

**National Archives of Canada  
Government Archives and Records Disposition Division**

**Guidelines for the Transfer of Textual Archival Records  
to the National Archives of Canada**

**Introduction**

In accordance with sections 5 and 6 of the *National Archives of Canada Act*, the National Archivist approves all requests to dispose of government records and issues a Records Disposition Authority to a specific institution to dispose of records in accordance with the Terms and Conditions for the Transfer of Archival Records signed by the department's Senior Official. Records designated as archival in those Terms and Conditions must be transferred to the care and control of the National Archives.

The *purpose* of these guidelines is to provide government institutions with guidance on how to prepare records for transfer to the custody of the Government Archives and Records Disposition Division (GARDD), National Archives of Canada. The guidelines apply equally to other government institutions that have Agreements with the National Archives regarding the transfer of their archival records. These guidelines partially repeat and provide greater detail than many of the clauses contained in the Terms and Conditions for the Transfer of Archival Records document signed by the Senior Official and appended to the Authority or the Agreement. In most instances, the records to be transferred will be *covered by an approved authority or an Agreement* with the National Archives. In exceptional cases, *records at risk that meet the criteria for a direct transfer* may be transferred without an approved authority in place. In the latter case, the archivist should be consulted first.

National Archives staff wishes to work with our information management partners to save on resources, avoid duplication of efforts and to ensure the long-term preservation of archival records. It is hoped that once departmental clients have incorporated these procedures into their own information management practices, the work and resources spent at the front-end will prove beneficial to all parties.

Supplementing these guidelines are a series of appendices on specific topics that are available for institutional staff to use. See list at the end of these guidelines.

**Applicability of the Guidelines**

1. The guidelines pertain to archival records of government institutions subject to the *National Archives of Canada Act*, other government institutions that have Agreements with the National Archives, as well as those institutions that are about to become defunct or already are defunct.
2. The guidelines apply to *textual paper records* unless otherwise noted.

3. The guidelines apply to *archival records* that will not undergo any further selection once they are transferred to the custody of the National Archives. Government institutions shall apply these guidelines to records once the Terms and Conditions have been applied by departmental staff.

Records that require further selection after transfer to the National Archives are not subject to the guidelines but certain advice regarding conservation in Appendix 1 and guidance concerning file lists or finding aids contained in Appendices 3 to 5 should be followed by departmental staff.

4. The guidelines apply to *archival records whether they are still on the shelf in the records area or in a storage facility*. For example, the records may be stored in a private facility contracted by the creating department or they may be stored in one of the Federal Records Centres (FRC) operated by the National Archives of Canada across Canada.

## **Policies Regarding the Transfer of Archival Records**

### ***Segregation of Archival Records from Non-archival Records***

Segregation of the archival record from the non-archival is the responsibility of the transferring institution and must occur before the expiry of the retention period. Segregation must take place prior to storage of records in a Federal Records Centre. In any case, segregation shall take place before the records are transferred to the control of the National Archives.

### ***Containerization of Archival Records***

Archival records are to be placed in National Archives approved containers prior to their transfer to the National Archives, if the records are being directly transferred to the custody of the Government Archives and Records Disposition Division or to a private storage facility.

### ***File Lists for Paper Textual Records***

A transfer of archival records will be accompanied by a comprehensive list (electronically produced) which will indicate the box/container number, the file number, the file part number, the file title, and the outside dates of each file part. These file lists or finding aids must be electronically produced; handwritten or typewritten lists are unacceptable. It is GARDD's preference to obtain a list using the department's own electronic system but a Word Perfect or ASCII electronic copy is acceptable. A hard copy as well as an electronic copy of the file list will be transferred.

## ***Documentation Accompanying the Transfer of Electronic Records***

When electronic records are transferred to the National Archives, the institution must transfer the archival component of the specific system including such descriptive elements as data, tables, modules or electronic textual records. The institution must also include supporting metadata for the system which include printed or electronic versions of data elements, data definitions, code values, naming protocols, user or system manuals.

## **Conservation of Archival Records**

The National Archives of Canada is committed to offering guidance and resources on a case by case basis to federal departments in an effort to support local records preservation programs. Incorporating simple conservation practices contributes to the long term preservation of historically significant records. These include:

- ▶ advice on the use of NA-approved archival containers
- ▶ provision of adequate storage conditions for records
- ▶ removal of binders and pockets from boxes
- ▶ proper labelling of containers
- ▶ splitting of oversized files
- ▶ use of pH neutral file folders
- ▶ caution in underfilling or overfilling boxes
- ▶ segregation of non-textual material such as diskettes, microfilm, maps, drawings, photographs, etc.

## **Consultation with National Archives Staff**

Preparing records for transfer to the National Archives of Canada is the responsibility of the transferring institution. The National Archives will provide advice and assistance as needed. These guidelines will provide information on the various steps in this process. The National Archives recognizes that each government department or agency has specific needs regarding the management and handling of records for transfer. Consultation between departmental records managers and Archives staff is, therefore, considered to be a necessary part of the transfer process. Records managers should contact the responsible NA archivist before preparing records for transfer. Throughout the transfer process, consultation should continue to take place at regular intervals. Inattention to standard procedures concerning the transfer of records can lead to the duplication of work and other costly problems. The staff of the National Archives is available to provide the necessary advice for the efficient transfer of records.

## **Specific Guidelines for Staff of Government Institutions**

Before embarking on the preparation of records for transfer, institutional staff will review the departmental Records Disposition Authorities and their corresponding terms and conditions to determine if there are any special limitations or considerations that are unique to the archival

records in question. The terms and conditions are negotiated agreements between government institutions and the National Archives and should take precedence over these general procedures.

When archival records are ready for disposal, the records/information manager should contact the responsible archivist regarding the feasibility of preparing the archival records to permit their direct integration into the permanent holdings of the Archives. The National Archives will provide ongoing assistance throughout the process; however, details should be worked out at the beginning to ensure a smooth transfer.

### ***The Feasibility Assessment***

The archivist, accompanied by the responsible Records Control Officer from the Physical Control Section and the GARDD Standards Officer (Finding Aids and Authority Control) will make an on-site visit to discuss and assess the feasibility of the project. The assessment is a confirmation that the records for transfer are suitable for direct placement in the archival containers. It includes an on-site analysis of the situation from a conservation perspective. The assessment also gauges the resource implications of the project for both departmental and National Archives staff. In addition, it is an opportunity to exchange information and to answer questions concerning conservation practices, material in other media, and the preparation of finding aids.

- ▶ The feasibility assessment is a necessary part in preparing archival records for transfer as there is a significant resource investment for both our institutions.
- ▶ Upon an agreement that both institutions are equipped to deal with the transfer, and that the records themselves are suitable for direct transfer into the permanent holdings, the institution will box the records directly into archival containers. Contact the National Archives to obtain the appropriate containers.
- ▶ When the archival containers arrive, and prior to the packing of the material, the departmental staff will contact the archivist and arrange a second meeting or a follow-up visit with the Records Control Officer.

### ***Training on Preparing Archival Records for Transfer***

- ▶ The Records Control Officer will conduct an on-site demonstration of the procedures for archival container assembly, file separation, use and filing. In addition, conservation concerns such as the removal of binders and paper clips will be addressed. These procedures are outlined in the document entitled *General Conservation*

Practices.<sup>1</sup> The demonstration is highly recommended for departmental staff involved in the preparation of records for transfer since it is easier to demonstrate a point or explain certain technical aspects on site instead of over the telephone.

### **Segregation**

- ▶ The departmental staff will segregate the archival records from the non-archival material.
- ▶ Records still on the shelf in the records office that are designated archival can be placed in the approved archival containers instead of placing them in the usual 30 cm. (1 ft.) boxes (This only applies to records to be stored within the department or in a private storage facility.) This should avoid having to rebox archival records from 1 ft. boxes to archival containers.
- ▶ Segregation of odd-sized textual records and other media (microfilm, microfiche, videocassettes, diskettes and other electronic records) is normally required. This material can be placed in the 1ft. boxes for final containerization at the National Archives. Any references to records in these formats should also be noted in the finding aids.
- ▶ If required, the National Archives of Canada will provide specialized containers for archival records of non-standard dimensions.
- ▶ All archival records need to be identified in the finding aid before placement in the archival container.

### **Managing the Archival Record**

- ▶ The National Archives of Canada will provide archival reference numbers for the containers consistent with its information management and physical control holdings practices. The archival reference numbers are mainly for physical control and identification purposes at the National Archives. They are distinct from the departmental file classification systems or numbering systems which should be included as a part of the finding aid.

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<sup>1</sup> Please contact the GARDD archivist at the National Archives of Canada to obtain copies of the following guidelines: *General Conservation Practices; Boxing Archival Records in Approved Containers; Preparing Finding Aids in Word Perfect or ASCII; Provision of Electronic Finding Aids to the National Archives of Canada (generic).*

- ▶ The archival reference numbers should be clearly marked on the outside of each archival container and added to the finding aid.
- ▶ Institutions are strongly encouraged to add a field for the archival reference number to their records management data base in order to facilitate retrieval of the institution's archival record.

### ***Finding Aid***

- ▶ The Government Archives and Records Disposition Division has guidelines for institutional staff to follow when creating finding aids.
- ▶ The institution will create an electronic finding aid that is consistent with National Archives data bases and include the archival reference numbers. The NA requires the preparation of electronic finding aids so that the information can be downloaded to the National Archives' own information system. Ideally, the department's own tracking systems should be sufficient for this purpose.
- ▶ In the absence of electronic tracking/inventory systems, it is suggested that institutional clients prepare an electronic file list or a finding aid (in ASCII or WordPerfect) to accompany the records. The finding aid should contain information such as the originating program, branch, or department, file numbers, file titles, outside date ranges, and the number of parts. The archival reference numbers assigned by the NA should also be added to the finding aid. Further information concerning the preparation of finding aids can be obtained from *Preparing Finding Aids in Word Perfect or ASCII and Provision of Electronic Finding Aids to the National Archives of Canada (generic)*.
- ▶ The electronic version and a hard copy of the finding aid will be placed in the first archival container. Institutions are strongly urged to retain their own copy of the finding aid.

### ***The Archival Transfer***

- ▶ When the archival records have been placed in their containers, the records manager will contact the archivist to arrange to have the records picked up. The archivist will require information on the main contact, address, number of archival containers and the finding aid. The archivist will arrange the pick-up with the Records Control Officer in the Physical Control Section.

- ▶ The archivist will follow-up with a letter of acknowledgment indicating the FRC accession number (if applicable), the National Archives' Branch Accession Number (BAN) and the range of archival reference numbers included in the accession.
- ▶ Once the archival records are transferred, the National Archives of Canada assumes custody and control of the records.
- ▶ Requests to view the contents of the archival containers should be directed to the Researcher Services Division of the National Archives of Canada.

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## APPENDICES

1. General Conservation Practices
2. Containerization of Archival Records
3. Data Entry Standards
4. Preparing Finding Aids in Word Perfect or ASCII
5. Provision of Electronic Finding Aids to the National Archives of Canada (generic)
6. Forthcoming - Process for the Consultation of Records Subject to the Access to Information and Privacy Acts by Government Researchers at the National Archives of Canada

*For information on the conservation of records contact the National Archives of Canada, Physical Control Section at (613) 992-9362. For information on the preparation of a file list or finding aid using the department's own automated system, consult the responsible archivist and the GARDD Standards Officer (Finding Aids) at (613)995-9518. For all other information, contact the responsible archivist. The phone number of the Government Archives and Records Disposition Division is (613) 996-8507.*

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**Appendix 1 - General Conservation Procedures\*\***

## **Introduction**

These instructions on general conservation practices are designed to assist staff within government institutions to prepare records for transfer to the custody of the Government Archives and Records Disposition Division (GARDD) of the National Archives of Canada. The instructions cover both the preparation of material to be transferred directly to the permanent holdings of the National Archives and the preparation of material requiring further selection at the Archives.

Records which are being prepared for transfer to GARDD are of lasting historical value; they are unique and cannot be replaced. These archival records are different from operational records in a records office. It is therefore important to adhere to certain conservation procedures to ensure that the records are not damaged. It is easier to follow *preventive conservation practices* from the beginning rather than conserve and repair damaged records later on - a costly and time-consuming procedure.

Two practices that ensure that valuable archival records will not be damaged through handling is to avoid accumulating excessively thick files (over 1"). Another volume of a file should be opened if a file is accumulating documents that increase its thickness. The second practice is to avoid file pockets; these are not acceptable in archival containers. The material should be put into regular file folders. Several folders may be necessary if there is a lot of material; it is necessary to avoid creating a thick file which is difficult to handle and causes damage to valuable documents while handling.

## **Specific Guidelines**

### **1. Handling Documents and Personal Safety**

Some people may be sensitive to the inks or dust found with older records. Latex gloves and masks are available for those persons. Contact the Records Control Officer in the Physical Control Section of the National Archives of Canada.

### **2. Use of Pens**

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\*\* Consult the archivist for copies of other documents on the preparation of archival records for transfer to the National Archives of Canada. These documents include: *Guidelines for the Transfer of Archival Records to the National Archives of Canada*, *Containerization of Archival Records*, *Data Entry Standards*, *Preparing Finding Aids in Word Perfect or ASCII*, and *Electronic Finding Aids to the National Archives of Canada (generic)*.



Fountain or felt-tip pens or magic markers should never be used near archival material because of the danger of accidental ink spillage or markings. HB pencils should be used. Use of magic marker on the outside of archival containers in the label area will be permitted. ***Under no circumstances will writings or markings of any kind be permitted on original archival material.***

### **3. Eating and Drinking**

There should be no eating or drinking permitted where records are being stored, processed, copied or consulted, since food and drink stain documents and attract insects which harm paper.

### **4. Water Damage**

Because of the constant threat of leaks from water pipes, boxes of documents **must not remain on the floor overnight**. If ample book trucks and shelving are not available, the material must be stacked on skids. Water leaks do not need to be severe to cause substantial damage to archival documents. Even the smallest spill can result in serious mould damage if a box is permitted to sit on a wet floor. The "wicking effect" will allow water to migrate through the container wetting some or all of its contents, depending on the time and amount of water involved.

### **5. Damaged Containers**

Containers which are sufficiently damaged as to render their contents unsafe during handling or transportation should be replaced immediately. To help prevent damage to boxes and to their contents, containers should not be stacked more than three high on trucks and tables.

### **6. Rubber Bands, Clips, Binders, File Pockets and Oversize Material**

Rubber bands and very large paper clips must be removed from original documents. All records should be removed from 3-ring or spiral metal bindings before they are boxed. Documents in file pockets should be removed and placed in appropriate sized file folders. Bring to the attention of the National Archives' Records Control Officer any oversize material found in a file or pocket, e.g. large maps or reports.

### **7. Material in other media (photographs, tapes, drawings etc.)**

Occasionally, records in other media such as video or audio tapes, photographs, drawings, maps or computer diskettes may be included within textual paper files. You may also encounter collections of microfiche or microfilm. In such cases, consult with National Archives staff before preparing the material for listing and transfer to ensure that any special instructions for the treatment of this other media are included for the project if this material is archival.

## **8. Containerization**

For information on containerization, please refer to Appendix 2, *Guidelines for Containerization of Archival Records*.

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**Appendix 2 - Containerization of Archival Records<sup>\*\*\*</sup>**

**Introduction**

There are two kinds of transfers of material to GARDD. In the first type of transfer, archival records will be accessioned directly into the permanent holdings of GARDD without further selection. The records will be placed into archival containers following the guidelines below. In the second case, that of material being transferred that requires further selection by the archivist, the records will be placed in regular 30 cm. (1 ft.) cubic foot boxes.

Before beginning any preparations for the transfer of material to the Archives, review the documents specified in the footnote below and, if necessary, consult with the responsible archivist and the Records Control Officer.

**General Guidelines**

**Handling of Archival Records**

Care must be taken in handling archival records. The removal of files from containers can cause great damage to the documents. To prevent tearing, files should be lifted out of the container by the protective acid-free or manila folder, not by the pages themselves. When the file is returned to the container, the pages should be arranged as neatly as possible on the spike to ensure that the edges do not hang out from the folder to avoid torn or lost corners.

In all cases, care should be taken not to place too many files into each container. These attempts to save space often result in damage to the material from forced removal/placement and broken containers frequently result. Files should be packed closely enough to be held upright in the container but not so tightly that there is no room for a hand to remove them. Records should not be packed so loosely that they slump in the containers. The space left should be approximately ½ to 1 inch. The National Archives will provide spacers or a more appropriate-sized container to keep the files upright.

**Diskettes**

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<sup>\*\*\*</sup> Consult the archivist for copies of other documents on the preparation of archival records for transfer to the National Archives of Canada. These documents include: *Guidelines for the Transfer of Archival Records to the National Archives of Canada*, *General Conservation Practices*, *Data Entry Standards*, *Preparing Finding Aids in Word Perfect or ASCII*, and *Provision of Electronic Finding Aids to the National Archives of Canada (generic)*.

The National Archives does not accept diskettes which contain only transitory records, or records that duplicate the contents of the corporate paper files. The National Archives does accept diskettes that contain unique records of value. Government institutions must segregate their diskettes, clearly identify the contents on a label and cross-reference them to the textual records to which they relate. Records in diskette format carry the same retention periods as the textual records to which they relate. It is the responsibility of the creating agency to maintain the readability of records on diskettes until the expiry of their retention period.

### **File Folders**

When using pH neutral file folders, crease the folder along its full width. In this way, the documents will be held flat against the bottom of the container and not ride up. In all cases, the spine of the original file should be placed so it is resting on the bottom of the containers, to avoid future damage to the documents.

### **Specific Guidelines**

1. Begin by ensuring that all files to be transferred are in proper numeric order. Ensure that all parts (which are marked on the file jacket as a "volume") of the same file number are kept together in numeric sequence. If a file has a pocket(s), they must be kept with that file. When placing files in order, note that numbers are indexed before letters, single letters before double, double letters before triple:

35-1-2	36-11-13	50-X-40
35-A-1	36-11-13-2	50-Z-40
	36-11-13-A	50-AB-40
	36-11-13A	50-AC-40
	36-11-13B	50-ABC-40
	36-11-13-R	50-ACD-40

2. For material being boxed into archival containers, begin by marking the Archival Reference Number on the 20 cm container in pencil (later to be inked-in when the project is complete). This information will be provided to you by the archivist.
3. Where records are being refoldered, take a clean pH neutral folder and mark on its tab the file number and file part number.

Without removing the original manila file jacket, place the file in the newly identified pH neutral file folder, with its spine down towards the expansion fold. Ensure the expansion fold has been folded along the appropriate crease line to fit the contents.

**Note:** If the file is too large to fit into a pH neutral file folder safely, the files must be physically split. Splitting of files must be undertaken in consultation with the Records Control

Officer. The material removed from the original file is spiked together with a brass fastener. The same file number is written on the tab but since the file has been split, the part numbers will be put in square brackets, for example, file 50-1-2, part 1 when split will be written as 50-1-2 [Pt. 1.1] and 50-1-2 [Pt. 1.2] on the tabs.

5. Once the files are correctly placed in the appropriate container, a file list must be prepared before the material can be transferred to the National Archives. The following information must be recorded on the list: container or archival reference number, file number, file title, file part number (where applicable), file inclusive dates, and file part dates (if applicable). Instructions on the preparation of lists are found in the appendix on Data Entry Standards, and in other documents giving specific instructions based on the type of software to be used.
6. Where possible, records (loose items) should be linked to a file classification system. Records which are clearly not part of a file classification system should be identified in the finding aid and linked to the office of creation.

*Example 1:* Deputy Minister (*office of creation*) - Minute Book (*subject*)  
- 1955 (*date*)

*Example 2:* Yukon Resource Centre - Diary of Field Agent - 1925

Where necessary, consult with the archivist at the National Archives about any unusual problems in dealing with loose material.

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**Appendix 3 - Data Entry Standards\*\*\*\***

**Introduction**

The following section on the preparation of lists for government records has been established to maintain the Government Archives and Records Disposition Division's standards in the production of file lists, also known as finding aids. These standards have evolved over the years in an ongoing effort to meet the division's need for improved research tools and to ensure consistency and accuracy in data entry. They will apply to all projects, unless specifically altered for particular projects to suit the records or the archivist's needs. These will be specified at the beginning of the project by the archivist.

**Guidelines**

**1. File Security Identification:**

Files with different security classifications will only be identified in lists if the classification is actually part of the file title written on the file jacket.

**2. Empty or Missing Files:**

Do not transfer or list empty or missing files, which are usually indicated by a charge out card. Such situations should be brought to the attention of the archivist.

**3. Language**

No translation into or out of any language will be done and there will be no standardization of name forms or abbreviations. Accents and other markings must be respected. On files where the file title is predominantly in English, proper names will be accented only where the name appears in a form other than English. Thus "Trois Rivières" will have an accent, but Montreal will not. If the file title is predominantly in French then all words will be considered to be in French and a proper name which appears the same in both French and English will be treated as a French word and accented.

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\*\*\*\* Consult the archivist for copies of other documents on the preparation of archival records for transfer to the National Archives of Canada. These documents include: *Guidelines for the Transfer of Archival Records to the National Archives of Canada*, *General Conservation Practices*, *Containerization of Archival Records*, *Preparing Finding Aids in Word Perfect or ASCII*, and *Provision of Electronic Finding Aids to the National Archives of Canada (generic)*.

**4. File Numbers:**

File numbers must be input as they appear on the file. In cases where there are no numbers on the files, consult the archivist prior to beginning the project to determine if a different control number should be used.

**5. File Titles:**

File titles will be entered into the file title field **as they appear on the file jacket and respecting any other conventions in these instructions, such as abbreviations.** Any deviation from this rule will constitute special instructions and will be determined by the archivist prior to the commencement of the project.

When entering file titles, **do not use** underlining, bold or special characters or place a period at the end of the title. In addition, enter all abbreviations as they appear on the file jacket, enter acronyms in upper case with no periods between the letters (i.e. RCMP, not R.C.M.P.), and always enter ships names in upper case (i.e. EMPRESS OF JAPAN). Ampersands (&) are written out as "and" or "et", as the pound sign (#) is written out as "no."

Each different block of the file title will be separated by a space hyphen space. For example:

Example: Corporate Management Branch - Finance Division - Organization

File titles will be input in upper/lower case; this means that the first letter of the first word in each block of the file title will be capitalized, and the rest input in lower case; the first letter of words in a proper name (individuals, countries, companies, committees, associations and titles) will be capitalized.

Example: United Nations - Member countries contributions - Budget and expenditures

**6. Part ID and Dates:**

Where a file is composed of more than one part, the list must show the file title, the part number and the outside dates of each part. If pockets are included, they also must be identified separately, according to the instructions for pockets stated previously.

**7. Pockets:**

The following formats may be used for describing material that was in file pockets:

a) When a pocket is linked to a specific file part:

5-3-1  
Administration - General  
1950/01-1950/05  
Part: 3=1950/01-1950/02  
3-FP=1950/02-1950/05

- b) Multiple pockets linked to a specific file part:

5-3-1  
Administration - General  
1950/01-1952/11  
Part: 3=1950/01-1950/02  
3-FP=1950/02-1950/05  
3-FP=1950/07-1952/11

- c) When a pocket is not linked to a specific file part, it is entered separately with the same title as the file by that number and FP in the part field:

5-3-1  
Administration - General  
1950/01-1950/05  
Part: 3

5-3-1  
Administration - General  
1950/02-1950/05  
Part: FP

- d) Multiple pockets that are not linked to a specific file part are entered separately with the same title as the file by that number and FP in the part field:

5-3-1  
Administration - General  
1950/02-1952/11  
Part: FP=1950/02-1950/05  
FP=1950/07-1952/11

- e) On rare occasions, pockets are numbered. For multiple pockets linked to a specific file part:

5-3-1  
Administration - General  
1950/01-1952/11  
Part: 3=1950/01-1950/02  
3-FP(1)=1950/02-1950/05  
3-FP(2)=1950/07-1952/11



f) For multiple pockets that are numbered but not linked to a specific file part:

5-3-1  
Administration - General  
1950/02-1950/05  
Part: FP(1)=1950/02-1950/05  
FP(2)=1950/07-1952/11

**8. Dates:**

Before beginning any boxing and listing project, consult with the archivist to confirm the nature of date information to be recorded.

In determining file dates, some broad guidelines can be laid down. First, a file's date refers to the dates during which it was in use and active, and this is not always easy to determine. Generally, however, documents in a file which are original to the file itself is the material which should be used to determine dates, as opposed to enclosures with letters or supporting documents in case files. A case file about an application for a loan, for example, will have as its earliest date the date of the application or the date of a letter requesting an application form, and not an earlier date which might appear on material sent to support the application.

Second, for many files, it will be sufficient to look at the first and last piece in each file and take the inclusive dates from them. The date of any letter is the original date of writing, not a "received" stamp. Any date stamps on a letter should be ignored unless they are the only way to approximate the date the letter was written. With large files it would be wise to check two or three other pieces in the file at random to make sure they fall into the time period. If they don't, a more detailed check may be made; however, these kinds of checks should not be done often. If during a project, a person doing listing finds him/herself doing many of such checks, it should be brought to the attention of the supervisor for resolution.

Briefing books should be dated with the date of the meeting or conference for which they were created.

In order to be consistent with existing finding aids, date information must be as complete as possible and presented in the following fashion:

a) for a continuous run of documents in a file,

year/month-year/month

1964/04-1994/12

b) for a single date,

year/month/day  
1994/12/03

c) for non-continuous documents in a file,

year/month, year/month  
1920/04, 1976/07  
1945, 1960/02-1961/03  
1950/02-1953/03, 1968

d) for files with missing details in the dates,

year/month - year/month  
1934/01 - 1954/12  
1888/03 - 1917/11

Generally the date information should be entered as year/month-year/month (eg.1950/02-1953/11), unless otherwise specified.

If a file contains no dates, supply an approximate date.

[1971 or 1972]	one year or the other
[1969?]	probable date
[ca. 1960]	approximate date
[198-]	decade certain
[198-?]	probable decade
[19--]	century certain
[19--?]	probable century

Insert N.D. to indicate that there is no date information for the file.

## 9. Use of Square Brackets and File Parts:

The use of square brackets indicates that **additional or missing** information has been added to the file title, for example [pocket], or that a file number has been created for control purposes. They may also indicate that the file has been split into several files for conservation purposes. Square brackets, in this case, will indicate parts or subparts of a file.

Examples:    Volume: 3145            File ID: 1990-1-3  
                 Title: [Correspondence]  
                 File Inclusive Dates: 1910/03-1920/10  
                 Part:    1=1910/03-1915/06  
                        2=1915/06-1920/10

Volume: 3145 File ID: [1990-1-4]  
Title: Circulars  
File Inclusive Dates: 1990/01-1990/12

Volume: 3145            File ID: 1990-1-3  
Title: Correspondence  
File Inclusive Dates: 1935/03-1940/06  
Part    [1.1=1935/03-1937/12]  
         [1.2=1937/12-1940/06]

- 10.** Staff of government institutions should be aware that the National Archives is changing the way it assigns numbers to accessions and permanent archival records. Details on the new Archival Reference Number will follow when they become available.
  
- 11.** For further information, contact the GARDD Standards Officer (Finding Aids) at 995-9518.

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**Appendix 4 - Preparing Finding Aids for the National Archives  
in *WORDPERFECT AND ASCII (With Examples)*<sup>\*\*\*\*\*</sup>**

While production of finding aids in Word Perfect is *discouraged* in favour of using a list from the department's own electronic file control system, there may be instances where only a WP list is available.

When the information on files is saved in *WordPerfect* word-processing software, create a list using the "Columns" function (not tabs or spaces to separate the fields) as follows:

- ▶ First decide which fields to include and in what order. For example, the fields could be: 1-container number, 2-file number, 3-part or volume number, 4-file title and 5-dates.
- ▶ Choose the paper size, the position of the page number, the font and other specifications necessary to any document. Use the software's automatic page-numbering to number the pages. If you want a title at the top or bottom of each page, use *WordPerfect's* "Headers" or "Footers" function.
- ▶ Define the columns at the point where the list actually starts (after the title). Choose "Parallel" columns and the number of columns; in the example given, you would choose five.
- ▶ Begin typing the titles of the columns and the information on each file.

When using a word-processing software other than *WordPerfect*, adapt the instructions accordingly. It is important to be consistent in the information entered.

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<sup>\*\*\*\*\*</sup> Consult the archivist for copies of other documents on the preparation of archival records for transfer to the National Archives of Canada. These documents include: *Guidelines for the Transfer of Archival Records to the National Archives of Canada*, *General Conservation Practices*, *Containerization of Archival Records*, *Data Entry Guidelines* and *Provision of Electronic Finding Aids to the National Archives of Canada (generic)*.

**Example of A List in *WORD PERFECT* Format**

NAME OF THE DEPARTMENT  
 NAME OF THE BRANCH  
 TRANSFER TO THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES  
 DATE

<i>Box</i>	<i>File No</i>	<i>Part No</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Dates</i>
2	8000-6	1	Human Resources — Personnel management accountability	1964/11-1976/10
2	8000-6	2	Human Resources — Personnel management accountability	1976/11-1977/02
2	8000-6	Supp. A	Human Resources — Personnel management accountability	1977/03-1978/08
2	8000-7	1	Human Resources — Scientific exchange program with industry	1976/09-1977/01
3	8007-4	1	Human Resources — Committees — Joint Public Service Commission/Treasury Board Canada Committee	1975/06-1976/02
3	8007-4	2	Human Resources — Committees — Joint Public Service Commission/Treasury Board Canada Committee	1976/03-1976/06
3	8007-4	3	Human Resources — Committees — Joint Public Service Commission/Treasury Board Canada Committee	1976/06-1977/01
3	8010-2	1	Human Resources — Communication of policies and procedures — Policy development	1970/10-1975/05
3	8010-2	2	Human Resources — Communication of policies and procedures — Policy development	1975/06-1977/07
3	8010-2	3	Human Resources — Communication of policies and procedures — Policy development	1975/09-1977/07

3	8010-2	4	Human Resources — Communication of policies and procedures — Policy development	1977/08-1977/10
3	8010-3-1		Human Resources — Communication of policies and procedures — Consultants — Generally	1975/03-1976/04
3	8010-3-3		Human Resources — Communication of policies and procedures — Consultants — Contracts	1975/05-1975/06
3	8010-4		Human Resources — Communication of policies and procedures — Evaluation	1975/06-1977/06
3	8010-5		Human Resources — Communication of policies and procedures — Meetings	1973/04-1977/12
3	8010-8-3		Human Resources — Communication of policies and procedures — Reports — Status reports	1975/06-1976/05

**Example of a List in *WORD PERFECT* Format**

NAME OF THE DEPARTMENT  
 NAME OF THE BRANCH  
 TRANSFER TO THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES  
 DATE

<i>Box</i>	<i>File No</i>	<i>Part No</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Dates</i>
2	8000-6	1	Human Resources — Personnel management accountability	1964/11-1976/10
2	8000-6	2	Human Resources — Personnel management accountability	1976/11-1977/02
2	8000-6	Supp.A	Human Resources — Personnel management accountability	1977/03-1978/08
2	8000-7	1	Human Resources — Scientific exchange program with industry	1976/09-1977/01
3	8007-4	1	Human Resources — Committees — Joint Public Service Commission/Treasury Board Canada Committee	1975/06-1976/02
3	8007-4	2	Human Resources — Committees — Joint Public Service Commission/Treasury Board Canada Committee	1976/03-1976/06
3	8007-4	3	Human Resources — Committees — Joint Public Service Commission/Treasury Board Canada Committee	1976/06-1977/01
3	8010-2	1	Human Resources — Communication of policies and procedures — Policy development	1970/10-1975/05
3	8010-2	2	Human Resources — Communication of policies and procedures — Policy development	1975/06-1977/07
3	8010-2	3	Human Resources — Communication of policies and procedures —	1975/09-1977/07

Policy development

3	8010-2	4	Human Resources — Communication of policies and procedures — Policy development	1977/08-1977/10
3	8010-3- 1		Human Resources — Communication of policies and procedures — Consultants — Generally	1975/03-1976/04
3	8010-3- 3		Human Resources — Communication of policies and procedures — Consultants — Contracts	1975/05-1975/06
3	8010-4		Human Resources — Communication of policies and procedures — Evaluation	1975/06-1977/06
3	8010-5		Human Resources — Communication of policies and procedures — Meetings	1973/04-1977/12
3	8010-8- 3		Human Resources — Communication of policies and procedures — Reports — Status reports	1975/06-1976/05



## **Creating Lists For the National Archives In *ASCII* (With Examples)**

When the information on files is saved in a data base, create a list in *ASCII* as follows:

- ▶ First decide which fields to include and in what order. For example, the fields could be: 1-container number, 2-file number, 3-part number, 4-file title and 5-dates.
- ▶ The contents of each field must appear in the report and be followed by a delimiter, that is, a character that indicates the end of a field.
- ▶ Similarly, each record must end with a special character indicating the end of a record.
- ▶ The characters chosen as delimiters should be ASCII characters that do not appear in the data. In the example given below, we have used the "\" character at the end of each field and the "^" character to indicate the end of a record.
- ▶ It is very important that a space be reserved for each field, even if it need not contain any information.

If these instructions are unclear, contact the Standards Officer (Finding Aids and Authority Control) in GARDD at the National Archives of Canada (phone: 613-995-9518).

## EXAMPLE OF A LIST IN ASCII FORMAT

NAME OF THE DEPARTMENT  
TRANSFER TO THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES  
DATE

2\  
8000-6\  
1\  
Human Resources — Personnel management accountability\  
1964/11-1976/10\  
^  
2\  
8000-6\  
2\  
Human Resources — Personnel management accountability\  
1976/11-1977/02\  
^  
2\  
8000-6\  
Supp.A\  
Human Resources — Personnel management accountability\  
1977/03-1978/08\  
^  
2\  
8000-7\  
1\  
Human Resources — Scientific exchange program with industry\  
1976/09-1977/01\  
^  
3\  
8007-4\  
1\  
Human Resources — Committees — Joint Public Service Commission/Treasury Board Canada  
Committee\  
1975/06-1976/02\  
^  
3\  
8007-4\  
2\  
Human Resources — Committees — Joint Public Service Commission/Treasury Board Canada  
Committee\  
1976/03-1976/06\  
^  
3\  
8007-4\  
3\  
Human Resources — Committees — Joint Public Service Commission/Treasury Board Canada  
Committee\  
1976/06-1977/01\  
^

3\  
8010-2\  
1\  
Human Resources — Communication of policies and procedures — Policy development\  
1970/10-1975/05\  
^  
3\  
8010-2\  
2\  
Human Resources — Communication of policies and procedures — Policy development\  
1975/06-1977/07\  
^  
3\  
8010-2\  
3\  
Human Resources — Communication of policies and procedures — Policy development\  
1975/09-1977/07\  
^  
3\  
8010-2\  
4\  
Human Resources — Communication of policies and procedures — Policy development\  
1977/08-1977/10\  
^  
3\  
8010-3-1\  
\  
Human Resources — Communication of policies and procedures — Consultants — Generally\  
1975/03-1976/04\  
^  
3\  
8010-3-3\  
\  
Human Resources — Communication of policies and procedures — Consultants — Contracts\  
1975/05-1975/06\  
^  
3\  
8010-4\  
\  
Human Resources — Communication of policies and procedures — Evaluation\  
1975/06-1977/06\  
^  
3\  
8010-5\  
\  
Human Resources — Communication of policies and procedures — Meetings\  
1973/04-1977/12\  
^

**National Archives of Canada  
Government Archives and Records Disposition Division**

**Appendix 5 - Provision of Electronic Finding Aids  
to the National Archives (Generic)<sup>\*\*\*\*\*</sup>**

<b>Procedure Number:</b> FA-23	<b>Procedure Account:</b> ARC20
<b>Procedure Title :</b> Provision of Electronic Finding Aids to National Archives - Generic	

For each project undertaken in an institution, this document will be modified to include further details on how to produce a finding aid from the institution's records management system.

**(Use this procedure as a template to develop specific instructions for individual procedures. The new procedures should have the naming convention FA-23a, FA-23b, etc.)**

The National Archives of Canada stores and manages electronic finding aids using the MINISIS relational database system. This system imposes certain layout rules in the provision of electronic finding aid data. While, for reasons of efficiency and expediency, it is highly desirable that these layout rules be respected when providing electronic finding aids to the National Archives, limitations of the source systems will be taken into consideration and the National Archives will undertake the necessary editing in cases where the source system cannot provide the data in the desired layout.

The institution will create a new field for the archival reference number in their records management control system. The archival reference numbers will be provided by the National Archives.

**(Add information specific to the project)**

Each record will be provided as a separate record following the guidelines outlined below. Data elements internal to the National Archives will be provided at the beginning of each record as a header (record separator) for each record.

### **General Guidelines**

The database system used by National Archives is primarily a text management software which accepts data in a linear (paragraph) format as opposed to systems which accept data in a tabular or column format. For ease of downloading, each data element should be presented on its own line.

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<sup>\*\*\*\*\*</sup> Consult the archivist for copies of other documents on the preparation of archival records for transfer to the National Archives of Canada. These documents include: *Guidelines for the Transfer of Archival Records to the National Archives of Canada*, *General Conservation Practices*, *Containerization of Archival Records*, *Data Entry Guidelines* and *Preparing Finding Aids in Word Perfect and ASCII*.

<b>Dates</b>	Whenever possible, dates should be provided in the format YYYY/MM or YYYY/MM/DD which is the standard date format for finding aids. Date ranges should be provided with a hyphen between. For example: 1985/11-1986/01 or 1985/11/19-1986/01/02
<b>Diacritics</b>	All diacritical characters supported by the ASCII standard are allowable.
<b>Line Width</b>	A suggested line width of 80 characters is preferred, with wraparound lines indented by one character from the left margin.
<b>Unit Separator</b>	Each separate unit (record) should be flagged by the insertion of the separator "!REC-ID" on a line by itself at the beginning of the unit, followed by the five elements in static text.
<b>Tagging</b>	Each data element within a unit should be clearly tagged at the left margin with the label provided for the element.
<b>Repeating elements</b>	Each occurrence of a repeating data element should be recorded on its own line repeating the label at the margin.
<b>Empty data Element</b>	Empty data element should be omitted from the file.
<b>Bilingual data elements</b>	Bilingual data elements should be provided in the following format: <b><i>English Text = French Text</i></b>

## SAMPLE

### LABEL KEY: Field Information

Note: All fields are listed. Use as necessary.

**(This is a list of the fields for the standard finding aid databases. Modify as necessary for the project or replace by fields of a specialty database.)**

!A050!	Record Group Number (Internal to National Archives)
!A110!	Series Information (Internal to National Archives)
!A200!	Record Type Code (Internal to National Archives)
!B700!	File Access Code (Internal to National Archives)
!A300!	GARDD Accession Number (Internal to National Archives)
!A310!	Record Center Code (Internal to National Archives)
!S200!	Finding Aid Project # (Internal to National Archives)
!B300!	File Identifier
!B400!	From-To Dates - in format YYYY/MM-YYYY/MM or YYYY/MM/DD-YYYY/MM/DD
!B500!	File Title
!B600!	File Keywords
!B700!	File Access Code
!B800!	Part Id & Dates - in format 1=YYYY/MM-YYYY/MM or 1=YYYY/MM/DD-YYYY/MM/DD
!B810!	Next Level (Title # ...)
!B820!	OLD File Identifier
!B900!	File Reel No. (C-1000)

!B910! Microfiche # (MF 010/00001-00002)  
!B920! Microfiche Box Number (#####)  
!C250!C251! Archival Reference Number  
!C280! Accession Box Number  
!D100! Date - Document (YYYY/MM/DD)  
!D110! Date - Reply (YYYY/MM/DD)  
!R100! Names  
!R200! Notes

**DATA:**

Specific example for **(this project)** data, showing expected fields.  
**(State database name if a specialty database.) (Annotate the example as necessary for clarity.)**

**!REC-ID**  
**!A050!41**  
**!A200!F**  
**!S200!41-18**  
**!B300!1**  
**!B400!1988/12/31-1988/01/04**  
**!B500!**This is the file title field and should include all  
information available. If the file title field wraps to  
a subsequent lines, each subsequent line needs to indented by  
one character  
**!B700!10**  
**!B800!1=1988/12/31**  
**!B800!2=1989/01/03**  
**!C250!C251!1**

For more information about the technical specifications of electronic  
finding aid download files, please call:

Database Administration  
Information Management Branch, Systems Division  
National Archives of Canada

Database Manager (613)995-0549