort required to reclassify records varies depending upon existing practices and the records classification plan and the scope of the project (e.g., whole department or individual business units).

Recommended steps to reclassify information may include:

Step	Description
Analysis	Identify records
Information Mapping	Map Information to classification plan

Transfer	Transfer information (paper or electronic) to the new classification location (e.g., paper folder, network folder, electronic record keeping system folder or classification)
Update Documentation	This may include documentation maintained by the business unit or IM staff to retain an up to date profile of information holdings

4.4.3 Monitor and Verify

Following implementation of a classification plan, it is important to assess how it is working. Departments and other public bodies should complete an assessment within six months to a year after implementation. This review will help discover whether the classification plan is effectively working or if there are areas where changes are required to better meet operational needs. For example, when organizational initiatives change and evolve, so too do many of the operational functions of a department or other public body. Given that all operational functions result in the creation of records, it is important that IM development and continual improvement functions align with these changes.

The assessment may include a series of short interviews with targeted resources that will:

— Determine if the plan is working effectively;
— Determine if there is information that is not accommodated in the plan;
— Validate that roles and responsibilities are clearly understood; and
— Update project deliverables (if required).

5.0 Roles and Responsibilities

Deputy Minister or Permanent Head or Designate
(Department or other Public Body)

— Support the department or other public body's compliance with MOIA as well as OCIO-issued policies, directives, standards and guidelines, and ensure that proper protocols are in place to properly develop and manage a records and information management system, often referred to as an IM Program.

— Support the development, maintenance and continual implementation of classification plan for operational records in the organization's IM Program.

Executive, Directors, Managers and other staff responsible for IM
(Department or other Public Body)

— Align organization-issued materials with the guidance provided by the OCIO in the development and implementation of a classification plan within the organization's IM Program.

— Apply a continual improvement approach to the management of the organization's IM Program to ensure the review of and updates to the classification plan for operational records.

Office of the Chief Information Officer

As part of OCIO's administration of the MOIA, the OCIO:

— Recommends to Treasury Board policies for adoption.

— Develops, manages, monitors, and communicates IM&P policy instruments and supporting materials to departments and other public bodies.

— Provides direction on IM&P best practices, resource requirements, organizational structure, recordkeeping systems and IM Programs to departments and other public bodies.

— Assists departments and other public bodies to improve their IM&P capacity.

— Provides IM&P advisory, training and awareness services and support to departments and other public bodies.

— Supports IM forums, committees, and other professional practice communities, consisting of IM representatives from departments and other public bodies.

— Manages the Provincial Records Centre (PRC).

— Provides administrative support to the Government Records Committee (GRC).

In addition, the OCIO will:

— Develop, implement and maintain this Guideline as well as the GuideBook, also known as the Guide to IM for Public Bodies.

— Provide education and awareness on the development and implementation of Classification Plan for Operational Records.

6.0   Supporting Materials and Version History

Supporting Materials
Below is a listing of supporting materials hyperlinked to the published location.

Management of Information Act
http://www.assembly.nl.ca/Legislation/sr/statutes/m01-01.htm

Policy - Information Management and Protection
https://www.gov.nl.ca/exec/ocio/im/policy-instruments/im-ip-policy/

Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 2015
http://www.assembly.nl.ca/Legislation/sr/statutes/a01-2.htm

Rooms Act
https://assembly.nl.ca/legislation/sr/statutes/r15-1.htm

OCIO Website
https://www.gov.nl.ca/exec/ocio

Version History
The following table highlights the version history of this document including date issued and version number.

Date (yyyy-mm-dd)	Version
2022-11-30	1.0

Appendices

Appendices listed below directly relate to the Guideline Classification Plan for Operational Records and are published independent of this Guideline on the OCIO website, https://www.gov.nl.ca/exec/ocio/im/policy-instruments/guidebook/.

Appendix	Title
A	Checklist - Classification Plan for Operational Records
B	Quick Reference - Records and Information Management System
C	Interview Schedule - Classification Plan for Operational Records