

Government Records and Information Need to be Kept Forever



Fast Facts:

Under the *Management of Information Act (MOIA)* public bodies must dispose of records and information in a timely manner when operational and legal retention requirements are met.

The Government Records Committee (GRC) is authorized under the *MOIA* to make recommendations on the retention and disposal of government records. The GRC:

** Is made up of senior public servants from across the public sector including the OCIO, Justice, Finance and The Rooms Provincial Archives;*

** Recommends an approved Records Retention and Disposal Schedule (RRDS) for disposal; and*

** Has over 190 RRDS approved for use by public bodies.*

The *MOIA* defines a transitory record as 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.

Forever. 7 years. Until after the next audit. These are common responses to the question of how long government records and information need to be kept. Government records and information are used to support operational processes and provide evidence of its business activities. How long records and information need to be kept varies depending on the content, its purpose and value to the public body. Some records can be destroyed after a short time while others need to be kept for many years to meet legal retention requirements.

What's the harm in keeping everything forever? Many requirements demand that public bodies produce records and information. For example, when a request is made under the [Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act \(ATIPPA\) 2015](#), all holdings must be searched for responsive information. This includes records that could have been legally disposed of, transitory records and copies of convenience. Having to review and produce low value or outdated records is inefficient.

Some best practices to help you to support your public body's records and information disposal requirements include:

- Understand the management requirements for the records and information you handle, including how long it needs to be kept.
- Understand if there is an event or action that starts the clock ticking (e.g., file closes at the end of the year, when the claim is processed, project ends, etc.). This helps in identifying what records can be moved out.
- File records and information according to how long it needs to be kept (e.g., store records by client, claim, project, year, etc.).
- Keep your email clean by following the best practices available through the OCIO and by following your internal email filing requirements.
- Destroy transitory records on a regular basis in a secure manner.

Learn more about IM:

- Speak with your supervisor to learn about IM rules for your work group
- Review OCIO best practices on the [OCIO website](#)
- Complete [IM@Work: Making Information Management work for You](#)