

Department of Agriculture and Fisheries

Records Management Policy

Approval date: February 24, 2003
Approved by: Executive Committee
Effective date: February 24, 2003
Revision date: February 28, 2005

1. POLICY STATEMENT

The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries will manage all records in its custody or under its control so that it will meet its obligations under the *Government Records Act*, the *Public Archives Act*, the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, the legislation of the Department and the *Corporate Records Management Policy*.

2. DEFINITIONS

Department:

Refers to the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries including the Nova Scotia Agricultural College (NSAC) and any boards, commissions, and committees which report to the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Records:

Information or data that is recorded or stored by graphic, photographic, electronic, mechanical or other means and includes public archives vested in Her Majesty in the right of the Province (*Government Records Act*).

Record includes books, documents, maps, drawings, photographs, letters, vouchers, papers and any other thing on which information is recorded or stored by graphic, electronic, mechanical or other means, but does not include a computer program or any other mechanism that produces records (*Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*).

Records schedule:

A comprehensive description and classification of all records of a public body, with a plan governing the life cycle of the records from creation or receipt to disposition or permanent preservation (*Government Records Act*).

3. APPLICATION

3.1 This policy applies to all employees of the Department.

4. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this policy are:

- 4.1 To ensure that the Department maintains the records in its custody or under its control as an asset and resource, managed so as to maintain their usefulness, integrity and ability to support decision making and policy formation, consistent delivery of programs and services, and as a reliable source of information about the actions of the Department.
- 4.2 To ensure the accountability of the Department by protecting and preserving the records documenting the activities and decisions of the Department.
- 4.3 To ensure that records created and kept by the Department provide an authentic, reliable, complete and trustworthy record of the Department's activities.
- 4.4 To protect the records in the custody or under the control of the Department from unauthorized access and disposal.
- 4.5 To ensure the records are managed in an efficient and effective manner in order to reduce the time and effort necessary to locate records needed for business and information purposes.

5. DIRECTIVES

- 5.1 All employees will keep records that provide evidence of work they carry out for the Department.
- 5.2 All records created or received by employees of the Department while performing their duties are the property of the Department. Any employee leaving his/her position shall not remove any records from the Department.
- 5.3 All records in the custody or under the control of the Department will be classified, retained and disposed of according to an approved classification and retention schedule.

- 5.4 All records in the custody or under the control of the Department will be identified, inventoried, and managed, to ensure they can be accessed and retrieved, through the use of filing systems, file lists, indexes, directories or other similar tools.
- 5.5 The final disposition (destruction, transfer to the public archives or alienation), of all records in the custody or control of the Department must be authorized by the Deputy Minister. No records may be destroyed, transferred or alienated without completion of the required forms and the signature of the Deputy Minister.
- 5.6 Each branch, division, section, administrative unit or academic unit of the Department will appoint a records custodian. This individual is responsible to ensure that the records within their area of responsibility are identified, managed and protected according to the procedures and guidelines established under the records management program. The records custodian will form part of the Department's records management network.
- 5.7 Best practices will be followed in the housing and storage of all department records. Appropriate filing equipment and supplies, storage media and formats, and storage facilities will be used to ensure usefulness, preservation and retrieval of the records.
- 5.8 Policies, procedures, guidelines and standards will be established as part of the records management program that will facilitate the effective and efficient management of the records.

6. ACCOUNTABILITY

- 6.1 The Minister is responsible for recommending a records classification and retention schedule to the Government Records Committee for their review.
- 6.2 The Deputy Minister is responsible for authorizing the final disposition of all records.
- 6.3 The Executive Committee is responsible for the approval of this policy.
- 6.4 Managers are responsible for ensuring that employees follow the policies, procedures, standards and guidelines of the Department's records management program and that their area of responsibility is in compliance with this policy.

- 6.5 All employees of the Department are responsible for keeping accurate and reliable records of the activities and functions they perform as employees of the Department.
- 6.6 Custodians are responsible for ensuring that records are maintained according to the guidelines and procedures of the records management program and ensuring that records are classified and managed according to approved records classification and retention schedules.
- 6.7 The Manager, Legislative and Policy Services, as the management level designate, is responsible for the management and direction of the records management program within the department.
- 6.8 The Records Analyst, as the activity level designate, is responsible for the development of the records management program within the department including providing classification and retention schedules, guidelines and procedures. Additionally, to also provide training and assistance to custodians and other staff on the effective implementation of the components of the records management program.

7. MONITORING

The records analyst will monitor the implementation of this policy and report from time to time to the executive committee on the status of the records management program within the Department.

8. REFERENCES

The following legislation and policies relate directly to this policy:

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
Government Records Act
Public Archives Act
Corporate Records Management Policy
Electronic Mail Policy
Legislation under Agriculture and Fisheries