

GOVERNMENT RECORDS SERVICE GUIDE

TRANSITORY RECORDS

Many records do not need to be retained. The [Transitory Records Schedule](#) authorizes you to dispose of records of temporary value as soon as their business use ends. This guide will help you identify these records.

What is a transitory record?

Transitory records are **records of temporary usefulness** that are needed only for a limited period of time in order to complete a routine action or prepare a final record.

As with all records, they can exist in **any format or medium** (paper or electronic), and can be created and shared using a variety of technologies (e.g., email, social media, Live Meeting, SharePoint, wikis).

Transitory records **are not required** for financial, legal, audit or statutory purposes and are not regularly filed in the office [recordkeeping system](#).

They do not need to be filed using the *Administrative Records Classification System (ARCS)* or your office's *Operational Records Classification System (ORCS)*.

Examples of transitory records:

- advertising material
- announcements of social events
- cc copies (unless you are the main staff member responsible for the matter)
- copies created for convenience/reference purposes
- email conveying an attachment (providing it doesn't add value to the attachment)
- meeting arrangements
- personal messages
- simple messages reflecting commonplace interactions (e.g., a request to call someone)
- outlines, calculations, preliminary notes and other rough content used to prepare a final record
- drafts and revisions that are not needed to document decisions and associated approvals
- routine correspondence about drafts and revisions

See the Quick Reference Guide on last page for more examples.

Who can apply this schedule?

You can! You simply need to use your judgment to determine whether a record is, or is not, transitory. The authority to identify transitory records is delegated to each BC government employee.

However: DO NOT destroy any transitory records that are relevant to a FOIPPA request or legal discovery.

GOVERNMENT RECORDS SERVICE GUIDE

TRANSITORY RECORDS

What isn't a transitory record?

A record's content and context determines whether it is transitory, not its format or storage medium. If an email, significant draft, or other record is essential to understanding government business, e.g., how a particular decision was reached, then the record is non-transitory and must be kept.

Non-transitory records need to be filed and saved in accordance with the appropriate government records schedule (i.e., *ARCS/ORCS* classification).

Examples of non-transitory records:

- work unit activities documentation (e.g., work schedules, assignments, etc.)
- useful information that helps explain the history of a relationship, decision or project
- drafts or revisions with information about a decision or associated approvals that is unavailable elsewhere (e.g., directions to change a proposal and recommend a different course of action)
- a final report with recommendations
- formal communication about official business
- policies and directives
- decision records, instructions, and advice
- meeting agendas and minutes
- documentation of a policy matter or how a case was managed
- documentation of initiation, authorization, or completion of business transactions
- documentation that is evidence of a significant action (e.g., verification or approval to proceed)

Why Managing Transitory Records Is Important

By promptly removing transitory records, employees are better able to identify and file key records into their office recordkeeping system, where they can be easily found. As well, government avoids unnecessary costs for storing and processing transitory records.

Additional Information

Contact your [Records Officer](#) or check out the other [RM Guides](#).



TRANSITORY RECORDS

Quick Reference Guide to Transitory Records

WHAT	SHORT DEFINITION	EXAMPLES
1. Records of Short-term Use	Records created or received for informational purposes only; OR convenience copies for reference or ease of use (i.e., the official copy has been filed in the office recordkeeping system)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Messages (e.g., email, voicemail, instant messages) that are not required to document a decision, action, or transaction ◦ Duplicate copies, partial copies or extracts no longer needed for reference purposes ◦ Input source documents no longer required
2. Working Materials, Drafts, and Revisions	Preliminary versions and supplementary documentation used to prepare a final document, which DO NOT indicate new decisions or provide approvals and are not specified in another records schedule (e.g., ARCS or your ORCS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Drafts and revisions that provide no information on decisions or approvals that cannot be found elsewhere ◦ Rough notes, calculations, outlines, lists of ideas or suggestions ◦ Newspapers or magazines used for compiling daily 'news clippings' (physical or electronic)
3. Advertising and Promotional Material from the Private Sector	Advertising and promotional material from businesses or business professionals which DOES NOT relate to a transaction with a private sector provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Company profiles, pamphlets ◦ Direct mail/email notices and bulletins ◦ Catalogues ◦ Free trial CDs and DVDs ◦ Course and seminar announcements
4. Supplies of BC Government Publications and Blank Forms	Stocks of publications and blank forms which have no further usefulness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Blank forms, including blank e-forms and e-templates ◦ Blank stationary with out-of-date information ◦ Out-of-date published material (e.g., pamphlets, brochures, and newsletters)

Dispose of Transitory Records as soon as you are finished with them!

