Managing Physical Records During and After a Disaster: Procedure

Data, Information and Privacy Services Division, Data, Information and Records Services Branch

Version: 1.0

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Contents

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Introduction

The Government of Alberta is a trusted steward of information held on behalf of Albertans. This procedure provides direction in the event of a disaster that results in damage to physical records. A "disaster" refers to an event, major or minor, that results in damage to or contamination or loss of physical records. Examples of such disasters include natural disasters such as floods or fire, building malfunctions such as sprinkler malfunctions or water leaks, pest infestations such as mice or accidental loss such as spilling coffee on a box of records.

> Note: All government information must be disposed according to an approved Records Retention and Disposition Schedule. Please refer to the approved Records Retention and Disposition Schedule for damaged records.

This guideline does not provide direction regarding disaster preparedness or business continuity planning. For direction on disaster preparedness or business continuity planning, please contact the appropriate Business Continuity Coordinator.

For direction on managing digital records affected by a disaster, please contact your Sector Information Security Officer (SISO).

Application and Scope

This procedure has been developed for government staff who have and/or share responsibility for the management of physical records in their department and the following:

- all departments defined under schedule 11 section 14(1) of the *Government Organization Act*; and
- agencies, boards and commissions that apply to schedule 1 of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Regulation.

Agencies, boards, and commissions that are not designated in schedule 1 of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Regulation are encouraged to align with this directive.
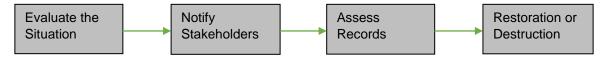
Definitions

Information Controllers: Information controllers have the responsibility and decision-making authority for assigned collections of information, including (but not limited to) regulating and administering use, disclosure, and/or disposition of information.

Information Custodians: Information custodians have the responsibility for maintaining and/or administering the systems and/or applications in which content is managed without having responsibility for the information itself.

Procedure Overview

The following outline illustrates the steps that must be completed before determining whether to destroy or restore damaged records after a disaster.

Evaluate the Situation → Notify Stakeholders → Assess Records → Restoration or Destruction

Evaluate the Situation

The initial response once the disaster is under control is to evaluate the nature and extent of the damage to the records to ensure that they are preserved, restored, and only disposed of in accordance with an approved records retention and disposition schedule.

GET DISASTER UNDER CONTROL
- Flood, fire and building malfunction (e.g., sprinkler malfunction, leaky roof, pest infestation), report to building management
- Accidental damage (e.g., spilling coffee on a box of records), report to supervisor

Example:

Incident type	Action	Who to Notify of Damaged Records
Pest infestation, if noticed	Do not disturb	Information Controllers
Water leakage (pipes burst)	Move records if it is possible and to a safe, dry location, or cover records with plastic sheets (tarp)	Information Controllers
Water leakage (flood)	Move records if it is possible and to a safe, dry location	Information Controllers
Sewer back-up	Do not disturb	Information Controllers
Mould	Do not disturb	Information Controllers
Spilling liquids on records	Move and dry records	Information Controllers

Notify Stakeholders

BEFORE SITE ACCESS
1. Information Custodians will notify the following groups, indicating a disaster has occurred and there is a possibility that records may be damaged:
   a. Information Controllers;
   b. SA Infrastructure Facility Coordinator;

    i. GoA owned buildings have Facility Coordinators. See [Facility Management Contact List.;](#) and

    ii. Privately owned buildings contact Building Management.

  c. Health and Safety Officer - [Occupational Health and Safety Contacts;](#)

  d. Active File Management (AFM) Project Services - [IMT Contacts;](#)

  e. IM Portfolio Lead and Manager - [Portfolio Leads;](#)

  f. Transfer Storage and Disposition – SA Disposition Services [SA.DispositionServices@gov.ab.ca;](#) with subject line as: "Ministry Name" – Damaged Records (e.g. Service Alberta – Damaged Records); and

  g. If electronic records are affected (Laptops, PC, etc.) contact:

    i. Government of Alberta Helpdesk

    ii. Sector Chief Information Officer (SCIO) - [SCIO by Organizational Unit](#)

2. Information Custodians will contact the appropriate Health and Safety Officer before entering a site.

  a. Sign off from Health and Safety Officer to enter the building. WPH0032- Office Inspection Checklist is available in the [forms repository.](#)

  b. Health and Safety Officer - will access the site or will give instructions how to enter the site. Health and Safety Officer will determine any requirement such as PPE to access the building.

Assessment of Records

AFTER SITE ACCESS

1. Information Custodians complete the Worksite Assessment portion on the [Damaged Records Checklist.](#) Please include:

  a. Photographs of the damages;

  b. Photograph any information or markings on the damaged records;

  c. Attach inventory forms or file listings that pertain to the damaged records; and

  d. Identify all potential Information Controllers of the damaged records (i.e. program area, Executive Director).

2. Information Custodians forward the completed Worksite Assessment portion of the Damaged Records Checklist to the following stakeholders:

  a. Information Controllers (program area, Executive Director);

  b. Active File Management (AFM) Project Services - [IMT Contacts; and](#)

  c. IM Portfolio Lead and Manager - [Portfolio Leads](#)

3. [Information Controllers](#) review and assess the information received from the Information Custodian to determine the following: (if additional support is required contact the [AFM Project team](#))

  a. business value of the records by consulting the retention and disposition schedules;

  b. urgency of recovery efforts;

  c. If the business value is low, proceed with destruction. See [Appendix C.;](#)

  d. If the business value is critical, vital, or historical, determine if the records are salvageable or unsalvageable. See [Appendix B.;](#)

    i. salvageable or unsalvageable is determined by a restoration third party vendor;

  e. If the records are responsive to litigation and/or a FOIP request, determine if the records are salvageable or unsalvageable. See [Appendix B;](#)

    i. salvageable or unsalvageable is determined by a restoration third party vendor.

4. Information Controllers complete the Information Management Assessment portion of the Damaged Records Checklist and send to:
    a. Active File Management (AFM) Project Services - IMT Contacts; and
    b. IM Portfolio Lead and Manager - Portfolio Leads.
5. Active File Management Team – Sends a notification to the ARMC Secretary regarding records that were damaged. See Appendix D for an ARMC Secretary Template.

Restoration

1. Information Custodians may decide to proceed with in-house restoration activities depending on the volume and extent of the restoration needed. If additional support is required, contact AFM Project Services for guidance on physical records restoration.
2. Information Custodians will request three (3) quotes accompanied with a statement of work (SOW) specifying the restoration services and submit them to Information Controllers if the volume and extent of the restoration needed exceeds in-house capabilities.
    a. Restoration service providers in the province:
        i. Alberta Restoration Services;
        ii. Belfor Property Restoration;
        iii. First Onsite;
        iv. On Side Restoration;
        v. Restoration 1 Water Damage Experts; and
        vi. Steamatic.
    b. 3rd Party Vendor Responsibilities:
        i. complying with IMT Standards, Policies and Guidelines; IMT Policy Instruments;
        ii. collecting the records from the worksite;
        iii. completing restoration activities; and
        iv. returning the records to the worksite.
3. Information Controllers will select the third party service provider and request approval from the Program Area Expenditure Officer and once approved, will notify the Information Custodian to call the chosen service provider to commence the work.
4. Information Custodians will inform the Information Controller when the restoration services are complete and will ensure that the quality of the work is as per the Statement of Work agreement.
5. Information Controllers will advise Risk Management and Insurance when restoration is complete and provide financial information as requested. The insurance portion will go to Treasury Board and Finance.

Destruction

If Information Controllers have assessed and determined that the damaged records can be destroyed, follow these steps:

1. Information Controllers will notify the Information Custodian to start the destruction process.
2. Information Custodians will request three (3) quotes for destruction services and provide them to the Information Controllers.
    a. Service providers in the province:
        i. Alberta Restoration Services;

ii. Belfor Property Restoration;
iii. First Onsite;
iv. GFM Environmental Healthcare Waste Management;
v. On Side Restoration;
vi. Restoration 1 Water Damage Experts; and
vii. Steamatic.
b. 3rd Party Vendor Responsibilities:
i. complying with IMT Standards, Policies and Guidelines; IMT Policy Instruments;
ii. collecting the records from the worksite; and
iii. completing destruction activities;
3. Information Controllers will select the third party service provider and request approval from their Ministry's Expenditure office and once approved will notify the Information Custodian to call the chosen service provider to commence the work.
4. Information Custodians will complete a records inventory form; forms are available in the forms repository. If additional support is required contact the AFM Project team:
a. In order to comply with legislated requirements, it is essential that unsalvageable records are only disposed of in accordance with the appropriate records retention and disposition schedule;
i. In cases where records have not met their retention period, or have a final disposition of "Archives": Apply Schedule 2011/002-A002 Damaged Records.
5. Information Custodians will send the completed inventory to:
a. Active File Management (AFM) Project Services - IMT Contacts;
b. IM Portfolio Lead and Manager - Portfolio Leads; and
c. Transfer Storage and Disposition – SA Disposition Services. SA.DispositionServices@gov.ab.ca with subject line as: "Ministry Name" – Damaged Records – Destroy (e.g. Service Alberta – Damaged Records-Destroy).
6. Information Custodians will inform Information Controller, Alberta Records Centre (ARC) and SA.DispositionServices@gov.ab.ca when the destruction services are complete.
7. Information Controllers will advise Risk Management and Insurance once restoration is complete and provide financial information as requested. The insurance portion will go to Treasury Board and Finance.
8. Active File Management (AFM) Project Services will notify the ARMC Secretary via briefing note.

Appendix A: Damaged Records RACI Table

Tasks	Get Disaster under Control	Notify Stakeholders	Complete "Worksite Assessment" – Damaged Records Checklist	Complete "Information Management Assessment" – Damaged Records Checklist	Salvageable Records (Restore)	Unsalvageable Records (Destroy)	Notify the ARMC Secretary – Briefing Note
R – Responsible for completing the task, for the actions and implementation of rules	Facility Coordinator	Information Custodian	Information Custodian	Information Controller	Information Custodian	Information Custodian	AFM Project Services Team
A – Accountable and answerable for all activity in the decision	Information Custodian	Facility Coordinator	Information Custodian	Information Controller	Information Controller	Information Controller	AFM Project Services Team
C – needs to be consulted before making a decision or action	Health & Safety Officer	None	None	Information Custodian Provincial Archives of Alberta IM Portfolio Lead & Manager AFM Project Services Team	Provincial Archives of Alberta IM Portfolio Lead & Manager AFM Project Services Team	Provincial Archives of Alberta IM Portfolio Lead & Manager AFM Project Services Team Transfer, Storage & Disposition Team	Information Custodian Information Controller IM Portfolio Lead & Manager
I – Inform Are to receive updates on progress and any decisions	Information Controller IM Portfolio Lead & Manager AFM Project Services Team Transfer, Storage & Disposition Team SCIO	Information Controller IM Portfolio Lead & Manager AFM Project Services Team Transfer, Storage & Disposition Team Health & Safety Officer SCIO	Information Controller IM Portfolio Lead & Manager AFM Project Services Team Transfer, Storage & Disposition Team Health & Safety Officer SCIO	Transfer, Storage & Disposition Team SCIO	Transfer, Storage & Disposition Team	None	Transfer, Storage & Disposition Team

https://www.alberta.ca/enterprise-information-management

Appendix B: Salvageable Records Guide (Restoration)

Material	Priority	Handling precautions	Packing method	Drying method
Paper documents and manuscripts Stable media	Freeze or dry within 48 hours.	Don't separate single sheets.	Interleave between folders and pack in milk crates or cartons.	Air, vacuum, or freeze dry.
Soluble inks (felt pen, colored pens, ball point)	Immediately freeze or dry.	Do not blot.	Interleave between folders and pack in milk crates or cartons.	Air or freeze dry.
Maps and plans Stable media	Freeze or dry within 48 hours.	Use extra caution if folded or rolled.	Pack in map drawers; bread trays; unfolded boxes; on heavy cardboard or poly-covered plywood.	Air or freeze dry.
Soluble media Maps and plans by photo reproductive processes Hand colored maps	Immediately freeze or dry.	Do not blot.	Interleave between folders and pack as above.	Air or freeze dry.
Drafting linens	Immediately freeze or dry.	Avoid pressure—inks can smear away. Do not open or close, do not separate	Pack drawing (like maps) in containers lined with plastic.	Air or freeze dry Air dry by separating sheets and interleaving.
Maps on coated papers	Immediately freeze or dry.		Pack like maps in containers lined with plastic	Freeze drying preferred.
Books Books and pamphlets	Freeze or dry within 48 hours.	Do not open or close, do not separate covers.	Separate with freezer paper, pack spine down in milk crate or cardboard box 1 layer deep.	Air, vacuum, or freeze dry.
Computer media Tapes	Immediately rinse off tapes soaked by dirty water Dry within 48 hours in paper boxes or label; tapes can stay wet for several days. Do not freeze.	Do not touch magnetic media with bare hands. Handle open reel tapes by hubs or reel.	Keep tapes wet in plastic bags. Pack vertically in plastic crate or tub.	Air dry, or test vacuum drying without heat.
Books and periodicals with coated papers	Immediately freeze or dry.	Do not open or close, do not separate covers.	Keep wet; pack spine down in containers lined with garbage bags.	Freeze drying preferred. Air dry by fanning pages and interleaving.
Oversize prints and drawings	Freeze or dry within 48 hours.	Use extra caution if folded or rolled.	Pack in map drawers, bread trays, and flat boxes, on heavy cardboard or poly-covered plywood.	Damp—air or freeze dry. Wet—freeze drying preferred.

This chart is drawn from "Salvage at a Glance" by Betty Walsh, published by CCA: 11860 CCA Salvage bk ev2 (archivescanada.ca)

Appendix C: Notification to ARMC Secretary Template

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INFORMATION TO

THE ALBERTA RECORDS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (ARMC)

Purpose

- The following notices were received by the ARMC Secretary regarding records that were either damaged, inadvertently destroyed, potentially breached, unable to be located, or destroyed without authorization; additional details are available through the ARMC Secretary.

Department	Issue	Overview
Name: <Ministry/Department Name>	<Add Info Here, e.g. Damaged/Unsalvageable Records>	**Incident:** • <Add Info Here> – E.g. What happened, where it occurred, what was affected, damage assessed) • • **Details**: ○ <add Information here – E.g. How many records, how many boxes, box details>
		Recommendations made by the Portfolio Lead: <add information here> e.g. Boxes will be held on pallets above water lines, checks will occur once a week for water; Traps will be put down for mice and checked regularly.