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**Alberta Records Management Committee (ARMC)**

**ARMC Circular: 2004-03**

**Topic: Alberta Records Management Committee Schedule  
Review Guidelines**

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(This Circular rescinds Circular 99/00-001)

**Introduction**

Within the Alberta government, records provide evidence of business decisions, plans and actions, and a background and basis for future actions. They are necessary for demonstrating government accountability, protecting citizens' rights and preserving the documentary heritage of the province. The [Records Management Regulation](#) requires that records be disposed of only under the authority of approved records retention and disposition schedules.

Ministries, the Provincial Archives of Alberta (PAA), the Records and Information Management Branch (RIMB) and the Alberta Records Management Committee (ARMC) all have a role to play in the development of records schedules:

- **Ministries** - Senior Records Officers (SROs) are responsible for the preparation of records retention and disposition schedules for their organizations following the processes described in the publication, [Developing Records Retention and Disposition Schedules](#).
- **Provincial Archives of Alberta** - The Records Management Regulation requires an archival appraisal for each schedule. The staff of PAA must complete this step before a schedule can be sent to the ARMC Secretariat.
- **Information Management Branch** - IMB staff provide advisory services to ministries by reviewing all draft schedules. They also form the Secretariat that supports the ARMC. The Secretariat must conduct a final review of schedules before they are forwarded for ARMC approval.
- **Alberta Records Management Committee** - The ARMC is a senior interdepartmental committee mandated in the Records Management Regulation. The Committee approves records retention and disposition schedules and provides advice on policy matters related to the management of records of the Government of Alberta. The members represent legal, financial, archival, administrative, records management, access to information and privacy, and information technology perspectives.

## Guidelines

The following table provides guidelines to Senior Records Officers and staff about the details of schedules and how they are commonly examined during the review and approval process.

<b>Purpose/History</b>	The Committee checks that descriptions of the Purpose and History of the program and the records being scheduled are understandable to those unfamiliar with the items, and that the reasons for proposed schedule amendments are clear.
<b>Business Process</b>	Each schedule must provide enough information for Committee members to understand the business process behind items, especially if the same or similar records are in more than one format. If records have multiple formats, master and copy relationships should be clear.
<b>Master / Copy Sets</b>	<p>If you schedule Copy Sets of records, in order of preference:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• include the Master and Copy Sets on the same schedule, or</li> <li>• if you must separate Master and Copy Sets on different schedules, include specific cross-references to the other schedule and item numbers, or</li> <li>• if you cannot easily make specific cross-references because you have all multiple Copy Sets, such as committee records, then schedule all the sets as master, since they are used in different locations for different business purposes.</li> </ul>
<b>Databases</b>	<p>If databases are included, the Committee checks that the following are scheduled:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• data sets/stores or databases;</li> <li>• source documents and output documents; and</li> <li>• regular backups.</li> </ul> <p>The ARMC also looks for evidence that a migration strategy is in place covering hardware, software, operating systems and any other elements necessary to ensure that records will be accessible for the retention period, whether the related application is maintained in-house or by a contracted service provider. An explanation of these arrangements could be included at the end of the Item Description if it relates to only one item, or as a separate attached document if it relates to several items.</p>
<b>Retention</b>	Retention periods are reviewed for consistency within the schedule, and with related schedules if appropriate. The rationale for retention is considered; e.g. is the need for a very long retention clearly explained?

<b>Service Programs for Individuals</b>	Particular emphasis is placed on the review of schedules for government programs that provide or provided for the well-being of individuals, or decisions made for or about individuals.
<b>Legal Implications</b>	Schedules for records that could relate to citizens' or government rights and potential government liabilities are examined to ensure that they have appropriate final disposition. The ARMC assumes that SROs have consulted with their legal services regarding possible impact of the <i>Limitations Act</i> and other legislation before schedules are forwarded for review.
<b>Current Events and Legal Cases</b>	The Committee maintains an awareness of current events and court cases that could influence records management within government.
<b>Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP)</b>	Orders and Investigation Reports of the Information and Privacy Commissioner, as well as FOIP legislation and policy, that could have implications for records retention and disposition are considered.
<b>Personal Information Banks (PIBs)</b>	Schedules are reviewed to ensure that Personal Information Banks, as defined by FOIP policy, are identified and described. This information is especially useful for PAA. The ARMC assumes that SROs have consulted with their FOIP Coordinators about PIBs and privacy issues before schedules are forwarded for review.
<b>References to Other Schedules</b>	Items that relate to items on other schedules should be listed in the "Related Schedules" field in the format prescribed by the Records Scheduling System (RSS).
<b>Archival Appraisal</b>	Appraisal descriptions and final dispositions are reviewed for consistency with Item Descriptions and logic of the recommendations.

If these factors are considered and schedules are clearly written, they should move through the review and approval process in an efficient way.

### Conclusion

For clarification, further details or assistance on the contents of this circular, please contact the ARMC secretary at [sa.informationmanagement@gov.ab.ca](mailto:sa.informationmanagement@gov.ab.ca) or (780) 427-3884.

*Original Signed by Tom Thackeray*  
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 Tom Thackeray, Chair

*Dec. 21/04*  
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 Date