

# **Record Keeping Metadata Requirements for the Government of Canada**

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## Record Keeping Metadata

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## THE FUNCTION OF METADATA IN RECORDS MANAGEMENT

Metadata is data describing data. In electronic document and records management, this means data that must be captured along with electronic records to enable them to be understood and to support their management and use.

- Metadata assists with the retrieval of records;
- Metadata improves the management of records;
- Metadata is necessary to document the content, context and structure of a record;
- Metadata is used to document transactions relating to a record; and
- Contextual and descriptive metadata is essential to the integrity of records and to document a record's commitment as a record.

## RECORD KEEPING METADATA

The Record Keeping Metadata is defined broadly to include the type of information Departments are required to capture to describe the identity, authenticity, content, context, structure and management requirements of records created in the context of a business activity.

The Metadata model consists of elements, which are the attributes of a record that are comparable to fields in a database. The model is modular in nature. It permits Departments to use a core set of elements that will meet the minimum requirements for describing and sharing information, while facilitating interoperability between government Departments. It also allows Departments with specialized needs or the need for more detailed descriptions to add new elements and/or sub-elements to the basic metadata in order to satisfy their particular business requirements.

## ELEMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Each metadata element is described using the following structure:

Attribute	Description
Name	The label assigned to a metadata element
Identifier	The unique identifier assigned to the element
Definition	Description of the concept, nature, and scope of the element.
Purpose	Rationale for including the element in the metadata model.
Obligation	Indication of whether the element is mandatory (eg, must be used for record keeping) or optional (eg, use can be decided by individual Departments based on their own business requirements).
Occurrence	The element can have one or more (many) entries or the element name itself may be repeated for each unique entry.
Data source	Source of data and whether system assigned or manually input (by a general "user" or an "authorized user" such as a Records Administrator).
Comments	Additional information to aid users in understanding the purpose and use of the element. May also indicate actions that may be necessary for implementation of the metadata model.

## 1. DEPARTMENTAL IDENTIFIER

Attribute	Description
Name	Departmental Identifier
Identifier	1
Definition	The Departmental name or code indicating the Department responsible and accountable for the record.
Purpose	To uniquely identify the Department responsible and accountable for the record. To aid in record searching and retrieval across government Departments. To provide contextual information about the record.
Obligation	Mandatory
Occurrence	1
Data source	System - The default value should be assigned by the system. Not modifiable.
Comments	

## 2. ORGANIZATION

Attribute	Description
Name	Organization
Identifier	2
Definition	Official name or code that reflects the organization responsible and accountable for the record.
Purpose	To ensure responsibility and accountability for records at the corporate level. To facilitate searching. To provide contextual information about the record.
Obligation	Mandatory
Occurrence	1
Data source	System/User. Defaultable. Modifiable.
Comments	May be system assigned through an e-mail header, from a structured document or template, or from system logon. Beyond the first level, it is up to Departments to decide how many organization levels are required.

## 3. DOCUMENT NUMBER

Attribute	Description
Name	Document Number
Identifier	3
Definition	A unique document/record identification number.
Purpose	To uniquely identify the document/record. To facilitate searching.
Obligation	Mandatory
Occurrence	1
Data source	System. Not defaultable. Not modifiable.
Comments	

#### 4. AUTHOR

Attribute	Description
Name	Author
Identifier	4
Definition	The name of the person(s) primarily responsible for the intellectual content of the record.
Purpose	To facilitate searching. To provide contextual information about the record.
Obligation	Mandatory
Occurrence	Many
Data source	User/System. Defaultable. Modifiable.
Comments	This element may or may not be the same as “Trustee”. Element equivalent to “creator” or “originator”.

#### 5. TRUSTEE

Attribute	Description
Name	Trustee
Identifier	5
Definition	The name of the person responsible for the record.
Purpose	To facilitate searching. To provide contextual information about the record.
Obligation	Mandatory
Occurrence	1
Data source	User/System. Defaultable. Modifiable.
Comments	This element metadata is likely to change over time for non-finalized electronic records as users change responsibilities or positions. This element may or may not be the same as “Author”.

#### 6. SIGNED BY

Attribute	Description
Name	Signed By
Identifier	6
Definition	The person who signed the record/the person accountable for the record.
Purpose	To facilitate searching. To provide contextual information about the record.
Obligation	Optional
Occurrence	Many
Data source	User. Defaultable. Modifiable.
Comments	Element generally used for internally created Departmental records.

## 7. DESIGNATED RECIPIENT

Attribute	Description
Name	Designated Recipient
Identifier	7
Definition	The personal or corporate name of the entity or entities to which the record was sent.
Purpose	To facilitate searching. To provide contextual information about the record.
Obligation	Optional
Occurrence	Many
Data source	System/User. Defaultable. Modifiable.
Comments	This element may include names of cc's and bcc's. For an e-mail, this element may include names of all the addressees or business units to which the e-mail was sent.

## 8. TITLE

Attribute	Description
Name	Title
Identifier	8
Definition	The title assigned to the record.
Purpose	To assist identifying the record. To describe the content of the record. To facilitate searching. To provide contextual information about the record.
Obligation	Mandatory
Occurrence	1
Data source	User/System. Defaultable - Not recommended. Modifiable.
Comments	Meaningful titles should be assigned to aid in retrieval. In the absence of a title, the Subject is used (eg, subject line of a memo or an e-mail). In the absence of both a title and a subject line (eg, a letter) a meaningful title must be composed.

## 9. DESCRIPTION

Attribute	Description
Name	Description
Identifier	9
Definition	An abstract or textual description of the content and/or purpose of the record.
Purpose	To enable searching based on words or phrases describing the record. To provide a summary for display in search result sets.
Obligation	Optional
Occurrence	1
Data source	User/System. Defaultable. Modifiable. System may be programmed to select the first 250 characters of a record to complete this field if left blank.
Comments	Description may include an abstract, summary or table of contents of a textual record. Especially useful for allowing searches of non-textual records (eg, images).

## 10. SUBJECT NAME

Attribute	Description
Name	Subject Name
Identifier	10
Definition	Name of the subject file to which the record belongs (could be subject title, program, activity, subactivity, function or responsibility centre).
Purpose	To group like records for the purpose of facilitating work and carrying out administrative actions. To facilitate searching. To provide a text label for numeric or cryptic Subject Codes that can be used in searches.
Obligation	Mandatory
Occurrence	Many
Data source	User/System. Defaultable. Modifiable. System generated when a user selects a Subject Code.
Comments	Linked to Subject Code as applicable.

## 11. SUBJECT CODE

Attribute	Description
Name	Subject Code
Identifier	11
Definition	File number or similar identifying code used to group related records.
Purpose	To group like records for the purpose of facilitating work and carrying out administrative actions. To facilitate searching.
Obligation	Mandatory
Occurrence	Many
Data source	User/System. Defaultable. Modifiable.
Comments	Linked to Subject Name as applicable.

## 12. LANGUAGE

Attribute	Description
Name	Language
Identifier	12
Definition	Language of the content of the record.
Purpose	To facilitate searching. To provide contextual information about the record.
Obligation	Mandatory
Occurrence	Many
Data source	User. Defaultable. Modifiable.
Comments	See RFC1766 – <i>Tags for the Identification of Languages</i> (taken from the Standard ISO 639-2 - <i>Codes for the Representation of Names of Languages</i> , a two-letter Language Code).

### 13. DATE

Attribute	Description
Name	Date
Identifier	13
Definition	The date of the record.
Purpose	To provide contextual information about the record. To facilitate searching. May also be used in life cycle management of the record.
Obligation	Mandatory* The date that the author/originator completed the development of and/or signed the record. For electronic records, this date should be established by the author or from the time assigned to the record by the application used to create the record. For e-mail, date message was sent.
Occurrence	1
Data source	User/System. Defaultable. Modifiable.
Comments	See ISO 8601, " <u>Data elements and interchange formats - Information interchange – Representation of dates and times</u> ", fixed 8 characters (YYYY-MM-DD). There may be additional date fields as each Department requires (eg, approval date, received date, expiration date).

### 14. ESSENTIAL STATUS

Attribute	Description
Name	Essential Status
Identifier	14
Definition	An indicator that a record is considered to be vital to an Essential Records Program in the event of an emergency or disaster.
Purpose	A mechanism to identify records in an organization that are part of an Essential Records Program. To indicate to which category an essential record belongs. To facilitate searching.
Obligation	Optional
Occurrence	1
Data source	Authorized User. Defaultable - Default value set to "0", non-essential record. Modifiable.
Comments	Records should be identified as either non-essential (0) or essential belonging to Category 1 (1), Category 2 (2) or Category 3 (3).

### 15. ACCESS RIGHTS

Attribute	Description
Name	Access Rights
Identifier	15
Definition	Indicators of which users have which degree of access to the record.
Purpose	To assign access rights to records.
Obligation	Optional
Occurrence	Many
Data source	User. Defaultable. Modifiable.
Comments	Once a record is finalized the system should default to read-only access by all.

## 16. SECURITY

Attribute	Description
Name	Security
Identifier	16
Definition	A means of classifying/designating records based on their security requirements (eg, Unclassified, Protected A, Protected B, Protected C, Confidential, Secret and Top Secret). This element includes warning terms that indicate the record requires special handling, and that only those cleared and entitled to see the record have access (eg Secret/Canadian Eyes Only).
Purpose	To ensure records are labelled correctly and systems are able to utilize that label to permit or restrict access to records. To facilitate searching. To provide contextual information about the record.
Obligation	Mandatory* (when dealing with designated/classified records).
Occurrence	1
Data source	User. Defaultable (default value set to unclassified/non-designated). Modifiable.
Comments	The Government Security Policy requires that information be classified and designated according to the appropriate provisions of the Access to Information Act and the Privacy Act.

## 17. TYPE

Attribute	Description
Name	Type
Identifier	17
Definition	The recognized type of a record governing its structure and relating to its purpose or the action or activity it documents.
Purpose	To provide contextual information about the record. To facilitate searching.
Obligation	Optional
Occurrence	1
Data source	User. Defaultable. Modifiable.
Comments	The values for this field will be set by each Department but it is expected that they will include the following: letter, memo, report, e-mail, form, etc.

## 18. FORMAT

Attribute	Description
Name	Format
Identifier	18
Definition	The format or medium of the record.
Purpose	To facilitate searching. To assist in the control, storage and preservation of the record.
Obligation	Mandatory
Occurrence	1
Data source	System/User. Defaultable. Not Modifiable.
Comments	For records of long term value, it is important to keep information about media and data formats and storage media so that appropriate migration and storage strategies are in place. It is recommended that this element be used in conjunction with element 22, "Preservation and Migration History".

## 19. LOCATION

Attribute	Description
Name	Location
Identifier	19
Definition	The location of the physical or electronic record.
Purpose	To track the locations of records for which a Department is responsible. To ensure records can be retrieved in a timely manner when needed.
Obligation	Optional
Occurrence	1
Data source	User/System. Defaultable. Modifiable.
Comments	

## 20. FINAL

Attribute	Description
Name	Final
Identifier	20
Definition	An indicator that a record has been made final.
Purpose	To facilitate searching. To provide contextual information about the record.
Obligation	Optional
Occurrence	1
Data source	User. Defaultable. Not modifiable.
Comments	Once finalized, a record is frozen in time and cannot be altered.

## 21. HISTORY

Attribute	Description
Name	History
Identifier	21
Definition	Information related to the actions performed on a record.
Purpose	To provide a log of all actions taken on a record.
Obligation	Optional
Occurrence	1
Data source	System generated after selecting/performing an action. Not defaultable. Not modifiable.
Comments	Examples of actions performed on a record include location changed, edit, print, export, etc. Tracked by the system log, which may need to be retained for the life of the records affected.

## 22. PRESERVATION AND MIGRATION HISTORY

Attribute	Description
Name	Preservation and Migration History
Identifier	22
Definition	Tracking preservation and migration actions taken to ensure technical and intellectual survival of records through time.
Purpose	To track preservation and migration actions taken on records. To provide evidence of due diligence in ensuring records were preserved.
Obligation	Optional
Occurrence	Many
Data source	System. Not defaultable. Not modifiable.
Comments	Tracked by the system log, which may need to be retained for the life of the records affected.

## 23. RETENTION PERIOD

Attribute	Description
Name	Retention Period
Identifier	23
Definition	The period of time the record must be retained before authorized disposition.
Purpose	To ensure records are life cycle managed.
Obligation	Mandatory
Occurrence	1
Data source	Authorized User. Defaultable. Modifiable.
Comments	Required to comply with the Privacy Act and Treasury Board policy.

## 24. RETENTION TRIGGER

Attribute	Description
Name	Retention Trigger
Identifier	24
Definition	A condition that must be met before the retention period clock is triggered against a record.
Purpose	To aid in life cycle management of records.
Obligation	Mandatory
Occurrence	1
Data source	Authorized User. Defaultable. Modifiable.
Comments	

## 25. DISPOSITION ACTION

Attribute	Description
Name	Disposition Action
Identifier	25
Definition	The ultimate disposition of the record, on expiry of its retention period, by destruction, transfer as archival records to National Archives, or removal from the control of the Government of Canada (Alienation).
Purpose	To aid in life cycle management of records. To facilitate searching. To provide contextual information about the record.
Obligation	Mandatory
Occurrence	1
Data source	Authorized User. Defaultable. Modifiable.
Comments	Required to comply with the National Archives Act, the Privacy Act, and Treasury Board policy.

## 26. DISPOSITON DATE

Attribute	Description
Name	Disposition Date
Identifier	26
Definition	The date on which disposition of the record was carried out.
Purpose	To document the history of actions against the record.
Obligation	Optional
Occurrence	1
Data source	System. Not defaultable. Not modifiable.
Comments	This element is required only if the Department is retaining metadata after disposition of the record.

**APPENDIX A**

**METADATA CONCORDANCE TABLE**

**Record Keeping/Dublin Core/CLF (TBS Common Look and Feel)**

<b>Record Keeping</b>	<b>Dublin Core</b>	<b>CLF</b>
27. Departmental identifier	Publisher	Originator
28. Organization		
29. Document number	Identifier	
30. Author	Creator	
31. Trustee		
32. Signed by		
33. Designated Recipient		
34. Title	Title	Title
35. Description	Description	
36. Subject name	Subject	Controlled Subject
37. Subject code		
38. Language	Language	Language of Resource
39. Date	Date	Date
40. Essential status		
41. Access rights	Rights	
42. Security		
43. Type	Type	
44. Format	Format	
45. Location		
46. Final		
47. History		
48. Preservation and migration history		
49. Retention period		
50. Retention trigger		
51. Disposition action		
52. Disposition date		