

Ministers' and Deputy Ministers' Records

Provincial Archives of New Brunswick
Corporate Information Management Unit

Ministers' and Deputy Ministers' Records

Ministers' Records

Records of New Brunswick's Cabinet ministers and their staff constitute a valuable public asset. They provide critical evidence of government policies and programs and form an important part of the historical record of government. Ministers' records include not only hard copy textual records, but also records created and maintained in electronic or other formats. Ministers' records fall into two categories:

Ministers' Office Records generated by ministers in their capacity as ministers of the Crown. These records are public property and are subject to the *Public Records Act*, the *Right to Information Act*, and the *Archives Act*.

and

Ministers' Personal, Political and Constituency Records, generated by ministers in their capacity as members of the Legislature and private citizens. These are the ministers' personal property and may be disposed of as the minister sees fit, although these records can be important to an understanding of the history of New Brunswick and consideration should be given to their donation to the Provincial Archives.

Ministers' Office Records

What they are: Ministers' office records relate directly to the minister's portfolio responsibilities. These should be organized, maintained and stored separately from ministers' personal, political and constituency records. Ministers' office records typically include:

- records of internal deliberations involving a minister and his or her staff on matters relating directly to the minister's portfolio;
- communications between ministers on matters directly relating to the portfolio of the minister processing the records;
- external communications on matters directly relating to the minister's portfolio;
- records concerning administrative matters pertaining only to the minister's duties or office;
- records relating to the minister's activities as a member of Cabinet or its committees.

However, they should not include published material, Hansard-type Legislature material, or other reference material common to every minister.

What to do with them: The *Archives Act* prohibits the removal or destruction of ministers' office records without the authorization of the Provincial Archivist. Ideally, ministers' records are integrated into the department's central filing system and final disposition is governed by the appropriate retention schedule. (Thus, the retention requirements of ministers' office records are determined by the needs of the ministry, not by the tenure of the individual minister.)

In cases where the ministers' office records are filed separately from the departmental files, the filing system should mirror that of the department as a whole, and the existing retention schedules may be applied. If no department-wide filing system exists, final disposition may be governed by the above primary. Departmental records managers should work to integrate ministers' records into a central filing system to ensure that the departmental record is complete and available.

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Ministers' Personal, Political and Constituency Records

What they are: Ministers' personal, political and constituency records typically relate to:

- the minister's constituency business and role as a member of the Legislature;
- party political matters (such as leadership, party organization, caucus affairs and political donations);
- the private life and personal interests of the minister.

What to do with them: Ministers' personal, political and constituency records are their own property and may be disposed of as they wish, and at the time they wish.

Ministers' personal, political and constituency records can provide important documentation of the provincial political process. Their donation to the Provincial Archives of New Brunswick is welcomed, and can be arranged through a private donation agreement with the minister. Access provisions for these records are determined by the Provincial Archivist in consultation with the donating minister. Advice and assistance in arranging for donation can be made by contacting the Provincial Archivist or the Archivist in charge of Private Sector Records. Of course, such agreements with individual ministers cannot include nor be applied to the minister's office records.

Deputy Ministers' Records

What they are: Deputy Ministers' records encompass a broad range of departmental activities. They are a valuable source of information on the decisions made and actions taken by the department for which the deputy is responsible.

What to do with them: Records of deputy ministers should be incorporated into a central filing operation and filed according to the subject they deal with. This allows them to be retained according to the *Classification Plan and Retention Schedules for Administrative Records*, or the appropriate operational retention schedule. These retention schedules can also be followed if the records have been maintained separately, but in a way that mirrors the department's filing scheme.

NOTE: Copies of retention schedules 2011-ALL-01 and 2013-ALL-01 are available from the Corporate Information Management Unit of the Provincial Archives. Phone 453-2897 or email Records.Centre@gnb.ca.