

RIM 5-06-07: PREPARATION OF RECORDS FOR OFF-SITE STORAGE

1 OVERVIEW

This policy ensures that records transferred to off-site records storage centres comply with standards for the packing, arrangement, and labelling of boxes.

1.1 Authority

- [Document Disposal Act](#) (RSBC 1996, c. 99)
- [Core Policy and Procedures Manual \(CPPM\), c.12](#)
- [Chapter 12 Information and Technology Management Supplemental Manual \(IM/IT Supplemental\)](#)

1.2 Applicability

All agencies, boards, commissions, and Crown corporations covered by the *Document Disposal Act* that transfer records to off-site records storage facilities.

1.3 Key IM/IT Supplemental Principle

- 12.3.3. Part III (a) vi:
Government records must be handled and stored in a manner that ensures that they remain accessible, authentic and reliable for as long as they are required to support government business and accountability needs.

2 POLICY

Ministries and agencies using contracted off-site records storage services must arrange, box and label records in accordance with the attached standard. See also RIM policies 5-06-09: *Records Storage Boxes* 5-06-14: *Documentation of Scheduled Records for Transfer to Off-site Storage or On-site Destruction*.

Containers that fail to meet these standards will not be accepted for off-site storage unless the Corporate Records Management Branch ([CRMB](#)) grants an exception to these requirements.

3 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 Ministries and Agencies

Ministries and agencies must prepare boxes for off-site records storage in compliance with this policy, to ensure that the records in them remain accessible, authentic, and reliable until they become inactive.

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3.2 CRMB

CRMB provides advice and guidance for ministries and agencies to assist them in complying with this policy. In addition, CRMB determines whether exceptions to this policy can be made due to special circumstances.

3.3 Records Officers

Records Officers provide advice and guidance for ministry and agency staff to assist them with boxing records and complying with this policy, as well as with any related ministry or agency policies.

4 STANDARDS

4.1 General Standards

4.1.1. Records Storage Boxes

Most records are packed in common records storage boxes (1 cu. ft., or 40 cm x 32 cm x 25 cm). Other materials such as flat or rolled maps and plans, computer print-outs, cheques, etc. should be packed in specialized storage boxes. For information on recommended records storage boxes, see RIM Policy 5-06-09: *Records Storage Boxes* or consult your Records Officer.

Ministries and agencies must pack boxes in a manner that helps protect the records from damage and deterioration. Over-packed boxes can cause security problems and may result in increased costs. The top of a box should close easily and the sides should not bulge, and the weight must not exceed 11.25 kg (25 lb.).

Partially filled boxes may also cause problems when they are stacked for storage. If there are insufficient files or other records to completely fill a box, fill the balance of the box with inert packing material to support the records and prevent the box from collapsing.

Records should be placed in boxes so that their labels are easily read or are conveniently accessible.

4.1.2. Packing Records Arranged by *ARCS* and *ORCS*

Pack records that are arranged according to the *Administrative Records Classification System* ([ARCS](#)) or agency *Operational Records Classification Systems* ([ORCS](#)) as follows:

- Place records covered by different records schedules in separate boxes. For example, do not mix *ARCS* records in a box with *ORCS* records.

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- Place records with different final dispositions in separate boxes. Box records scheduled for DE (destruction) separately from records scheduled for selective or full archival retention (SR or FR).
- For records designated SR, follow boxing instructions and box selected records separately from those not selected. If necessary, the selected records can be boxed with other FR records.
- Wherever possible, place records of the same type together in the same box. For example, box large case-files or subject-files series together.
- Wherever possible, place records with the same final disposition date together in the same box.
- Wherever possible, arrange boxes by the length of the semi-active retention period, placing boxes with the longest retention period at the beginning of the accession.
- Place records with no semi-active retention period and a final disposition of selective or full retention by the government archives in separate boxes. Arrange these files by primary and secondary numbers.

4.1.3 Packing Records that are Not Classified by ARCS/ORCS

Pack records that are not classified and arranged according to ARCS or ORCS, as they are arranged in the office (e.g., alphabetically, numerically, or chronologically).

4.1.4. Box Identification Labels

Each box must have an identification label bearing a unique number. The standard box labels are available for purchase through [Distribution Centre Victoria](#).

Use the accession number as the box prefix, numbering each box within an accession sequentially. For example, the first three boxes in accession 91-0067 would be numbered as follows:

91-0067-1
91-0067-2
91-0067-3

Use one label per box, and affix it to the end of the box. To maintain security and confidentiality do not put any other identifying information (such as ministry, agency or branch name or records series title) on the box.

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4.1.5. Destination Labels

Office locations in Greater Victoria, Greater Vancouver, Kelowna, Vernon, Penticton, Westbank and Summerland will have their boxes picked up directly by one of the records storage companies. These boxes will not need destination labels.

Outside these areas, each box will need a destination label for the appropriate records storage facility. Offices will be contacted by CRMB Records Centre Services prior to the boxes being picked up or sent by mail and they will be informed about destination labels at that time.

If required, the destination label (8 X 13 cm. [3 X 5 in.] or larger) must be clearly legible and affixed to the top of each box.

4.2 Media-Specific Packing Standards

4.2.1 Paper files

File folders must be placed upright in the box so that their labels may be read.

Labels must all face the same way.

4.2.2 Maps and Plans

4.2.2(a) Rolled Maps and Plans

Rolled maps and plans may need to be stored rolled in off-site storage facilities. Use specialized storage boxes for any oversize materials. Do not fold or crease maps and plans which have previously been stored rolled. Do not use rubber/elastic bands to bind rolls. Replace rubber bands with cotton ties prior to boxing.

Box rolled maps and plans so that:

- A box retains its normal dimensions (i.e., the sides do not bulge).
- The length of each roll is at least 1 cm less than the total box length.
- A roll retains its normal diameter (i.e., no roll is compressed).
- Each map or plan is rolled in a manner that permits the roll to be unrolled and re-rolled to its original diameter without subjecting the item to undue strain. In other words, do not try to save storage space by rolling maps or plans too tightly.

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- There is enough space left between the rolls to remove and return them to the box without subjecting the sides of the rolls to undue friction.

4.2.2(b) Flat Maps and Plans

Flat maps and plans may need to be stored flat in off-site storage facilities. DO NOT FOLD flat maps and plans for transfer to off-site storage without first consulting your Records Officer.

4.2.3 Audio and Video Tape

Pack audio and video tape in standard records storage boxes.

Each tape must be in a properly fitted individual case. The cases provided by the manufacturer are acceptable.

Place tapes vertically in the box with their labels up.

Exceptions:

- If on the top of a set of vertically stacked tapes there is room to place additional tapes flat, this may be done. These additional tapes may not be layered more than two deep.
- Reels of 1" videotape in rigid plastic cases may be packed horizontally not more than five deep.

Pack the tapes side by side so they will not move or fall over. If there are insufficient tapes to fill a box, support them with inert packing material.

Recommended practice:

Prior to long term storage, tapes should be wound at playback speed. A tape wound at different speeds (e.g., partly at playback speed and partly at fast forward or fast rewind) may have uneven tension that will eventually deform the tape.

Exception:

- While the ideal tape wind for long-term storage is at playback speed, some machines rewind automatically at high speed. It is acceptable to store these tapes rewound since the tension will be uniform.

4.2.4 Motion Picture Films

35 mm films manufactured before 1950 may be on a cellulose nitrate base. Spontaneous combustion of nitrate-based 35 mm films has caused many serious fires. Consult CRMB before sending pre-1950, 35 mm films to off-site storage.

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All 16 mm film and more recent 35 mm film have been manufactured using "safety film".

4.2.4(a) 16 mm films

Each film (or set of related films) must be in a properly fitted can. A small film may not be stored alone in a large can. Metal cans and reels must be free of rust and corrosion.

Each can must be clearly labelled as to contents and in a manner that allows it to be related to a file list.

Store film cans in appropriate boxes (based on advice from CRMB). If film cans are more than 10" in diameter, larger boxes must be used. Cans must be stored flat. Fill the box with inert padding to prevent the cans from moving in the box.

"Vinegar Syndrome": If the odour of acetic acid (or vinegar) is detected while handling older films, contact CRMB without undue delay. This condition, not harmful to humans, is a sign of imminent serious deterioration in films.

4.2.5 Photographs

Follow the general standards or consult your Records Officer.

4.2.6 Computer Tapes and Discs

Follow the general standards or consult your Records Officer.

4.2.7 Microforms

Follow the general standards or consult your Records Officer.