

EMAIL: YOUR RECORDKEEPING RESPONSIBILITIES

Do government records management rules apply to email?



Yes, these standards apply to all types and forms of government records. The retention and disposition of email must comply with existing government legislation, regulations, policies and standards (e.g., [Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act \(FOIPPA\)](#), [Information Management Act \(IMA\)](#) and [Core Policy and Procedures Manual \(CPPM\) Chapter 12](#)). Employees need to create and keep sufficient records to document work activities and decisions.

It is important to ensure that significant business emails are:

- Classified under [ARCS](#), [ORCS](#) or another approved schedule.
- Filed in the **office recordkeeping system** (e.g., physical file folders, LAN, TRIM).
- Retained and disposed of in accordance with approved schedules.
- Accessible to authorized staff and available in response to *FOIPPA* and litigation requests.

Do I need to file every email?

No, you do not. Many emails are only of temporary use and are therefore considered transitory. Transitory records are typically kept for only a short period of time for convenience or reference use; for preparation of revisions or a final version of a record; or, to complete immediate and minor transactions.

Transitory records are covered by the cross-government *Transitory Records Schedule (102901)*. Examples of transitory emails include:

- **Working materials and non-substantive drafts** not scheduled elsewhere.
- **Duplicate copies** retained for reference purposes.
- **Messages** (e.g., telephone, fax, email, instant messages) **that do not** document a decision, activity, or transaction or add any other information needed to meet financial, legal, audit, or other statutory requirements.

Who is responsible for filing outgoing email messages?

The sender is responsible for filing any significant email and attachments.

Who is responsible for filing incoming email?

You are responsible for determining which of the emails you receive are significant business records that need to be filed. Consider:

- Is it a **personal** email? If so, delete it promptly.
- Is the email of only **temporary** or transitory use? If yes, then it does not need to be filed and may be disposed of under the *Transitory Records Special Schedule*..

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- **Do not keep convenience or reference emails longer than the official file copy.**
- Were you sent a 'cc' (carbon copy) or 'bcc' (blind carbon copy) copy of the message? In most cases you can delete this copy once it is no longer required for business purposes.
- Was the email widely distributed? Ministry-wide notices, for example are received by many offices. The initiating office (as the sender) is responsible for filing an official file copy. Within each receiving agency or office, the person who is responsible for the subject or function covered by the email should assume responsibility for filing an official file copy, if required. Other recipients in the agency or office can then manage their copies as transitory.

If you are the main or sole recipient of a significant business email, then file it (with any attachments) in your office's recordkeeping system. The source email may then be treated as [redundant](#) and deleted.

Five Benefits of Well Managed Email:

1. You and your co-workers have **access** to the records you need to do your jobs. Email is classified and filed in the official recordkeeping system, not left inaccessible and unmanaged in an individual's email folders.
2. Email and all related records are linked together. A **complete file** of a specific activity, case, or topic is maintained – something that isn't possible if records are scattered across various email accounts.
3. Email is disposed of in accordance with approved **records schedules**.
4. Email **server space usage is reduced** as duplicate and transitory emails are promptly deleted.
5. Authorized staff can locate all records required to **comply** with *FOIPPA* or litigation requests.

Additional Information

Contact your [Records Officer](#) or check out the rest of the Records Management website.

