

RECORDED INFORMATION MANAGEMENT MANUAL

Government Records Service	RIM Number: RIM 422
Province of British Columbia	Approval Date: 2014/12/17
Policy: PREPARATION OF RECORDS FOR OFFSITE STORAGE Specifications: RIM 422A <i>Specifications for Boxing Records</i> RIM 422B <i>Specifications for File Lists</i> RIM 422C <i>Specifications for Assigning Records to Accessions</i>	
AUTHORITY	
From <i>Core Policy and Procedures Manual, 12.3.3. Part III (a)</i> : <ol style="list-style-type: none">Government records must be managed and preserved to remain authentic, reliable, trustworthy, secure, complete and accessible over time and location regardless of media or format.Ministries transferring records to offsite storage must use approved records centres.	
Security Classification: PUBLIC	

1. SCOPE

This policy establishes the requirements for preparing records for offsite storage.

1.1 Authority

- [Core Policy and Procedures Manual \(CPPM\), c. 12](#)

1.2 Applicability

Ministries, agencies, boards, commissions, and Crown corporations using government offsite storage facilities.

2. POLICY

Government approved records storage facilities provide efficient, cost-effective, and secure records storage with humidity and temperature controls.

Ministries and agencies using approved records storage facilities must prepare their records for storage in a manner that ensures they will remain **accessible** for as long as they are required to support government business and accountability needs. To accomplish this, they must arrange, box, and document the records in accordance with the related specifications (see list at end of policy).

2.1 Using Approved Records Storage Facilities

Government ministries must use approved records storage facilities to store any scheduled or unscheduled physical records they wish to send offsite.

All physical records that are scheduled for eventual transfer to the custody of the government **archives** (i.e., they have a **final disposition** of **full retention** or **selective retention**) must be sent to approved records storage facilities when they become **inactive**, if not before. This ensures their secure preservation until they can undergo archival selection and be transferred to the government archives.

Physical records that are scheduled for **destruction** may also be sent offsite, **unless** they are eligible for destruction immediately or within six months under an approved records schedule. Those records are more efficiently managed and destroyed at the ministry / agency office.

Broader public sector (BPS) agencies are strongly encouraged but not required to use approved records storage facilities for their offsite records. However, when records that are scheduled for full or selective retention become inactive and are ready for transfer to the government archives, they must be sent to an approved records storage facility.

2.2 Submitting Records for Storage

Records will be accepted for storage under the following conditions:

2.2.1. Records must meet the requirements outlined in this policy and associated specifications, whether they are covered by approved **records schedules** or not (i.e., whether they are scheduled or unscheduled records).

2.2.2. Records will be accepted for storage as **scheduled records** if:

- They are covered by an approved records schedule, **AND**
- They have more than six months left before final disposition (i.e., they are semi-active or are active with a specified file closure date), **OR**
- they have a final disposition of selective or full retention.

2.2.3. Records will be accepted for storage as **unscheduled records** if:

- No records schedule has been developed, or
- There is a draft schedule not yet approved by the Legislative Assembly, or
- There is an approved schedule but the records are still **active** and the file closure date is not yet known (e.g., the file is not superseded or obsolete).

2.2.4. Records will **not be accepted** for storage if they are:

- Eligible for destruction immediately or within six months under an approved records schedule (see 2.1 above).

- **Digital records** on digital storage devices, as these need to be managed on government servers where they can be securely backed up.
- **Hazardous records**, as these may endanger employees, facilities, and other records (e.g., pre-1950 nitrate film or mouldy records).

2.3 Assigning Accession Numbers

GRS will assign a six-digit **accession** number to each body of records accepted for storage. This number is used to track storage, retrieval, disposition, and other scheduling actions conducted in relation to the records.

There are three types of accession numbers:

- **One-time accessions** that relate to only one transfer of records (most common),
- **Ongoing accessions** that are open-ended to allow for multiple transfers of related records over time, and
- **Multi-transfer accessions** used for specific time-limited projects (i.e., ongoing accessions that are closed when a project is completed).

Ministries and agencies must follow the *Specifications for Assigning Records to Accessions* (RIM 422C).

2.4 Boxing Records

Ministries and agencies sending records offsite must pack them into boxes in a manner that facilitates their ongoing accessibility and durability, in accordance with the *Specifications for Boxing Records* (RIM 422A).

2.5 Creating File Lists

Ministries and agencies transferring records to approved records storage facilities must identify and describe the records accurately and comprehensively by creating standard box content file lists in accordance with the *Specifications for File Lists* (RIM 422B).

In addition, GRS and/or the government archives may need copies of or reports from file tracking tools used by ministries and agencies (e.g., indexes, databases, spreadsheets), in order to access the files. Ministries and agencies must provide this upon request.

2.6 Exceptions

The Government Records Service (GRS) Senior Director or delegate may grant exceptions if circumstances warrant (such as for legacy records being processed in special projects).

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1. Government Records Service (GRS)

GRS is responsible for:

- Setting the specifications for boxing, listing, and accessioning records,
- Providing advice, training and guidance for ministries and agencies to assist them in complying with this policy,
- Determining whether exceptions to this policy can be made due to special circumstances, and
- Managing records in offsite storage.

3.2. Ministries and Agencies

Ministries and agencies are responsible for:

- Preparing boxes and associated documentation for offsite records storage in compliance with this policy,
- Documenting offsite records sufficiently to enable locating, retrieving, administering litigation holds, and other purposes, and
- Alerting GRS about the existence of records that may be hazardous.

RELATED POLICIES AND SPECIFICATIONS

The following specifications are founded upon this policy:

RIM 422A *Specifications for Boxing Records*

RIM 422B *Specifications for File Lists*

RIM 422C *Specifications for Assigning Records to Accessions*

Also closely related to this policy are:

RIM 423 *Provision of Offsite Records Storage Services*

RIM 423A *Specifications for Providing Offsite Records Storage Services*

RIM 423B *Specifications for Approved Offsite Records Storage Facilities*

RELATED GUIDES – see RM Guides and Online Training Modules

Closing and Boxing Files Module 5 of Records Management Basics (online training module available on the RM website in a PDF format)

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Revision History: First approved: 2014/12/17 Revised: n/a

This supersedes the following policies:

- 5-06-07: Preparation of Records for Offsite Storage
- 5-06-09: Records Storage Boxes
- 5-06-14: Documentation of Scheduled Records for Transfer to Off-site Storage or On-site Destruction
- IM/IT Supplement 2007 (*policy supplement to CPPM formerly posted by IM/IT Governance Branch of the Office of the Government CIO*)
 - 12.3.3 III (a) i. Physical and Legal Custody of Government Records
 - 12.3.3 III (a) vi. Storage and Preservation of Government Records

Index and Glossary Terms – see [RIM Glossary](#) for definitions of terms that appear in bold blue text (for the first usage of each term in the policy, as well as below)

Accessibility	Inactive records
Accession	Legal custody
Active records	Litigation holds
Archives	Multi-transfer accession
Boxes	Offsite storage
Box labels	One-time accession number
Destruction of records	Ongoing accession number
Digital records	Records on digital storage devices
File list	Records schedule
Final disposition	Selective retention
Full retention	Semi-active records
Hazardous records	Unscheduled records