

Recordkeeping Systems

A recordkeeping system is a shared filing system where records are captured, organized, accessed, protected, retained, and destroyed in accordance with approved records schedules. A recordkeeping system is about more than technology. In order to make it an appropriate system for managing paper or digital records, it also needs to be used in conjunction with policies and procedures, defined roles and responsibilities, and ongoing training.



There are various types of recordkeeping systems (also known as records systems) and ways to manage records. These systems range from manual to automated processes.

The goals of an appropriate recordkeeping system are to:

- › make it easy for users to file, locate, and retrieve the records they need
- › group related records together so that a ‘complete’ record of the business activity or case is available
- › remove the need for individual or ad hoc decisions on managing records
- › help prevent duplication and unmanaged accumulation
- › reflect the business activity
- › make it possible to apply records and information management rules accountably and comprehensively

There are three common types of records systems currently in use in the Government of Manitoba with varied capabilities and limitations:

- Electronic Document and Records Management Systems (EDRMS)
- Non-EDRMS Environments
- Print to File

Electronic Document and Records Management Systems (EDRMS)

EDRMS are the most effective way to maintain and manage digital records. These systems facilitate the implementation of adequate controls, which ensure the proper management of records and information throughout their life cycle and meet accepted industry standards (see the [Recordkeeping Standards fact sheet](#) for more information).

Simply put, an EDRMS ensures that:

- records are created in context
- records are managed to maintain their authenticity, reliability, integrity, and usability
- records can be migrated or exported across platforms
- records can be retained and disposed of in a systematic, auditable, and authorized way

Note: some systems may not identify themselves as EDRMS, but may have all of the same capabilities. These systems might include comprehensive case-management systems or robust enterprise content management systems (ECMs). EDRMS capabilities are sometimes integrated into other business applications to provide the full functionality to manage records ‘in place’ instead of exporting them to a specialized system.

Non-EDRMS Environments

Non-EDRMS environments can range from shared/network drives and cloud document libraries to document management systems *without* robust capabilities. While these environments are currently the most common way to maintain digital documents, they are not the best way to manage them. To effectively manage records in these environments, additional controls and processes are required to ensure that good records are created and that they will have authenticity, integrity, and usability for as long as required. Non-EDRMS environments are not suitable for [high-risk/high value records and information](#).

Print to File

The print to file method is effective for already well-established paper records management practices, and necessary for archival records that are not managed within an EDRMS or other records system with EDRMS capabilities. However, print to file is problematic for complex types of digital records and dispersed work groups.

Unacceptable Records Storage

Records kept outside of a recordkeeping system can result in serious operational risks and consequences such as loss of data, privacy/security breaches, unreliability as evidence, inaccessibility, and business disruption. Unacceptable records storage areas include:

- › business applications or storage solutions that are not approved for official government use
- › disks, USB drives, or other removable storage media except for temporary purposes
- › personal drives, your [phone](#), your email folders, or your desktop where they are inaccessible to others and/or not supported
- › [MS Teams](#) once collaboration on records is completed (this is a tool that should be used for [transitory records](#) only)
- › private devices or accounts (e.g. non-government email accounts, personal devices, messaging apps)
- › basements, attics, or other storage areas prone to environmental damage or infestation

Related guidance:

[Creating and Capturing Records](#)

[File Structures](#)

[Records and Information Management \(RIM\) Framework](#) (Principle 3)

[Recordkeeping Standards](#)

[High-risk/High-value Records and Information](#)

Records Systems Checklist (contact GRO)

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