



Records and Archives Policy

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to define a process to classify its records as well as identify and preserve records of archival value to the Association.

DEFINITIONS AND SCOPE OF POLICY

For the purposes of this policy, records are defined as information captured in any media pertaining to the administration or operations of the Association. It does not include computer software that supports the administration or operations of the Association.

In addition, archival records are defined as those records created or received by the Association which have operational, financial, legal, or other values that merit their ongoing preservation. This definition includes records in all formats, including paper and electronic.

POLICY STATEMENT

The Association is committed to preserving its archival records for the benefit of future members and staff of the Association as well as external researchers.

The Association creates records necessary to provide services and administer its programs. Barring any agreement to the contrary, all records created by a person elected or appointed to a position within the Association are the property of the Association. This principle of ownership of the Association's records also applies to persons employed or contracted by the Association.

The Association's office acts as the office of primary responsibility for records created by the Association. Because many records originate with and are disseminated by the office, individuals receiving those records can treat them as transitory copies that can be destroyed, confident in the knowledge that the headquarters maintains the original record. In cases where individuals create records while conducting Association business, they are required to send those records to the office. Where that is not possible, copies of the records (or at least copies of the final product of the individual's Association work) can be submitted to the office, which then become the original Association record. Individuals in possession of Association records are strongly encouraged to contact the Association office or a member of the Board of Directors if they have questions as to whether records should be transferred to the Association's office or destroyed.

As an association of archivists, the Association recognizes the importance of identifying and preserving records with ongoing operational, financial, legal or other values. Once records have passed their legally- and operationally- required time periods to be retained by the Association, a small minority of the total records produced by the Association is considered to be archival. These archival records preserve the Association's legal status as well as its accountability for its actions over time. The records also provide a documentary heritage of the Association that provides evidence of accomplishments, successes, and failures throughout the Association's history.



The Association also recognizes that it cannot maintain an independent archival program as a result of space and financial constraints, and it must designate an official archival repository external to the Association to provide preservation and access services to its archival records. By doing so, the Association recognizes that it is subject to the operating policies and procedures of that institution with respect to acquisition, appraisal, preservation, description and access.

While paper records remain a common medium for the creation of documents, the Association also faces the challenge of preserving its born-digital records. In the absence of a trusted digital repository, the use of the Association's members-only website is encouraged as a central repository of born-digital records.

POLICY REQUIREMENTS

In order to achieve the goals of this policy, the Association will:

- Designate an official repository for its archival records;
- Maintain a file classification system for all Association records in all formats;
- Maintain a records retention schedule for its records; and
- Arrange for the regular transfer of archival records to the Association's official repository.

ACCOUNTABILITIES

General Principles

In all activities, Association members are bound by the Volunteer Code of Conduct when participating in Association business, declaring conflicts of interest, and maintaining confidentiality of information. Employees and contractors of the Association are bound by the terms of their job descriptions or contracts regarding the handling of their duties; in the absence of any specific terms, this policy and the Volunteer Code of Conduct will apply as best practices documents.

Board of Directors

The Board of Directors designates Library and Archives Canada and its successors as the official repository of the Association's archival records. This designation can be changed by a resolution of the Board.

The Board of Directors approves a records retention schedule for the Association's records.

Within the Board, the Secretary or designate is responsible for:

- the design and maintenance of a file classification system for the records of the Association in all formats; and



- the creation of an Association records retention schedule that encompasses all Association records regardless of format, defines how long those records are to be retained by the Association (either in its offices or in off-site storage), and the disposition of those records (either archival preservation or destruction) once the retention period of the records has been met.

The Secretary or designate will approve the destruction of non-essential or obsolete records as well as the transfer of archival records to the Association's designated archival repository.

Leadership Team

In cases where they have original records not duplicated elsewhere, all members of the Association's leadership team (Board of Directors, Committee chairs, Special Interest Section chairs, and other Association representatives) transfer records resulting from their activities to the successors in their positions. Paper records are physically transferred at the earliest possible convenience in order to promote smooth transitions; typically, such transfers take place at the annual general meeting or thirty days afterward.

Members of the leadership team are encouraged to destroy transitory or duplicate records as soon as they are no longer required. Individuals in possession of Association records are strongly encouraged to contact the Association office or a member of the Board of Directors if they have questions as to whether records should be transferred to the Association's office or destroyed.

If they determine that the paper records they have received are not required because the records are obsolete / inactive, members of the Leadership Team must contact the Secretary or designate to arrange transfer of the records to the Association office. The member of the Leadership Team will create a file list of the material transferred to the Association office, where it will be managed according to the records retention schedule.

If it is not possible to transfer the paper files as a result of records policies at the member's institution, copies of those records of ongoing value will be forwarded to the Association office. In these situations, members are encouraged to discuss the process with the Association office or a member of the Board of Directors.

Electronic records are uploaded to the members-only website into their appropriate folders.

Secretariat

Using the approved records retention schedule as a guide, the Secretariat will remove those records that have met their retention period from the filing system. The Secretariat will create lists of:

- Records to be destroyed
- Records to be transferred to the Association's designated archival repository.



The Secretary or designate reviews the lists and approves either the destruction or transfer of the records.

The Secretariat will arrange either the physical transfer of archival records to the designated repository or the destruction of non-essential or obsolete records, typically by confidential shredding or manual destruction of disks / hard drives. Transfers to the designated archival repository will take place approximately every five years or at specific periods defined in the records retention schedule.

Members

As primary stakeholders of the Association, members are encouraged to use the archival records of the Association to examine past policies, programs, and activities of the Association.