

MANAGING GOVERNMENT RECORDS TRAINING - MODULE 4

FILE MAINTENANCE

This module helps you:

- Set up processes and develop procedures.
- Set up and maintain files.
- Create file lists, labels, etc.

Introduction

Alright! You now know a lot about managing information, but what about the filing system itself?



- Who does what?
- How are folders used?
- What goes on the file labels and file lists?

Internal Branch Procedures

- Establish and document records management processes for your office.
- Ensure that filing and maintenance procedures reflect the requirements for file retrieval, control, and maintenance of your particular office, as these do vary from office to office. Assign responsibilities. That is, who opens the mail, is it logged, who distributes it, who creates files, who sends files off-site, is there a records co-ordinator for your branch, etc?
- Decide if the filing system should be centralized or de-centralized (e.g., one or two persons have control).

Creating Files

Now that you have classified your records you need to create folders for them.

File Folders/File Backs

- Use letter size file folders and file backs (i.e., sheet of cardboard with prongs).
- File backs are recommended to separate years within a folder, rather than using a new expensive folder for each year.
- File folders can be used for project or contract type case files where you would not necessarily have to separate out the years.
- File folders should have an end tab to allow for the use of numeric and alpha colour coded labels down the right edge of the folder. This is a quick way to identify files on the shelf. Ask your records coordinator about how to obtain the standard government folders and labels.

MANAGING GOVERNMENT RECORDS TRAINING - MODULE 4

FILE MAINTENANCE

File Labels

File Folder Labels – Includes generic information:

- Primary/secondary number and titles
- File (Tertiary) code
- Retention period
- OPR/non-OPR designation
- Volume number
- Location of file

925-20/BBCA	Volume 1		
	Location: Cab. 1		
Blue Bird Cabs			
Accounts payable			
ACCOUNTS – PAYABLE			
<u>A</u>	<u>SA</u>	<u>FD</u>	
FY+1Y	6Y	DE	OPR

File Back Labels – Includes all the same information as the file folder label as well as the open and close dates of the volume.

925-20/BBCA	Volume 1			
	Location: Cab. 1			
Blue Bird Cabs				
Accounts payable				
ACCOUNTS – PAYABLE				
<u>A</u>	<u>SA</u>	<u>FD</u>		Open 2005-04-01
FY+1Y	6Y	DE	OPR	Close 2006-03-31

Note: If you are not using file backs, the label on your file folder should contain all the information including the open and close dates.

MANAGING GOVERNMENT RECORDS TRAINING - MODULE 4

FILE MAINTENANCE

What is a File List?

File List

- The file list is a listing of every file created by or currently in use within an office.
- An accurate file list is an essential tool, as it documents the creation and existence of government records.
- It assures the integrity and authenticity of records and may serve as legal evidence.

What goes on the file list?

- Records management applications such as QRMS/CRMS will produce a variety of file lists (i.e., Numeric Detailed, Alpha Summery, etc.).
- A file list needs to include the following elements: the primary and secondary number and titles, file/tertiary codes and titles, retention periods, OPR designations, volume numbers, locations, and open and close dates.
- Information Workers will usually get to know the numbers and may prefer working with a numeric file list while other users may prefer an alpha list.
- Either way everyone in the office will be able to refer to a file list and locate records quickly.

Maintaining Files

Now that you have a great filing system set up, here are a few tips.

- If you maintain a central file system, you should use charge-out guides when staff remove files to work on at their desk. This way you will never lose track of a file.
- Keep sensitive and confidential files locked up.
- In consultation with your records coordinator, remove files that are no longer active. This activity is often referred to as culling or purging. Once they are closed, box and send files to off-site storage or apply for an internal destruction.
- If you fall behind in the annual purging, it will build up and the task will become overwhelming. Also, it will result in files being kept longer than they should be. Remember: Even if retention periods have expired, you will be required to produce relevant records for an FOI request or a document disclosure in litigation process.

Congratulations! You have just completed Module 4, File Maintenance. In addition to setting up files, you will need to know about closing and boxing them up for transfer to off-site storage or internal destruction. **To find out how, go to [Module 5: Closing and Boxing Files](#).**