



Managing Drafts and Working Materials

Do I need to manage drafts and working materials in all formats?

Yes. [Information schedules](#) (ARCS/ORCS) apply to all types of records regardless of format or media. This includes textual, graphic, photographic, and audiovisual records held in digital or physical forms (e.g. paper, journals/notebooks, USB drives, DVDs, CDs, and any alternative media).

Government bodies must create and maintain adequate records of their decisions to meet their obligations under the *Information Management Act*. If your drafts contain important decisions, they must be retained. For more information on the requirements to document government decisions see the [Documenting Government Decisions guidelines](#)

You need to create and keep adequate records sufficient to document your decision-making and work activities.

For example, if you are working on a document with others, designate one person to be responsible for filing the official copy of the final version as well as relevant working materials. That person determines what to keep and what to destroy. The first step is to decide what records are transitory.

What are transitory records?

Transitory records are records of temporary usefulness that are not regularly filed with standard records or filing systems, and are only required for a limited period of to complete a routine action or prepare an ongoing record. Transitory records are not required to meet statutory obligations or to sustain administrative or operational functions.

Are all drafts and working materials transitory records?

No. Originals or copies required for statutory, legal, fiscal, administrative or operational purposes need to be retained in your office recordkeeping system and disposed of in accord with approved information schedules. Where copies are accepted as “official records” (i.e. when you digitize a paper record) the original source records may be treated as [redundant](#) and destroyed.

What drafts to retain

Retain draft documents and working materials that contain significant annotations, comments, approvals and substantial changes, such as:

- Working materials relating to the preparation of legislation (ARCS 140-20)
- Treasury Board submissions (ARCS 1250-20)
- Cabinet submissions (ARCS 201-40)
- Operational records covered by your office's ORCS/ORS (e.g. Office of the Comptroller General ORCS secondary 22210-30, Compliance audit project working file)

Retain any developmental drafts that, in your judgment, reflect important decisions, such as:

- Decisions informing the government body or others about the evolution of the government body's programs, policies or enactments;
- Decisions protecting the legal or financial rights or obligations of the government body, the Crown, or any person, group of persons, government or organization that is directly and materially affected by the decision;
- Decisions facilitating the government body's accountability for its decisions, including through internal or external evaluation, audit or review.

Additional Information

Contact your [Records Team](#) or check out the [Records Management website](#).