

## ***Managing E-mail and Electronic Communications – What to Keep and What to Delete***

### **◇ What you must keep: Government records**

If an e-mail message, or any electronic communication, relates to government business, it is a **record**. Keep and manage these electronic records in the same way you would manage records in other forms, such as paper.

#### **• Records:**

- are required to maintain business operations;
- document and provide evidence of business transactions;
- protect the rights of citizens and the government;
- provide evidence of compliance with accountability or other business requirements; or
- will have some future business, legal, research or historical value to the government and people of New Brunswick.

**Examples:** policies and directives; agendas and minutes of meetings; any document that initiates, authorizes or completes a business transaction; and final reports or recommendations.

***For information on where and how to store messages that are records, contact the Records Manager in your department.***

### **◇ What you should delete: Non-records**

**• Temporary Information** that is either of no importance or value to the department, or that is only of immediate or short-term use and has no future value.

**Examples:** personal messages, announcements of social events, or anything not related to the conduct of government business.

#### **• Duplicate Documents – copies where:**

- nothing has been added, changed, or deleted;
- the documents were created and used only for convenience or reference purposes; and
- the official version of the document (the record) has been filed in a departmental records or information system.

**Examples:** a finished document sent to all employees to inform them of a new departmental program, activity or approach to an issue; or a “cc” copy of a message or document.

• **Drafts and Working Materials** are items that contain information that has been used to create a record. Once the final record has been produced and incorporated within a records or information management system, most draft and working materials should be disposed of. (Drafts and working materials may need to be retained if they were used in the preparation of legislation, legal documents, or policies.)

**Examples:** Drafts of correspondence, reports and other documents; calculations; research materials; rough notes; editing and formatting notes; and rough documents.

**IMPORTANT:** There is personal judgment involved in deciding what is a non-record. The categories described here are examples.

***If you are not sure what to keep or delete, ask the Records Manager in your department.***

**Note:** All e-mail must be managed (Inbox, Sent Items, Deleted Items, Drafts, and any other folders).

- Since you initiated the messages in your “sent items” folder, it is probably the most important folder to manage.
- Empty the “deleted items” folder regularly. If you don’t empty the folder, the records remain on the system and remain accessible under legislation. (You may set your computer to empty the deleted items folder automatically upon exiting the system.)
- All Skype conversations and text messages that are a record must be managed appropriately.

Please see Policy AD-7109 E-mail and Electronic Communications

## What email and electronic communications do I keep?

Use this diagram help you identify records from non-records.

