High-risk/high-value records and information
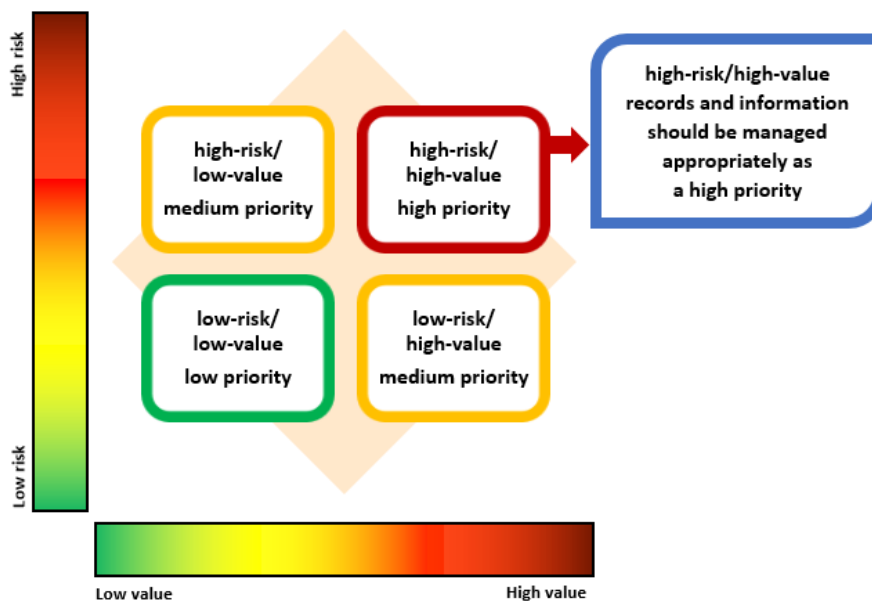
Defining high-risk/high-value records and information

High-risk and high-value records and information are essential to an organization carrying out core functions, making key decisions, and providing evidence of activities. Identifying these critical assets is dependent on the business context and is an important element of risk management for recordkeeping and other business continuity purposes.

High-risk/high-value functions include those that:

- protect the rights and entitlements of citizens
- document executive actions and decision-making
- perform direct activities that impact on individuals (e.g. health or welfare protection)
- manage natural resources or critical infrastructure
- collect and use sensitive personal information
- are subject to close scrutiny by the public or oversight bodies
- allocate or spend large amounts of money
- demonstrate the performance of legislated functions
- require long-term retention of records and information
- are deemed to have continuing value and will form part of Manitoba's archival heritage, as unique and irreplaceable records of government and society

High-risk/high-value matrix[1]

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[1] *This infographic is based on the Public Records Office (Victoria, Australia) high risk / high value matrix, High value, high risk records | PROV

Identifying and documenting high-risk/high-value records and information

Identifying high-risk/high-value records and information is critical because these records pose a significant risk to the organization if they are misused; inappropriately captured, accessed or disclosed; altered; lost; or destroyed prematurely. There are a number of recordkeeping tools and processes that can be used to identify and document high-risk/high-value functions and the records and information that support them, including:

- Approved Records Schedules – core functions of a department/agency are likely to be identified in approved records schedules, provided they are up to date. Records schedules define the long-term and archival value of records that support core functions and activities, and will assist in identifying the high-value records and information by both the department and the Archives of Manitoba.

- Compass: Capacity Assessment Tool for Recordkeeping – assists departments in assessing if they are meeting requirements of the RIM Framework and can aid in identifying and flagging risks. It is especially valuable for departments that do not have needed records and information management expertise. Contact GRO for more information.

- Functional analysis for records – a top-down analysis that outlines the high-level functions and activities of the organization and links them to the records that support those activities. Functional analysis provides the basis for understanding the organization's records and identifying the requirements for managing them. The methodology is used for a variety of recordkeeping purposes including records scheduling, the development of file structures and classification systems, and is useful in other areas of management such as business planning and risk assessment.

Other assessments or audits may point to high-risk situations where the program area responsible will need to review their recordkeeping practices and identify additional measures to manage high-value records and information. Examples include Business Continuity Planning, Privacy Impact Assessments (PIAs), data classification reviews, information security audits, and Auditor General or Ombudsman's audits/investigations.

Managing high-risk/high-value records and information

The Records and Information Management (RIM) Framework (May 2018) strategically focuses on high-risk and high-value areas of government business. This is to ensure that resources are being invested in the most appropriate places and ways. It also ensures that the most critical records and information are managed as a priority. In turn, better management can increase the value of these assets.

The RIM Framework contains two minimum requirements about high-risk and high-value records and information:
- ❖ *High-risk/high-value areas of business and the records and information needed to support them must be identified*. (minimum requirement 2.2)
- ❖ *RIM must be an essential consideration in design of all systems where high-risk/high-value business is undertaken*. (minimum requirement 2.3)

To mitigate risks to records and information, departments should work towards meeting the requirements of the RIM Framework. This begins with all employees – senior manager s and front-line staff alike – raising awareness of the importance of records as corporate assets and evidence, and assigning records management responsibilities to appropriate staff.

Records and information risk management requirements need to be built into departmental planning processes and integrated into enterprise-wide risk management strategies. This will allow records management activities to be connected to specific business risks.

Other related guidance

Managing Records to Mitigate Risk for potential risks to records and information.

Recordkeeping Systems for further information about types of systems in the Manitoba government and their recordkeeping capabilities.

Recordkeeping Standards for further information about international standards on recordkeeping best practices.

References

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Created: June 2018; Updated: April 2020, December 2022

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