



CARRIER SEKANI
tribal council

ARCHIVAL TOOLKIT

FOR FIRST NATIONS
COMMUNITIES

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A RESOURCE FOR

Starting First Nations Archival
and Memory Initiatives

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SURVEY OF LITERATURE

On First Nations Archival Practices

Introduction

This report was prepared for the purpose of creating an archival toolkit for Carrier Sekani Tribal Council (CSTC), Carrier Sekani First Nations (CSFN), and First Nations communities connected to CSTC/CSFNs. This report surveys relevant literature, archival toolkits, and other types of documents to examine existing protocols and practices in Indigenous archival and records management initiatives. In addition, this report assesses the applicability of these documents to the needs of CSTC/CSFN communities, as well as identifying gaps and possible improvements in the survey of relevant documents. The results of this deliverable will inform the creation of the draft toolkit for CSTC/CSFN communities. This draft toolkit will highlight the following major areas of archival practice, identified by CSTC/CSFN members, that will build organizational capacity: Archives and Records Management, Preservation, and Digitization.

Records and Archives for First Nations

A record can be defined as “information created, received or maintained as evidence and

information by an organization or person, in pursuance of legal obligations or in the transaction of business” (First Nations Public Service Secretariat [FNPSS], *Procedures Manual*, 2011, p. 8). However, what can be defined as a record is dependent on the organizational or legal regulations within a First Nations organization or government. Different types of records may include emails, mail, letters, maps, reports, audio-visual recordings, as well as many other physical and digital items. Archives may also include heritage materials and culturally sensitive documentation that requires customary practices and care, as defined by its community of origin (First Archivist Circle, 2007). Records may be used to support various activities associated with a First Nations organization or government. Some of these activities may include:

- community management and planning
- business and economic development
- environmental management
- treaty negotiations
- land claims
- language and cultural development
- repatriation and digital return initiatives
- genealogy and kinship research

- education

This is neither an exhaustive nor fixed list of activities that create records. In addition, these activities often relate to other activities included in and extending past this sample list. A similar approach can be taken when defining records, as the definition of a record is subject to the shifting activities, regulations, partnerships, and needs of an organization over time.

Information Governance

Central to the work of setting up and maintaining First Nations information systems are establishing protocols for information governance. Information governance can be defined as managing and sharing information appropriately within a community, organization, and/or government. This may include intellectual property, privacy laws, data sovereignty, and cultural heritage rights, among other areas. In addition, these protocols may reflect organizational and community-based ethics guiding the archives' information governance. Information can inform policy and decision-making, leading to a need for protocols governing its access and distribution (First Nations Information Governance Centre, 2014). In addition, information governance may cover the control and access of histories, traditional knowledge, and cultural heritage, as well as research protocols (First Archivist Circle, 2007).

Several protocols inform how we approach this aspect of our archival toolkit. While many documents surveyed throughout this report

discuss information governance, two prominent protocols guide our work in this area more specifically. The first of these protocols is the First Nations Principles of Ownership, Control, Access and Possession (OCAP®). The First Nations Principles of OCAP® establish how First Nations may exercise jurisdiction in relation to their information and data collecting processes in their communities. OCAP® is adaptable in its implementation across various contexts and “represents principles and values that are intertwined and reflective of First Nations’ world-view of jurisdiction and collective rights” (First Nations Information Governance Centre, 2014, p. 5).

Another protocol informing our approach is the CARE Principles for Indigenous Data Governance. In the context of data sharing, the CARE Principles emphasize issues in the open data movement (i.e., FAIR: findable, accessible, interoperable, reusable). The CARE Principles state that facilitating greater data sharing among parties while ignoring the historical contexts and power differentials embedded in these practices “creates a tension for Indigenous Peoples who are also asserting greater control over the application and use of Indigenous data and Indigenous Knowledge for collective benefit” (2019, p. 1). The CARE Principles advance Indigenous self-determination by emphasizing its four guiding principles of Collective Benefit, Authority to Control, Responsibility, and Ethics.

These protocols, along with community-led and culturally specific

practices, may serve as frameworks for implementing information governance within an archival and records management office.

Archiving First Nations Materials

Common priorities and needs were established among the participants in our planning and consultations for this archival toolkit. One major priority was establishing archival practices for archiving materials related to CSTC/CSFN communities. Multiple existing archival toolkits, protocols, and other types of documentation shape our approach to archiving First Nations materials. Some of these existing documents also provide guidance on implementing small-scale, community archives. For example, the Archives Association of British Columbia's *A Manual for Small Archives* (1988) provides a step-by-step overview on establishing and maintaining small archival repositories. However, in creating this toolkit, we wish to funnel our approaches through the existing documentation on Indigenous-based archival practices and initiatives. Significant documents that influence this toolkit include the *Protocols for Native American Archival Materials* (2007), the *Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Data Archive Protocols* (2012), and the *Reconciliation Framework: The Response to the Report of the Truth and the Reconciliation Commission Taskforce* (2022).

The three protocols identified above are mainly used to inform information professionals on how to engage with

Indigenous archival materials. The *Protocols for Native American Archival Materials* and the *Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Data Archive Protocols* provide guidance on how Indigenous and settler archival communities may collaborate on archival initiatives related to Indigenous materials. However, establishing specific steps on how to start archiving materials is a focal point of this archival toolkit. The Steering Committee on Canada's Archives created *Reconciliation Framework: The Response to the Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Taskforce* from recommendations made in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report and Call to Action no. 70. The framework provides actionable strategies that the Canadian archival community may adopt to critically redress the colonial legacies of archives and build meaningful relationships with Indigenous communities. In addition, the framework provides strategies for engaging in archival practices including governance and management structures, ownership, control, and possession, and access. Merging aspects of detailed guides like *A Manual for Small Archives* (1988) with approaches outlined in these three Indigenous-focused protocols may help to re-contextualize AABC's manual when engaging with Indigenous archival repositories.

A goal in executing CSTC's archival toolkit is to balance the specificity needed in implementing instructions for starting an archive, while privileging culturally relevant and community led approaches in this

process. Sources like the *Reconciliation Framework* provide general guidelines for supporting Indigenous world views in archival practice. However, the authors admit that the *Reconciliation Framework* does not go into great detail on how to decolonize every aspect of archival practice (2022, p. 8).¹ This aspect of the *Reconciliation Framework* may allow for greater flexibility in implementing culturally and locally relevant taxonomies, vocabularies, and languages while following its guidelines. In addition to outlining robust objectives, the authors intend for this framework to be a living document, stating that “revisions and updates to this framework will be required to keep its relevance and efficacy intact” (2022, p. 8). Designing CSTC’s archival toolkit with flexibility and adaptability in mind may be better suited to responding to shifting priorities and capacities in CSTC/CSFN communities.

Records Management

Another common theme raised in our discussions with CSTC/CSFN community members was the need for implementing records and information management (RIM) systems. Specifically, community members expressed a need for understanding the lifecycle of records, from a record’s creation to its disposal or transfer to an archive. The First Nations Public Service Secretariat (FNPSS) produces comprehensive

documents for First Nations communities to build and strengthen their capacity in records and information management. The first (2009) and second (2011) volumes of FNPSS’s *Information Management Toolkit for First Nations in British Columbia* serves as valuable records and information management resources for First Nations Government Organizations. The *Information Management Toolkit* provides a basic overview of how to identify records versus transitory information (2011, p. 8-10), conducting an inventory of existing records (2011, p. 11), and steps in developing and designing an RIM program (2009, p. 21-47). These steps include the daily operations of managing active records and identifying records for disposition or long-term preservation in an archive. In addition, FNPSS includes guidance on traditional use and cultural heritage records (2009, p. 45-47).

In addition to these general guidelines for implementing an RIM program, FNPSS created the *Filing Toolkit* for developing records classification and retention schedules in First Nations government organizations (2011). The subject headings used in this toolkit are derived from a review of the records in First Nations government organizations in British Columbia and consultations with government and records management staff working in First Nations government offices. FNPSS suggests a block numeric

¹ The authors identify that these omissions are deliberate: “At this initial stage of action and awareness in Canada’s archives, it is imperative to maintain focus on the fundamental message: Canada’s archival communities must respect First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples’ intellectual sovereignty over archival materials created by or about them” (2022, 8).

system that splits records between administrative and operational subjects. In addition, this system can be adapted and changed to various contexts, which is evidenced through the spacing between code numbers assigned to primary subjects (*Filling Toolkit*, 2011, p. 3). The adaptability of FNPSS's block numeric system suggests that CSTC and CSFN communities may benefit from consulting this resource in developing their own records classification. Defining specific CSTC and CSFN business activities will help refine this block numeric system for its adoption and implementation into the archival toolkit.

Preservation

Preservation is another area of priority in developing the archival toolkit. Multiple CSTC/CSFN community members expressed the need for instructions surrounding physical and digital preservation. A major focus of these discussions included preserving and restoring specific materials, ranging from paper documents, oversized materials, and audiovisual materials. Both AABC's *A Manual for Small Archives* (1988) and FNPSS's *Information Management Toolkit for First Nations in British Columbia* (2009; 2011) provide basic instructions on implementing preservation practices. These practices range from conservation, storage techniques, disaster planning, and mitigating agents of deterioration that may threaten the integrity of archival materials. In addition to these practices, the archival toolkit aims to suggest methods for building organizational capacity to implement

these practices, depending on their relevancy to an archival repository.

However, it is important to consider the colonial and extractive legacies embedded in many archival preservation practices, which may not suit certain archival contexts or materials from CSTC/CSFN communities. Documents such as the *Protocols for Native American Archival Materials* (2007) stress following traditional and customary practices surrounding access, privacy, and the preservation of materials. The Protocols state that "actions and policies for preservation, access and use based on Native American approaches will in some cases be priorities, as a result of consultations with a tribal community" (First Archivist Circle, 2007). Following from this guidance, the toolkit stresses prioritizing community-led approaches when caring for archival collections. These approaches may look like avoiding artificially prolonging the life cycle of sensitive documentary material at the community's discretion or ensuring specific privacy and access protocols on these materials (First Archivist Circle, 2007).

Digitization

Lastly, CSTC/CSFN community members identified digitization as a significant priority area for the archival toolkit. Specific areas of focus included identifying and labelling equipment for digitization, as well as instructions on how to set up and use this equipment. Documents like CSTC's *Library and Archives' Digitization Lab Manual* provide valuable information

regarding digitization, while exhibiting a need to include these instructions. Another suitable resource for digitization is the University of British Columbia's Indigitization Program. The Indigitization Program's Toolkit provides a reference document and a series of templates for First Nations communities interested in undertaking digitization projects. The Indigitization Toolkit includes best practices to ensure the creation of high quality, discoverable, and searchable digital objects in a variety of media formats, such as audio cassettes. In addition, the Toolkit outlines project planning for digitization projects, including considerations for how to adapt projects towards different goals like access and long-term preservation. The adaptability and flexibility offered by the Indigitization Toolkit serves as a useful guide in developing the archival toolkit's digitization sections. In addition, its focus on digitization project planning in First Nations organizations will provide a reference for how the archival toolkit may inform project planning for CSTC/CSFN communities.

Conclusion

Knowledge of relevant standards, declarations, and protocols related to archiving Indigenous materials shape the archival practices in this toolkit. In addition to these existing standards, consultations and input from CSTC/CSFN community members guided the developments of this toolkit. These various sources have shaped our approach to focus on the following areas of archival and records management practice: the records

management and archival lifecycle in relation to First Nations materials, preservation, and digitization. Like many existing toolkits related to these areas, we aim to build this toolkit with accessibility, flexibility, and adaptability in mind. In addition, ensuring that culturally specific and community-led ontologies, taxonomies, and knowledges can be infused into this framework based on community needs is essential to increasing the relevancy and utility of this toolkit across multiple Indigenous communities.

SECTION 1

**RECORDS AND
INFORMATION
MANAGEMENT**

What is a record?

Records are defined as “information created, received or maintained as evidence and information by an organization or person, in pursuance of legal obligations or in the transaction of business” (First Nations Public Service Secretariat [FNPSS], *Procedures Manual*, 2011, p. 8). A non-exhaustive list of records that may be used in your organization: paper and electronic documents, emails, maps, mail, letters, reports, audio-visual recordings, photos, and more.

Depending upon organizational or legal regulations, any document of any format within an Indigenous organization may be considered a record. According to the First Nations Public Service Secretariat (2009), the typical characteristics of a record include the following:

- A record should correctly reflect what was communicated or decided or what action was taken, and should be able to support the needs of the business;
- Authenticity of a Record – a record can be proven to be what a record purports to be; to have been created or sent by the person purported to have created or sent it, and at the time purported;
- Reliability of a Record – a record can be trusted as a full and accurate representation of the transactions, activities or facts, and can be depended upon in course of subsequent transactions;
- Integrity of a Record – a record is complete and unaltered;
- Usability of a Record – a record can be located, retrieved, presented and interpreted (p. 10-11).

What is records and information management?

It is important that everyone in an organization understands what is considered a record. A records management program helps to define regulated policies and procedures surrounding record retention and disposition. Records Management is the establishment of systematic controls over the creation, use, maintenance, and disposition of information. A records management program involves “control-led process whereby the records of an office or organization are analyzed, classified, and scheduled, then unwanted records are destroyed, and valuable material is sent to the archives” (Archives Association of British Columbia, 1988, p. 24).

Records management helps an organization ensure:

- The retention of records needed to meet administrative and operational requirements.
- The retention of records needed to meet legal requirements.
- The permanent retention of records of archival value.
- The effective creation, retrieval, and maintenance of current records.
- The security of vital records.
- The regular, authorized destruction of obsolete records.
- The improved flow of information throughout an organization.

At the end of the records management lifecycle, records are transferred from the parent organization to the archives. This could be a regular or sporadic process. However, this process can be regulated by incorporating a records management program into the organization.

Determining transitory records

Substantive records are contrasted with transitory records. Transitory records are “records to which no retention requirement applies and which have no value in documenting or supporting the organization’s business” (CAN/CGSB-72.34-2017, p. 18). In addition, transitory records include duplicate documents, which should be disposed if an original version is available. Information that is considered transitory are often only required for routine actions, or to prepare a subsequent record.

A few questions to ask yourself to determine if a record is transitory:

- Does this document provide evidence of actions or decisions related to your organization?
- Am I the Sender or Creator of this document?
- Am I the Recipient or Addressee of this document?
- Do I need to act on this document?
- Does another person need to act on this document?
- Is this the original or only version of this document?

If answering **YES** to any of these questions, this is a substantive record.

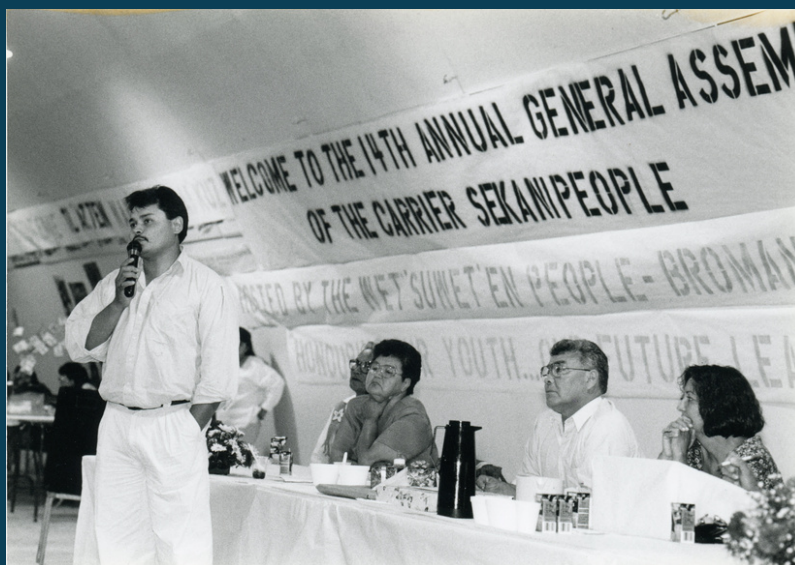


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Preparing a Records Management System

Information Inventory

A survey of all records kept in the organization is a necessary first step in developing a records management program. Conducting this provides a better understanding of 1) the number of records in your organization, and 2) the business activities that create records. By collecting this information, the organization can make more informed decisions on the retention and disposal of records. In addition, this survey helps form a basis for a classification system and retention schedules. A few important tips for completing this survey include:

- Using a form or spreadsheet to collect and store the same information for every collection identified.
- Note which records are vital to the organization (i.e., critical or irreplaceable to the organization), as these records should be identified for special, secure storage later.
- Set a timetable to complete the survey. It will not be possible to survey all records in the collection; however, the survey should provide as clear snapshot of the types and number of records in your organization.
- When possible, enlist the help of other staff from the departments or groups where these records are located to act as liaison persons. These liaison persons may help with completing the survey and the transfer of records later.

Depending on the organization, this form/spreadsheet may include: the type(s) of records, how they are arranged, location of these records, date(s) of creation, amount of records (e.g., in inches), physical format, the creator of these records, who uses the records and how often they are referenced, any legal/financial/administrative/community regulations governing security and access to the records, and file classification and retention period of these records (if already known by your organization).

Records and Information Management Policy

Determining a records and information management policy is one of the most important elements for establishing and maintaining consistent recordkeeping practices in an organization. A records and information management policy may include:

- A statement outlining the scope and purpose of the records management program, including the types of materials that are kept by the organization.
- A definition of the role of the records manager, including their authorities surrounding the transfer and disposal of records.
- The rules, regulations, or restrictions that may be implemented in the management of the records.

Determining the rules, regulations, or restrictions governing the management of records may come from specific organizational, administrative, legal, or community-related rights and resources.

Additional resources on First Nations data and information governance include the First Nations Principles of OCAP®. OCAP® was created by the First Nations Information Governance Centre (FNIGC) to ensure that First Nations own their information and are stewards of it. It is also “a set of principles that reflect First Nations commitments to use and share information in a way that brings benefit to the community while minimizing harm” (2014, p. 3-4). The four principles of OCAP® are Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession.

For more information on the First Nations Principles of OCAP®, including the online training offered by FNIGC, visit their [website](#).

Additional resources

- First Nations Financial Management Board’s [Records and Information Privacy](#), including the [Information Management Sample Policy](#)
- Douglas College’s [Records and Information Management Policy](#)

Managing Active Records

Creating a Records Classification System

The classification of business activities assists in many processes involving the management of records. Records classification links the record to the function, activity, or work process being documented (ISO 15489, 2016, p. 17). Records classification also aids in document discovery, maintains consistency with naming conventions, and determines appropriate retention and disposal actions for records.

When implementing a classification system, it is important to ensure that the classification system is consistent across physical and electronic records. In addition, the classification system should be updated regularly to accurately reflect the business activities of the organization and dispose of outdated classifications.

A recommended example of a classification system that is based on First Nations business activities is the Records and Information Management System for First Nations, created by the First Nations Public Service Secretariat (2011). This system is a Block Numeric filing system, organized by function and arranged alphabetically by subject into primary and secondary headings. The classification system is designed as an optional list for records managers and staff to select the appropriate primary and secondary headings that reflect their organization's business activities.

The examples below illustrate three of Records and Information Management Systems for First Nations' Subject Headings, with some of their Primary Headings. Section 1's Heading includes three of their primary and secondary headings.

Section 1 – Administration (Primary Numbers 0100-0699)

0110 Administration – General

- 01 General
- 02 Incorporation
- 03 Organization Charts
- 20 Convenience Files
- 30 Appointment Books, Calendars, Diaries

0125 Acts and Legislation

- 01 General
- 02 Comparative Studies
- 20 Legislation, by Jurisdiction

0150 Appreciation, Complaints and Inquiries

- 01 General
- 02 Complaints, by Dept., issue

Section 2 – Buildings, Facilities, and Properties (Primary Numbers 0700-0999)

0710 – Buildings, Facilities, and Properties – General

0730 – Buildings – General

0810 – Buildings – Individual

Section 3 – Equipment and Supplies (Primary Numbers 1000-1299)

1010 Equipment and Supplies – General

1015 Equipment and Supplies – Vendors

1025 Asset Control and Inventories

The full classification in FNPSS's Records and Information Management System for First Nations is accessed [here](#). Additional records and information management resources from FNPSS are found on their [website](#).

Creating Retention Schedules

Retention periods are an important aspect of the record life cycle. In a records classification system, retention periods are assigned to file codes to indicate the duration of time that information should be retained. Various factors indicate the retention period of a record, including organizational needs, regulatory requirements, statutes of limitations or other legal regulations, legislation, community regulations, financial needs, or other local, national, state, or international statutes and regulations.

Organizations should confirm their own retention schedules based on the specific requirements governing their records and information management policy.

Example 1 – Sample Document Retention Periods, adapted from the First Nations Financial Management Board (2022)

Record or information	Duration
General First Nation governance records	
All First Nation bylaws, amendments to the bylaws, the First Nation constitution, and membership resolutions	Permanent
Appointments and terms of appointments	Permanent
Legal files and papers	
Contractual or other agreements (e.g., contribution, impact benefit, trust) between the First Nation and others and correspondence related to the terms of the contracts	7 years beyond life of the contract
Papers relating to major litigation including those documents relating to internal financial misconduct	5 years after expiration of the legal appeal period or as specified by legal counsel
Human Resources	
Personnel manuals and procedures	Permanent
Where there is a pension plan (excluding RRSP plans): Original plan documents; records of pensionable employee service and eligibility; associated personal information including name, address, social insurance number, pay history, pension rate	7 years after the death of the employee or employee's spouse in the case of spousal eligibility

The First Nations Public Service Secretariat (FNPSS) provides a more detailed retention schedule as part of their Records and Information Management System for First Nations. To develop their retention schedule, the FNPSS researched regulations surrounding retention records in 2011. Since then, the FNPSS recommends organizations undertake their own research to ensure their retention periods reflect current regulations (2011, p. 6). In addition to their specific requirements, organizations may consult this resource to gain a clearer picture of the retention period requirements.

The FNPSS assigns a retention period to every secondary subject heading:

- the **Active Life** (A), the period during which the records are active and required for daily business in the office.
- the **Semi-Active** (SA) or inactive phase, the period during which staff no longer use the records for daily business, but the record series must be retained by the organization for regulatory or other reasons. These records may be removed from the active office space to a less costly storage location.
- the **Final Disposition** (FD) phase, where the record series has been retained for all required purposes and are either destroyed or retained permanently. (Appendix I, 2.2; 3.0).

Various codes are defined as abbreviations in the Records and Information Management System for First Nations. Some popular codes include:

A = active

SA = semi active

FD = final disposition

CY = calendar year

FY = fiscal year

Y = year

SO = until superseded or obsolete (each condition is noted)

SR = selective retention P = permanent retention*

D = destroy

NA = not applicable

ARC = archives (where organizational archives exist) legal or business obligation to retain permanently

PIB = Personal Information Bank (collection of records filed by name, identification number or other personal identifier)

Example 2 – Information Management Toolkit, Records Classification from the First Nations Public Service Secretariat

	A	SA	F
0100 ADMINISTRATION – GENERAL			
Includes records relating generally to administrative functions, which are not found elsewhere in this section. Includes incorporation and letters patent documents relating to the establishment of the First Nation organization. Also includes organization charts and materials relevant to organizational structure.			
-01 General	CY+1	6y	D
-02 Incorporation	SO	nil	P
-03 Organization Charts	SO	nil	P
-20 Convenience Files	CY+1	nil	D

Note: These are convenience copies of correspondence compiled for administrative convenience only. Classify the official file copy under the appropriate subject.

-30 Appointment Books, Calendars, Diaries SO nil SR

Note: Diaries relating to specific subjects should be classified under the appropriate subject.

For further information, consult FNPSS's Records and Information Management System for First Nations in British Columbia [here](#) and the First Nations Management Board's Sample Document Retention Periods [here](#).

Additional resources

- Alberta Records and Information Branch. (2004). [Developing Records Retention and Disposition Schedules](#).

Filing

Once an organization understands the records in its repositories, the next step is organizing them. Both physical and electronic records should be organized by the same classification system. Some filing procedures that an organization may adopt include:

- Deciding if records will be kept in the departments or units that are related to those records, or within a central repository.
- Creating labels for paper filing folders.
- Filing documents within paper and electronic files and folders.
- Sorting records into filing order by file codes.
- Keeping records related to one another together in the same folder or volumes and classifying them similarly using the file classification system.

When possible, contact an archivist or records manager for recommendations for how to organize and file materials.

Retaining Background Custodial Histories

When receiving records from another institution for business, research, and/or repatriation purposes, make sure to write down its original file classification and metadata elements. A few questions to be asking when retaining background custodial history:

- Did it have a previous filing number?
- Who created the record?
- What is the previous custodial history associated with the record?
 - Who has the record belonged to in the past? Do they still currently own or partially own this record?
 - Did it come from another organization before coming to your repository?
Is it an original file or a copy of a file?
 - Who does the record currently belong to?

Creating New Volumes and Folders

Some business activities or subjects will require multiple folders to hold its records. When a folder exceeds one inch of thickness, start a new volume or folder. Change the label on the closed volume folder to update the volume number and date range on the file.

Open a new folder indicating the volume number and an open-ended date label from the time of its creation (e.g., Vol. 2, JAN1/2023 -). Repeat this process as necessary.

Maintaining File Lists

Staff should keep an up-to-date list of all opened files, as new files are opened on the records classification system. When new file numbers replace older filing systems, staff should record both the new file number and the old file number to create a cross-reference. Using spreadsheets or an MS Access database can help record these cross-references.

When not in use, the cross-reference list should be filed away for safekeeping. The records management staff should maintain and update the list as necessary.

Records Security

Records will have varying levels of security and confidentiality requirements. The following procedures can promote the safekeeping of records:

- Vital records, whether physical or electronic, are retained in secure storage and are easily retrievable by staff in the event of a natural disaster, security breach, or technical issue.
- Fireproof filing cabinets.
- Regular backups and offsite storage of electronic data help protect electronic records.
- Retain records in secure and confidential storage. Certain records pertaining to traditional, cultural or community knowledges may require specific storage procedures, as directed by community guidelines.
- Lock cabinets when staff are not accessing the records.



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Managing Electronic Folders and Documents

Network Drive Structure

The folder structure used to organize electronic records should reflect the same filing system that is also implemented on physical records (see [Creating a Records Classification System](#)). Maintaining consistency between the ways that electronic and physical records are organized increases document discovery and provides a logical structure for the digitization of physical records.

The folders and sub-folders of the filing system can be mapped onto a network drive structure, so that files can be shared and accessed across various staff members. Each network drive can be decided to a specific function or subject. Access permissions on certain network drives can help secure records kept in these drives, so that they maintain internal to specific groups or units.

IT and computer technology staff can help manage security and backup requirements of electronic records.

Document Naming Conventions

It is important for an organization to implement consistent electronic document naming conventions. Consistent naming conventions can help staff locate and retrieve electronic documents, while distinguishing between specific versions of the documents.

According to the CSTC File Naming Conventions, a document's name should contain two or more of the following elements:

- **DATE of CREATION/EVENT** as YYYY-MM-DD [e.g. 2010-06-15]; year ranges are formatted as YYYY-YY [e.g. 2018-19]
- **AUTHOR/CREATOR** [Organization, department, society, community, body, or individual responsible for the document, event, or project]
- **SUBJECT** [e.g. Project, initiative, program, or document title]
- **DOCUMENT TYPE** [e.g. Interview, agenda, waiver, correspondence]
- **VERSION or STATUS** [e.g. DRAFT, FINAL]

The selection and ordering of these elements is based on how the file is most likely to be searched or retrieved in the future.

File naming elements should be separated with underscores.

Final and authoritative documents should be saved as PDFs once drafting is complete and reviews and edits have been given.

Last name and first names to be separated by commas and space, however the first name initial can be used to shorten character length.

File Closing, Storage, and Destruction Procedures

Closing Files

"Active" records become "semi-active" when they are no longer used in the daily work or business of the organization. This period should be determined in the retention schedule and labelled by each file code. Some records will only be retained conditionally (i.e., to the end of an employment or contract).

The following procedures should occur when closing files:

- When a record's retention condition occurs, close the file and transfer the records to a less costly storage location. This transfer helps to free up filing space where active records are kept.
- When files are closed, a formal file closure notice or label should be placed on the file.
- Record the location of semi-active records in storage through an index, as these records should still be accessible.

Boxing and Storing Paper Files

- Use banker's boxes to store paper files, which are strong, contain no glue, have handles, and are easily stackable in storage space.
- Pack file folders into boxes in their original filing order, and with other records of the same retention period.
- When a box is filled, create an inventory list, also known as a record transfer list, to describe the contents of the box.
- Staff should issue records transfer forms and box numbers to identify and locate boxes in the future, if necessary.
- Make three copies of an inventory or transfer list: the first in the box as an inventory of contents; the second for the department owning the box; and the third for the master storage binder that is maintained by records management staff.
- Create a spreadsheet with information on the contents of boxes and their locations in summary form for easier retrieval for these boxes.

Records Storage Space

- If available, equip storage space with industrial strength shelving to store records and clearly label sections of the storage space according to the indexes.
- Do not store records directly on the floor; the bottom storage rack should be set off the floor to prevent moisture, water damage, and pests.
- Appropriate storage areas may include:
 - A secure and dry basement facility
 - A records storage centre
 - An unused office space.
- Storage areas should be locked and access strictly controlled to ensure that original storage is not disturbed.

Records destruction and the disposal process

Why records disposal?

The final stage of the records life cycle is the disposal or long-term preservation of records. Disposal occurs when there are no longer requirements to retrieve the information in the record. This process frees up storage space and ensures that organizations are complying with regulatory requirements surrounding records retention. The maintenance of records for long-term preservation can be costly, so discernment is needed when determining which records require this or disposal. The records classification system and retention schedule should provide controlled and regulated processes for disposing of records.

The disposal process

- The approval of the retention schedule will indicate which records are intended for preservation or disposal.
- A final review of the records, including approvals by relevant authorities in the organization, will also determine which records are preserved or disposed of.
- Create a Destruction Register to indicate which records were destroyed and when.

- Destroy records on a regular basis, using appropriate methods to maintain the record's confidentiality. An appropriate method of disposal is shredding. Contact a shredding company to dispose of large quantities of records, or have a shredder in your facilities.
- Regularly update and review the disposal process, according to changes in legal and regulatory standards.
- Arbitrary and unplanned records destruction is considered a suspicious activity. Arbitrary and unplanned records destruction may be found by courts to be illegal destruction of evidence, which can yield serious consequences such as legal sanctions against the organization, including court judgments, fines or imprisonment.

SECTION 2
ARCHIVES

What is an archives?

An archives is a collection or accumulation of materials with enduring value related to the history, culture, and key activities of a creator(s). Creator(s) may be considered a person, place, institution, organization, or community. In addition, an archives is the physical repository where these materials are located. An archives can be a place to provide evidence of the activities conducted by a creator, as well as maintain important histories and stories, gather information, and conduct research.

An archivist or recordkeeper are the individuals who either lead or are involved in the assessment, collection, organization and preservation of these materials. Archivists and recordkeepers also help to make these materials available to users in the archives, depending on various privacy and access considerations.

Archives are the final step in the record life cycle, in that records of enduring value are collected and maintained in the archives. This step usually occurs once records become inactive; however, different archives may have different criteria for when record transfers occur between their records management systems and archives. Archivists or recordkeepers can help determine these criteria, as well as the standards of care needed to maintain archival materials.

Once materials have been transferred to the archives, they undergo a series of steps to make them discoverable and accessible within the archives:

- Acquisition, appraisal, and accessioning
- Arrangement
- Description
- Privacy and Access

These steps will be detailed in the following section of this toolkit.

Preparing an Archives

Before setting up an archives, an organization should consider the scope of its materials and activities. A few questions to ask include:

- What is the mandate or mission statement of the archives?
- What types of materials does the archives collect?
- What is your archival policy? How does it tie in or relate to your RIM policy (if applicable)?
- What tribal or community procedures must be followed to implement an archives? Do any reporting structures exist within this model?
- Who will be running the archives? To what extent are organization or community members that are external to the archives' operations aiding in running the archives?

In addition to these questions, an organization should consider what resources are available to them to start an archives. Some resources that are commonly seen in archives include:

Human Resources

No matter the size and scope of your archives, you must consider who will be operating the archives on a day-to-day basis. Are you planning on recruiting one or multiple persons to operate the archives? Are they paid employees, students, or volunteers, and how will you recruit them? What are their qualifications? What will they do? How will you train them? How will they be paid? What support can you get from your community or institution, and to what extent can community or institutional members help in operating the archives?

Facilities

You also need to consider the space available to you for managing the archives. How large is your space? What local building codes or bylaws must you follow when working in that space? What activities can take place in your archives, given the size of your facilities (i.e., space for processing, storage, reference, etc.)? How can your space be prepared to mitigate risks, such as fire, flood, theft, and pests?¹

1. For more detailed guidance on this topic, please consult "Section 3: Preservation."

Funding

You need to determine the cost of various archival operations. Where does funding come from? What operations does funding supplement? What are your capital costs and overhead: building (rent, lease, purchase), heat, electricity, taxes, water? Who is responsible for these costs, your archives or your institution? Who pays for staff? How much and how often? What money is available for equipment and supplies? Who pays for them? How much community, governmental, or institutional support is available for your archives?

Different funding mechanisms, such as government or other institutional grants, may be available to your organization to fund your archives. A few organizations who may provide funding for archival projects include:

- [First Peoples' Cultural Council](#)
- [BC History Digitization Program](#)
- [New Relationship Trust](#)
- [Library and Archives Canada](#)
- [Canada Council for the Arts](#)

Equipment, Tools, and Technology

Once you determine how much space and funding is available to you, consider your equipment and supplies. What equipment do you need? What do you already have? Where can you get equipment and supplies? Can some of this equipment be leased or rented when needed? Common items in archives include shelving, ideally adjustable metal shelves with a depth of 12" to 15"; acid-free file folders, envelopes, and tissue paper; tables and chairs for meeting and research; a desk; filing and storage cabinets; computers and printers; and office supplies and stationery. Other equipment needs may include photocopiers, microfilm and microfiche readers and printers, tape recorders and audiovisual equipment, as well as digital tools for managing electronic archival materials. Some digital tools can be costly; however, tools like Microsoft Access and Excel help keep track of inventories with little to no costs attached to these tools.

Perhaps one of the most important resources when setting up an archives is time. How much time do you have to complete this set-up process? How much time can you spend dedicated towards operating an archives?

Another consideration for setting up an archives are the community members, memory and knowledge keepers, elders, and creators of the records who provide guidance and context to the records and their care. Being able to recruit help from community members with certain knowledge or expertise is an asset, specifically in the context of understanding how to proceed with traditional knowledge, cultural expressions, and documentary heritage in your archives. In addition, community practices may determine how to operate your archives in ways that serve and benefit the communities related to your archives.

If viable given your resources, you may also want to contact an archivist to enquire further about setting up an archives.

Acquisition, Appraisal, and Accessioning

Acquisition, appraisal, and accessioning occurs once archival materials have been transferred or donated to your archives. While being distinct processes on their own, these three aid one another in determining the types of materials your archives accepts, including the procedures around accepting new materials into your archives:

- Acquisition is the process of seeking and receiving materials from any source by transfer from your records management department; by transfer from another person, community or organization; by donation; by loan; or by purchase ("Acquisition," Society of American Archivists [SAA], 2022).
- Appraisal is the process of determining whether materials have enduring value to your archives. Appraisal can take place prior to donation and physical transfer, at or after accessioning. The basis of appraisal decisions largely comes from the mandate, mission statement, and/or scope of your archives, which is defined in the archival policy for your institution ("Appraisal," SAA, 2022).
- Accessioning is the process that occurs after materials have been determined suitable for your archives. To accession an archival material is to take intellectual and physical custody over the materials, under certain legal or policy authorities ("Accession," SAA, 2022). However, what this custody may look like depends on the context of your organization, including various practices, protocols, and relationships your organization may have with other institutions, governments, or communities.

Determining the criteria for materials with enduring value can look differently depending on the organization's mandates. In addition, these criteria can be determined by community procedures and needs expressed by users. Some questions to ask when appraising materials includes:

- Does the archival material fit your policy? Does it enhance the rest of the collection, or is it unsuitable and inappropriate?
- Does it fill gaps in your collection or duplicate information already available?
- How much will it cost to preserve and store, and is it worth the expense?
- What is the medium of the material, and is there a special process required to handle and care for this material?

After deciding which materials are suitable for your archives, you can conduct the following procedures to maintain physical and intellectual control of the materials:

- Give each separate accession an accession number, which is a unique number that identifies each different group of records in an archives. Archives commonly use an alpha-numeric system, based on four digits of the current year and a sequential number for each accession received that year (e.g., 2022.1, 2022.2, 2022.3, etc.). Different items might be assigned numbers in the accession (e.g., 2022.1.1, 2022.1.15, etc.). However, if this numbering systems remains consistent, accession numbers can be any system that makes sense for your archives.
- Complete an accession record for the materials, recording what the accession consists of, where it is kept, and where it came from. If possible, accession the materials on either the first or second day after these materials enters the archives.
- Use a book to keep track of accession records and keep these records in the archives' administrative area in a filing cabinet or box.

Arranging/Organizing Archival Materials

The next step in the archival process is organizing, or arranging, archival materials. Arrangement is the process of organizing materials with respect to their contexts and to achieve physical or intellectual control over the materials ("Arrangement," SAA, 2022).

Colonial approaches to arranging records have tried to adhere to principles that assume the creator is one entity or individual. Their records are then organized in the original order they were first arranged by this creator. However, this is not the case for many different types of records. Some archival materials do not belong to a single creator, instead have multiple creators with different roles in the creation and custodianship of the materials. In addition, the original order may be disrupted during any stage of the life cycle of records, being rearranged throughout time before entering the archives.

What is most important when arranging records is organizing them in a way that makes sense for that specific community or organization. This may look like organizing records by department, business practices, and/or cultural activities.

Archives often accept the "order upon acquisition" of the records. "Order upon acquisition" means the order in which records are received at the time of their acquisition by an archives. However, arrangement practices may be best defined through following community practices, or determining your own community practices if they do not already exist.

The following questions may help you consider how to define arrangement practices:

- How is creatorship defined in your archives? What forms of creatorship are represented in your archival materials?
- What knowledges and ontologies does your organization or communities adopt when considering how information is collected, accessed, and used?

- What activities are your community currently involved in (i.e., litigation, language revitalization, land management, curriculum development activities, etc.)? How can arrangement practices, and description practices (discussed in the next sub-section), assist in this work?
- What system of organization could help community members access records in the future?

Collaborating with records creators, researchers and other community members can help identify relevant information about the materials. This information can help shape approaches in arranging and describing archival materials that cater to the uses these materials would have for users, as well as maintain the context of the records.

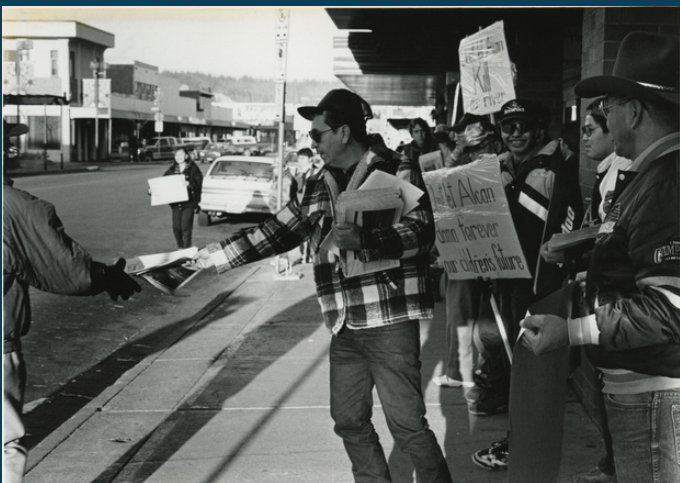


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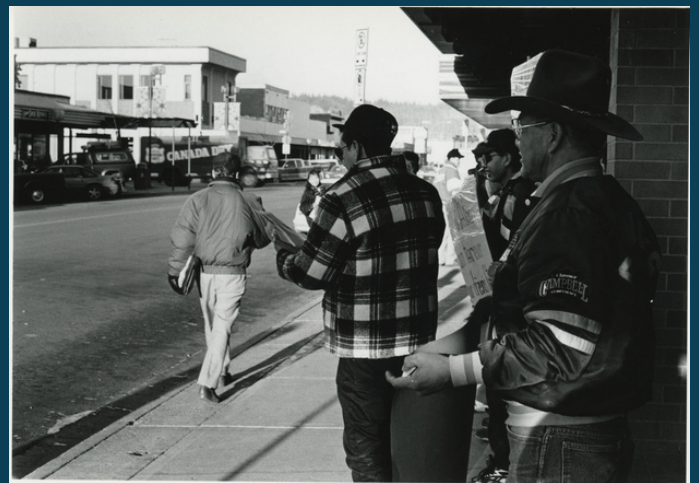


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Description

Archival description is the process of “analyzing, organizing, and recording details about the formal elements of a record or collection of records, such as creator, title, dates, extent, and contents, to facilitate the work’s identification, management, and understanding” (“Description,” SAA, 2022). By identifying these formal elements of archival materials, access points are created for these materials that aid in the discovery and management of these materials. Descriptions of archival materials are often expressed in finding aids and bibliographic records.

A finding aid is a description of the contextual and structural information about an archival resource. A finding aid places archival resources in context by consolidating information about the collection, such as acquisition and processing; provenance, including administrative history or biographical note; scope of the collection, including size, subjects, media; organization and arrangement; and an inventory of the series and the folders. Finding aids could also describe a single level of arrangement or a single item (“Finding aid,” SAA, 2022). One way of organizing and maintaining finding aids is keeping them in an MS Excel Spreadsheet or folder of MS Word Documents with their corresponding Box Lists.

These formal elements are often expressed through the metadata of a record. Metadata is “information about data that promotes discovery, structures data objects, and supports the administration and preservation of records” (“Metadata,” SAA, 2022). Different metadata standards exist in the archival world, with varying levels of flexibility in its structure and implementation. The following metadata standards may offer more dynamic and diverse ways of describing materials in archives, especially more unique materials:

- Descriptive Standards
 - General International Standard Archival Description – Second Edition [ISAD(G)]
- Content Standards
 - Describing Archives: A Content Standard [DACS]

Alternative & Published Materials

Because some materials that your archives acquire may be through transfers between different types of knowledge-keeping institutions, understanding library or museum standards may also be beneficial to your organization. Specifically, understanding where archival materials come from, how they have been previously organized, and who has kept them helps to maintain the custodial history of these materials. In addition, understanding different metadata standards helps to translate these standards to your archives' standards when necessary. Some standards from these types of institutions may include:

- Libraries
 - [The Brian Deer Classification System \[BDCS\], adapted by Xwi7xwa Library at the University of British Columbia](#)
 - [The Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules \[AACR2\]](#)
 - [MARC21](#)

- Museums
 - [Categories for the Descriptions of Works of Art \[CDWA\]](#)
 - [Cataloguing Cultural Objects \[CCO\]](#)

Privacy and Access

Archival operations may be determined by certain privacy and access considerations surrounding the archival materials in your collections. Any access requirements are often determined during acquisition and appraisal of archival materials. Some questions that may be useful to ask when determining these considerations include:

- Who has the rights or ability to access these materials? What agreement has been made with the donor(s) that may determine these access requirements?
- What legal, governmental, cultural, or community protocols shape access to these materials?
- Are there protocols surrounding traditional knowledge (TK), cultural expression, and/or documentary heritage that your archives follow? Which materials may be related to these protocols?
- What protocols need to take place in your archives to adhere to these access restrictions?
- Are there varying levels of access around certain archival materials? If so, who has these varying levels of access surrounding these materials?
- Is there a way to record and retrieve information about your privacy and access protocols? Including these protocols in your archival/records and information management policy may provide a document to refer to these protocols.
- What types of access are needed to maintain your archives? Does your archives need to consider both individual and community levels of access?
- What permissions are needed from band council to access certain information? What permissions are needed from community members to access certain information?

In addition to community-specific standards, resources such as OCAP® and the CARE Principles of Indigenous Data Governance provide standards for the collection, protection, use and sharing of archival materials. These two example standards can be adapted and interpreted depending on community standards, as well as guide decision-making regarding why, whom, and by whom information is collected, used, and shared.

Reference Services

Because the materials in archives may be of historical, cultural, legal, and/or community value to different archival users, archives regularly receive requests to access these materials. This process can be defined as reference services, which is a service that aids archival users in locating materials relevant to their interests. The various discovery mechanisms listed in this toolkit, including archival arrangement and description, aid in making these materials accessible for reference services. However, certain materials may have privacy restrictions surrounding them, thereby influencing access to these materials during the reference process.

A reference request may begin from within or outside a community or organization's archives. Users making the reference request may ask to access specific materials or ask for materials based on their subject area. The best way to determine what a user is requesting is to conduct a reference interview with them, which helps identify the specific information needs of the user. In addition, this process gives the user an orientation to the archives and its materials, including how to handle and care for these materials while accessing them.

Additional resources

- The National Archives at Boston. [Guidelines for the Successful Reference Interview](#).

Outreach

Outreach activities are great ways of staying connected with the communities that your archives serve. Public outreach can help raise awareness about your archives, including how users may utilize this space. In addition, public outreach can help identify new information needs of these communities, adapting archival practices to accommodate for these needs when necessary and viable.

Some outreach activities may include brochures, pamphlets, calendars, booklets, publications, or events related to the archives. Social media can be an innovative and free space to engage with communities and ask questions, conduct surveys, and spread information about your archives. It should be noted that public outreach activities are contingent on the resources available to your archival institution at that time, as these activities can be costly and take time to complete.

Not only does outreach help archives connect with users, but also other archival institutions and organizations. Utilizing shared resources may provide opportunities to engage users in new and exciting ways, across different communities and learning new things about the materials in these archival spaces.

A few questions to ask yourself when developing an outreach strategy, programming, or activity:

- What message is being communicated through this outreach, and how does this message impact the archives?
- Who is the target audience?
- What is the best way to engage this target audience (i.e., social media, community events, council meetings, etc.)?
- If receiving feedback through public outreach, how will the archives implement this feedback?

Repatriation

The *Protocols for Native American Archival Materials* outline the following for Indigenous communities to consider when engaging in repatriation practices:

- Provide in-depth consultation and review of archival collections in order to establish which materials may have been acquired inappropriately or require special conditions for handling, access, and use.
- Conduct research to establish which archival collections were acquired without right of possession.
- Consider in-trust holding agreements and other arrangements with archives and libraries.
- Ensure that copied and repatriated materials are properly cared for and managed. The state-of-the-art Seneca Nation Archives—the “Caretakers of the Old Words”—and the Mashantucket Pequot Archives and Special Collections serve as a model repositories.
- Request copies of legal agreements for copied and returned collections. (First Archivist Circle, 2007)

For an example of a repatriation agreement that would be signed between institutions and/or communities, please see the [Repatriation Agreement Template](#) in Appendix I, provided by Carrier Sekani Tribal Council.

SECTION 3
PRESERVATION

Why are preservation practices important?

Preservation is widely known as both a professional discipline and an act or practice. The professional discipline of preservation focuses on “protecting materials by minimizing chemical and physical deterioration and damage to minimize the loss of information and to extend the life of cultural property”. The act of preservation is the prevention of “harm, injury, decay, or destruction, especially through noninvasive treatment” (“Preservation,” SAA, 2022).

Preservation involves implementing proactive and preventative measures that minimize harm done to records and collections. Often, an archives’ preservation practices are determined by several factors:

- The materials held in collections, including their format and material type (e.g., a paper contract, an audiotape cassette, a basket, etc.).
- Resources to preserve materials, including resources for conservation and treatment.
- Digitization projects and strategies, which support the digital preservation of materials.
- Cultural, community, administrative, and/or legal protocols and obligations regarding the preservation of certain materials.
- Guidelines set by the community’s cultural preservation department or office regarding the preservation of cultural materials.

This section covers widespread practices that archives use to preserve different types of materials for their long-term use in archives. However, the factors listed above help determine how these practices may need to be enacted, contextualized, or modified in your archives.

Common Agents of Deterioration

The 'ten agents of deterioration' are a conceptual framework developed by the Canadian Conservation Institute used to categorize the major causes of change, loss or damage to cultural heritage objects. A summarized report of these agents of deterioration is included below:

Incorrect Temperature, Relative Humidity (RH), and Light

- These are agents that cannot necessarily be avoided like the other agents on this list. However, we can implement measures to minimize the damage caused by these agents.
- **Incorrect Temperatures** that are too low or too high can damage artifacts adversely based on the material type of the record, often accelerating deterioration. Attempt to keep temperatures between 65°F and 72°F/18.3°C and 22.2°C.
- **Incorrect Relative Humidity (RH)** can cause more damage than temperature. Large fluctuations in humidity can cause the artifacts to warp or grow mould. Attempt to keep humidity between 35% and 55%.
- **Light** damage is caused by overexposure to natural or artificial light. The best method to prevent light damage is to store materials away from direct light.

Pollutants

- **Pollutants** are grouped into a range of compounds that can have chemical reactions with any component of an object.
- Can be natural or man-made gases, aerosols, liquids, dust or dirt that are known to accelerate decay of artifacts.

Pests

- **Pests**, such as microorganisms, insects, and rodents, are often attracted to materials made from organic matter, such as paper and fabrics.
- An Integrated Pest Management (IPM) strategy can help mitigate the impacts of pests on collections by avoiding, blocking, detecting, and responding to them.

Fire

- **Fire** can cause smoke damage, partial or total loss of the objects.
- Fire prevention and fire suppression should be given high priority when preparing an archival space for housing materials (e.g., fire extinguisher accessible, acquiring a fire-proof safe for highly important and valuable materials).

Water

- **Water damage** can result from natural occurrences, technological hazards, or mechanical failures.
- Water leaks and floods are the most common causes of water damage; however, water damage can also be caused by spilling a beverage.
- Store collections off the floor and inside cabinets when possible, in anticipation of a leak or flood.

Physical forces

- **Physical Force** can damage artifacts directly by causing rotation, deformation, stress, breakage and pressure (e.g., impact; shock; vibration; pressure; and abrasion).
- Most physical force is caused by general use but also by accident.

Dissociation

- **Dissociation** results from the natural tendency for ordered systems to fall apart over time.
- Results in loss of objects, or object-related data, or the ability to retrieve or associate objects and data
- Includes misplacing or misfiling records, volumes, enclosures, removing identifying labels, tags, or enclosures from items (without transcribing), losing intellectual control.

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For more information about agents of deterioration, please consult the [Canadian Conservation Institute](#).

Preservation and Care by Material Type

This section covers specific preservation guidelines based on the material types commonly found in archives. Ultimately, standards of best conservation practice work with cultural standards defined by the originating community, and may differ across communities. These guidelines are recommendations that may be followed if they align with the preservation and care requirements of your community.

Textual materials

Includes bound and unbound paper materials, oversized materials like maps, plans, and large portraits

Storage and housing

- House paper objects in acid-free protective enclosures like envelopes or folders made from buffered paper, board or plastics, such as poly(ethylene terephthalate) (PET) or polypropylene (PP).
- House acidic paper objects separated or isolated from adjacent paper objects.
- Use archival storage boxes, shelving and cabinets to provide additional protection for paper objects housed in folders, sleeves or window mats.
- Label protective enclosures, folders, and archival storage boxes according to prevent disassociation (see Filing Procedures [link] for more details on labelling practices).
- Remove any staples, elastic bands, and paper clips that may transfer onto the paper materials.

For Maps, plans, and other oversized materials

- Store oversized paper objects flat in folders, either in metal horizontal cabinets or on wide metal shelves. Sufficient space should be allowed in the area where they are stored to remove them safely from the drawers or shelves and to ensure that there is space to set them down.

Use and handling

- Handle paper materials with gloves or washed hands.
- Use storage enclosures, boxes, window mats and frames when transporting textual materials, and use both hands when handling these materials.

Environmental conditions

- The recommended environmental standard for paper-based collections is 35-65°F/1.7-18.3°C and 30-50% relative humidity. Low temperature generally slows deterioration. Low RH can weaken adhesives on binding, while high RH can contribute to mold growth, cockling, and chemical deterioration.
- Establish desired light and UV levels and adjust these levels accordingly; monitor and record light and UV levels in all areas where materials are exposed (see CCI for detailed information on sensitivity levels of paper and colourants to visible light and UV light).
- Avoid hanging important documents on a wall exposed to sunlight, as the light can fade or bleach these materials.
- Acquire a cheap temperature monitor to track temperature conditions in your facilities.
- Acquire a humidifier to maintain RH levels, especially during the cold and/or dry winter months.

Photographic Materials

Includes film, negatives, slides, and photographs

Storage and housing

- House photographs in protective enclosures, such as acid-free paper envelopes or clear plastic sleeves made of polyester (Melinex, Mylar) or polyethylene.
- Do not use plastic sleeves if the emulsion is damaged or if hand-colouring is friable; static electricity will easily detach fragile media.
- Store oversized works flat in folders, either in horizontal metal cabinets or on wide metal shelves.
- Store objects in archival-quality document storage boxes—larger items should be stored flat, while smaller ones can be placed vertically, ensuring that they are properly supported within the box to prevent slumping.
- House photographs, especially fine art photographs or valuable display items, in window mats, as applicable and practical, or in inert plastic sleeves or heavyweight folders.

- Use archival storage boxes, shelving and cabinets to provide additional protection for photographs housed in folders, sleeves or window mats.
- Reformat (by photocopy, photographic film copy or digital image), where appropriate, for photographs that are too fragile to handle, are used heavily or are required for publications or reference.
- Place extremely fragile objects, such as cased photographs, ambrotypes and daguerreotypes, in watertight containers. Only place vulnerable items on upper shelves.
- If possible, take photographs out of frames to digitize materials and save storage space. However, photographs can be kept in their frames if the frame is part of the object, is inherent to its value, is difficult to remove, and/or damages the photograph.

Use and handling

- Handle objects as little as possible, and wear white cotton, nylon or vinyl gloves.
- Support large, unmounted photographs on a rigid board when moving them or turning them over.
- Use a rigid support, such as heavier paper or acid-free board, to handle or move larger and more fragile photographs.

Environmental conditions

- Like textual materials, the recommended environmental standard for photograph collections is 35-65°F/1.7-18.3°C and 30-50% relative humidity. Lower temperatures are best for colour photos and degrading negatives. High RH and temperature speed decay; low humidity can crack, peel, or curl photos.
- Reduce exposure to light and UV by rotating objects on display; avoid high UV sources.
- Avoid hanging important photos on a wall exposed to sunlight, as the light can fade or bleach these materials.
- Turn off lights in storage areas when not in use.

Audio, Video, and Data Recording Media

Includes grooved audio media, magnetic media, optical discs, and flash media

Equipment

- Preserving recording media involves more than simply keeping the media in good condition; it also requires preserving the equipment and technology used to read or play the media. Otherwise, this media (even if in good condition) is unreadable and unable to be accessed for its contents.

Storage and housing

- Store wax cylinders in their original containers.
- Store grooved discs in soft polyethylene sleeves and then in their original jackets with the cellophane wrap removed.
- Store reel or cassette magnetic tapes, ideally, in rigid and inert plastic cases.
- Paper jackets/boxes may be used for small and light reels or cassettes, if the jackets are in good condition. Keep in mind that paper will provide less protection than rigid plastic containers.
- Store CDs, DVDs and Blu-rays in regular-sized jewel cases.
- Store flash media in the plastic containers they came with (although not always available) and, where caps are present for USB flash drives, ensure that these are placed on the connection point of the flash media.
- Store recording media in a vertical orientation to limit distortion. This may lead to an increase in storage space required for a collection.
- Do not use adhesive labels on optical discs. Removing these adhesives can cause damage to the metal layer of the disc. Labels on tape cassettes should be minimized and placed only on the enclosure. Avoid labelling magnetic reels as much as possible.
- Avoid writing on optical discs, especially CDs, to prevent metal layer damage and possible delamination problems.

Use and handling

- Follow general handling recommendations; for example, handle media with lint-free gloves to avoid getting fingerprints on the media, do not drop or bend media, keep areas where the media is stored and used clean by avoiding activities such as eating and drinking in them.

- Do not play degraded media often, otherwise partial or complete loss of content may occur. If media looks damaged, send it to a professional service for conservation or digitization.
- Cleanse recording media prior to use (only if dirty or contaminated) by following proper cleaning procedures for the specific type of media.
- Keep clean all playing equipment that may require periodic cleaning, otherwise physical damage, such as scratching of media (except optical discs and flash media) or tearing of magnetic tape, can occur.

Environmental conditions

- Store media in their recommended storage containers when not in use. Avoid leaving media out in the open, exposed to light or sunlight for long periods of time. Short exposures will not be problematic.
- Not all recording media can be safely stored at lower temperatures, so identification of problem items and correct storage conditions are important. For example, most CDs can be stored at temperatures as low as -10°C, but the lower temperature limit for magnetic tape storage is 8°C.
- Store items in sealable polyethylene bags, which is a cheap and easy method to keep recording media at a reasonable RH.

Cultural Items and Belongings

Mainly covers materials made of plant matter, feathers, quills, leathers, skins, and furs

Storage and housing

- Provide enough space on shelving units for each object. Ensure that nothing will bump into or snag on elements that project out from the surface.
- You can provide outer support around objects, such as baskets. Outer supports can be made by cutting a recess for the basket into a block of polyethylene foam and lining it with thin foam, fabric or a non-woven sheet, such as Tyvek.
- You can provide inner padded supports for rounded objects, such as clothing and regalia.
- Building display and storage mounts will support the objects over the long term and guard against slow deformation.

- Fragile or delicate objects can be enclosed in archival boxes or plastic containers. Indicate the objects' accession numbers on the outside of the container.
- Provide boxes, trays, padding and securing nests or ties for fragile or vulnerable objects on storage shelves or in drawers.
- If cold storage is used (sometimes used to prevent infestations), ensure that all objects are enclosed in airtight bags or boxes.

Use and handling

- Follow proper handling procedures when holding or carrying objects. You can use handling and storage supports for fragile objects.

Environmental conditions

- Move plant materials away from sources of heat, such as heating vents and warm sources of light including windows and lighting. Keep plant materials away from windows. Keep lights off in storage areas when access is not needed.
- Prevent high relative humidity (RH) that can cause mould or lead to distortions. Avoid large and repeated RH fluctuations.
- Identify sensitive objects and limit light exposure and duration. All coloured quillwork and feathers other than natural browns (melanin) may be assumed to be in the high-sensitivity range.

Housekeeping and Pest management

General housekeeping and pest management practices can be applied to collections, including the following:

- Examine all incoming objects, building materials and packing cases.
- At the first sign of pests, remove and quarantine infested materials.
- Depending on the cultural sensitivity of the object, pest management intervention can be limited to visual inspection for signs of insect activity and, in some cases, freezing.
- Use dust covers, protective enclosures, storage boxes and furniture to keep collections dust-free.
- Conduct regular inspections of objects on display and in storage. Identify, examine and document the most vulnerable objects (i.e., objects containing fur, hair, quills and feathers) to provide a reference for their periodic inspection.
- Foodstuff and beverages in storage and display areas can attract pests.
- Avoid materials and finishes that are sources of pollutants.
- Implement an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) strategy to develop protocols and practices around mitigating risk and resolving issues regarding pests.
- If appropriate and depending on the object, some materials may be surface cleaned to remove dust and grime.

Disaster Planning, Prevention, and Security

Archives, including the materials in them, are susceptible to fire hazards, water damage from flooding, and other disaster-related incidents. In addition, materials in archives are susceptible to theft, vandalism, and other security risks. Preparing for these incidents ahead of time can mitigate potential harm done onto the people in the archives, the facilities, the surrounding environment, and the materials themselves. Some precautions to consider when preparing for these incidents include

- Installing heat and smoke detectors connected to a central system, as well as an automatic sprinkler system.
- Inspecting and maintaining the automatic sprinkler system, roof and plumbing.
- Install water monitors on the floor to detect any flooding or water accumulating on the floor.
- Placing fire extinguishers near exits.
- Identifying high-risk materials in your collections, whether this risk is due to their value, material type, or other reasons. Place these materials somewhere secure in the archives, where you can easily pick up these materials in the event of a fire, flood, or break-in.
- Keeping materials off the floor and away from water sources.
- Training staff in fire prevention techniques and implement a fire safety program in consultation with local authorities.
- Preparing a disaster plan, storing emergency supplies and establishing an emergency response for wet objects.
- Creating a security policy to cover access controls and building security procedures.

SECTION 4
DIGITIZATION

The Purpose of Digitization

Digitization is the process of converting analogue material of any form into a digital format. This process is completed by using electronic devices, which captures the material in a way that converts it to a digital format. These devices may include a scanner, digital camera, or audiocassette convertor.

Sound digitization procedures can provide numerous benefits to an archives, including but not limited to:

- Preserve materials through access to digital copies, especially if these materials are fragile or deteriorating, high in demand, and/or of high importance to your community.
- Increase the usability of material without damaging the original records.
- Ensure access to materials through digital management.
- Meet legal obligations, like copyright, privacy, and intellectual property

Many digitization initiatives are project-based, which allow archives to measure and allot the resources needed to complete the project in an effective way. Materials should be chosen for digitization through a careful selection process. The materials chosen for digitization should meet project objectives, not present any legal constraints, and have not previously been digitized to the archives' knowledge (i.e., no duplication of existing digital files). For more information and an in-depth look into project-based digitization planning, please consult Indigitization and their resources.

Important information to incorporate into a digitization project proposal or outline include:

- **Title:** Choose a descriptive title that captures the primary focus of your project.
- **Scope of the Work:** Defining the scope of the project (i.e., how many materials you plan on digitizing, the main activities needed to digitize materials) helps to determine how long the project will take, and how many staff members are needed to complete the project. The scope of the work should cover components like the hiring needs and timeline of the project.

- Hiring: Note that you may need to hire term staff to complete the digitization project. State the roles and responsibilities of these term staff you plan on hiring, as well as the length of time they will be hired for to complete project activities.
- Timeline: Often, digitization projects run between 4-12 months; determining the scope of the project will also help you determine how much work can be completed in this duration of time.
- Budget: Include a budget, especially if you're applying for funding. Clearly state which activities or resources require funding.

Preparing a Digitization Project

Determining a digitization policy

A digitization policy can help determine the scope of work and the requirements for digitizing materials. The Indigitization program provides robust guidance on the establishment of a digitization policy. Some elements to consider when creating your digitization policy include:

- Description of digitization activities, purpose, and scope.
- Description of digital objects, file types, and file formats for preservation and access.
- Description of metadata schema(s).
- Definition of essential characteristics of the original.
- Description of approach and quality levels for digitization. (From “Section A: Digitization Overview,” 2022, p. 3).

Indigitization’s [Digitization Policy Template](#) offers a general template for Indigenous communities to use when determining their own digitization policy.

Selection of Materials for Digitization

Selecting what materials need to be digitized is a key consideration to make before conducting digitization activities or projects. A few considerations to make when selecting these materials:

- The amount of materials that need to be digitized, including their physical formats.
- How these materials will be used, accessed, and maintained.
- Identify intellectual property rights, copyright, and community rights considerations.
- The funding, staffing, and technological resources needed to digitize your materials.
- The implications of preserving these materials in systems managing digital records, including risks associated with digitizing certain materials.

- The standards and formats required to digitize materials and document their digital files in a cost-effective way.

Taking a project-based approach can help break up the large number of materials that need to be digitized, especially if you have limited resources to digitize these materials. In addition, this approach allows you to select high-priority materials to be digitized first. A tiered priority list of materials to digitize can help organize this work, based on the resources needed to complete these projects. Audiovisual materials (e.g., cassettes, VHS, film photographs, and negatives) are fragile and typically deteriorate more quickly than other material formats. For this reason, these materials are usually prioritized over others to be digitized first. Ultimately, the materials that are high priority to digitize are determined by your organization, band council, and/or community, which can be outlined in your digitization policy if desired.

Resources for Digitization

While digitization projects can be beneficial to communities, they can also be costly. Some resources to consider when developing a digitization project:

Human Resources

Consider how many individuals are available to work on your project. Who is the project manager? Usually, the archivist acts as project manager. Would one individual be managing this project, or is it possible to take a teams-based approach? Term positions may be created to hire additional staff for digitization projects. In addition, consider the skill sets and areas of expertise that individuals may be bringing to this project. Areas of expertise that are beneficial for digitization projects include: project management; knowledge of the methods and technologies needed to convert analogue media to digital formats; cataloguing/metadata knowledge; familiarity with conservation methods; familiarity with community-specific protocols and practice; subject matter specialists; information technology skills, such as database development and computer programming; and administrative skills. When possible, collaborating with other organizations, communities, and external partners can help pool resources, as well as provide

support and guidance on certain aspects of the project. The First Peoples' Cultural Council's [Digitization Partner Guide](#) offers a guide for Indigenous organizations and communities who are looking to outsource their digitization to a third-party contractor.

Facilities

Consider what spaces are available in your organization or community to digitize materials. How large is this space? Is it located within the archives or records office, or in another location? Is this other location a good fit for digitizing materials (i.e., assessed for risks such as fires, floods, pests, or anything that can damage physical objects)? If you do not have the physical space to conduct your digitization project in your archives or community, you may be able to reach out to local archives, libraries, or universities with digitization labs to ask if you can use these spaces for your project. Depending on the institution, providing your own people to conduct your work at these labs may provide cheap or free access to these spaces.

Costs

The financial costs of digitization include both up-front costs, as well as costs towards long-term preservation of newly digitized materials. Up-front costs of a digitization project may include renting or purchasing new equipment, short-term staffing requirements, and any facility costs that cover the time needed to digitize materials. Like physical objects, digital materials need to be maintained through long-term digital preservation practices. It is necessary to allocate resources towards long-term staffing, staff training in managing digital collections and digital preservation, equipment repair and maintenance, and infrastructure to sustain access to the digital materials. In addition, you should prepare for the costs associated with updating technology used for digitizing materials and maintaining their digital files.

Applying for funding opportunities is one method of funding digitization projects. Some opportunities that may be useful include:

- [First Peoples' Cultural Council Grants](#)
- [BC History Digitization Program](#)
- [Library and Archives Canada's Documentary Heritage Communities Program](#)

Technical Considerations

The technical requirements of a digitization project are dependent on the formats of materials being digitized. These technical requirements are further discussed in [Preservation and Care by Material Type](#).

- Once technical requirements have been identified and bought, keep a spreadsheet of where equipment is stored in your facilities.
- Labelling equipment with what it is and instructions for use can help orient staff with the equipment.
- Aim to digitize materials according to current technical standards and conventions, to ensure these materials have been digitized to an appropriate level of quality. This process can help avoid re-digitizing and re-handling materials in the future.
- Ensure that original materials are maintained through preservation/conservation strategies, as digital copies are not a substitute for originals.
- Create and store a master file to produce lower quality access copies that serve a variety of current and future user needs; for example, the master file is in the tiff format and a lower quality file is in the jpeg format.
- Creating meaningful metadata for all digital files supports document discovery and access.
- Plan for eventual migration strategies for transferring records across generations of technologies, and plan for future technical developments.

Some guides to help determine technical requirements for various digitization-related projects:

- [Oral History Equipment Suggestions by NSW](#)
- [BASIC ORAL HISTORY RECORDING KIT: EQUIPMENT PURCHASING GUIDE by the Sustainable Heritage Network](#)

If viable given your resources, you may also want to contact an archivist to enquire further about digitization projects.

Standards by Material Type

General Rules

- Use consistent naming conventions and metadata standards to describe objects in your collection.
- Organize scanned files in your electronic folder structure in a way that best represents your collection hierarchy.
- Indicate that this material has been scanned on its Finding Aid.

Standards taken from [Indigitization's Digitization Best Practices and Guidelines](#)

Textual materials

	Preservation and Access Master	Print Access	Screen Access	Thumbnail
File format	TIFF and TXT or PDF/A with OCR	JPEG, PNG or PDF with OCR	JPEG, PNG or PDF with OCR	JPEG or PNG
Resolution	300 – 600 dpi	150 – 300 dpi	150 dpi	150 dpi
Bit depth	24 bit RGB colour or 8 bit grayscale	24 bit RGB colour or 8 bit grayscale	24 bit RGB colour or 8 bit grayscale	24 bit colour RGB or 8 bit grayscale
Dimensions	3000 – 6000 pixels across the long edge	3000 pixels across the long edge	800 pixels across the long edge	200 pixels across the long edge

Equipment: flatbed scanner for bound and unbound materials; image scanner for bound materials (if available).

Film, negatives, and slides, photography

	Preservation and Access Master	Print Access	Screen Access	Thumbnail
File format	TIFF	JPEG or PNG	JPEG or PNG	JPEG or PNG
Resolution	800 – 1200 dpi	150 – 300 dpi	150 dpi	150 dpi
Bit depth	24 bit RGB colour or 8 bit grayscale	24 bit RGB colour or 8 bit grayscale	24 bit RGB colour or 8 bit grayscale	24 bit RGB colour or 8 bit grayscale
Dimensions	4000 – 6000 pixels across the long edge	3000 pixels across the long edge	800 pixels across the long edge	200 pixels across the long edge

Equipment: Flatbed scanner or film and slide scanner.

Maps, plans, and other oversized materials

	Preservation and Access Master	Print Access	Screen Access	Thumbnail
File format	TIFF	JPEG or PNG	JPEG or PNG	JPEG or PNG
Resolution	Less than 36 inches on the long edge: 600 dpi Greater than 36 inches on the long edge: 300 – 400 dpi	Less than 36 inches on the long edge: 300 dpi Greater than 36 inches on the long edge: 150 dpi	150 dpi	150 dpi
Bit depth	24 bit RBG colour or 8 bit grayscale	24 bit RBG colour or 8 bit grayscale	24 bit RBG colour or 8 bit grayscale	24 bit RBG colour or 8 bit grayscale
Dimensions	6000 – 8000 pixels across the long edge	6000 pixels across the long edge	1078 pixels across the long edge	200 pixels across the long edge

Equipment: flatbed scanner for bound and unbound materials; image scanner for bound materials (if available).

Visual recordings

	Preservation and Access Master		Screen Access
File format	QuickTime .mov	File format	.mov, MP4
Codec	UYVY	Codec	QuickTime H.264
Bit depth	10 bit	Frame size width	640
Frame size width	720 pixels	Frame size height	360
Frame size height	576 pixels	Pixel aspect ratio	Square
Frame rate	25 frames per second	Frame rate	23.976
Frame type	Progressive	Field Output	Progressive
Frame aspect ratio	4:3	Pixel depth	24
Pixel aspect ratio	1:1	Spatial quality	75
Colour space	YCrCb	Min. Spatial quality	25
Chroma sub sampling	4:2:2	Key frame interval	30
Audio component	Uncompressed stereo audio	Temporal quality	50
Compressor	uncompressed PCM	Min. temporal quality	25
Bit depth	16bit / 24bit	Average data rate	1.331 Mbps
Sample rate	48KHz	Maximum data rate	1.331 Mbps

Equipment: VCR/DVD-R UNIT; VCR or S-VHS VCR, Time Base Corrector (TBC), External Capture Device, and Computer.

Audio recordings

	Preservation and Access Master	Screen Access
File Format	WAV, BWF or AIF (Apple)	MP3
Sample Rate	Spoken language: 44.1 kHz Music and ambient sounds: 96 kHz	44.1 kHz
Bit Depth	24 bit	16 bit
Comments	Highest recommended current quality, Standard for DVD/HD audio, Requires conversion to 16 bit and 44.1 kHz for most consumer audio devices	Lowest frequency range acceptable, Maximizes storage space, May not provide sufficient quality for future formats

Equipment: Audio Cassette Deck, Analog-to-Digital Conversion Unit, and Computer.
See [Sustainable Heritage Network](#) for further information.

Graphic Art

	Preservation and Access Master	Print Access	Screen Access	Thumbnail
File format	TIFF	JPEG or PNG	JPEG or PNG	JPEG or PNG
Resolution	600 - 800 dpi	150 – 600 dpi	150 dpi	150 dpi
Bit depth	24 bit RGB colour or 8 bit grayscale	24 bit RGB colour or 8 bit grayscale	24 bit RGB colour or 8 bit grayscale	24 bit RGB colour or 8 bit grayscale
Dimensions	6000 – 8000 pixels across the long edge	6000 pixels across the long edge	800 pixels across the long edge	200 pixels across the long edge
Compression	Uncompressed	Lossless compression	Lossless compression	Lossless compression

Equipment: Flatbed scanner or digital camera.

Naming Conventions for Digitized Materials

These standards are developed from CSTC Library and Archives' Digitization Lab Manual, Version 5.0 (June 2021), Appendix E: File Naming Conventions.

A digital object's name should be descriptive, but short enough so that the object is easily identifiable. Information that describes the physical object, as well as the context of its creation, should be represented in the digital object's name. A digital object's name contains **two or more** of the following elements:

- **UNIQUE IDENTIFIER OR ACCESSION NUMBER**; [e.g., 2022.1]
- **SUBJECT/TITLE**; [e.g., Project, initiative, program, or document title]
- **AUTHOR/CREATOR**; [Organization, department, society, community, body, or individual responsible for the document, event, or project]
- Last name and first names to be separated by commas and space (**Knudsen, Rachel_Resume.pdf, McRae, Grace_EvaluationForm_2020.pdf**) To reduce character length, the first name initial can be used (**Knudsen, R_Resume.pdf**)
- **DATE OF ORIGINAL**; [e.g., 2022-11-15]

The selection and ordering of these elements is based on how the file is most likely to be searched or retrieved in the future.

Other file naming elements should separate with underscores instead of spaces or dots whenever possible.

Words should be distinguished using Camel Case (**PGForestMeasuresTable, TechnicalSurvey, AnnualReport**)

Above all, be consistent. In the end, organizations can name documents however they like using these guidelines. But, they should ensure department staff have conventions, examples, and commonly used acronyms on hand.

Examples for Naming Conventions

Agreements, Contracts, Service Agreements: [UNIQUE IDENTIFIER]_[SUBJECT/TITLE]_[AUTHOR].FILETYPE

Audio Recordings: [UNIQUE IDENTIFIER]_[SUBJECT/TITLE]_[DATE OF ORIGINAL RECORDING].FILETYPE

Photographs: [UNIQUE IDENTIFIER]_[SUBJECT/TITLE]_[DATE OF ORIGINAL].FILETYPE



Photo ID: 2018-2-23-03_001, Provided by Carrier Sekani Tribal Council Library and Archives

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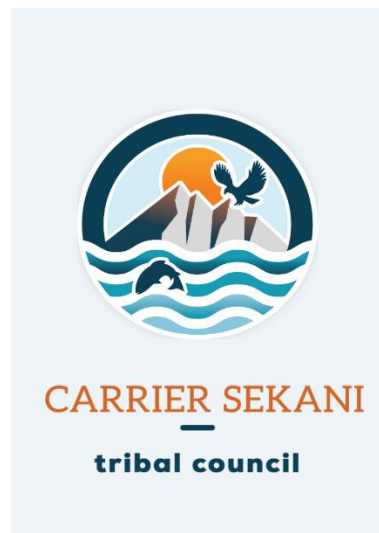
APPENDIX 1

**REPATRIATION
AGREEMENT
TEMPLATE**

For Administrative Use Only

Date of Request:

Reference number:



Repatriation Agreement

Requestor Contact Information

Requestor's Name: _____

on behalf of _____ (Community/Organization) if
not applicable, indicate as "Self"

Address: _____

City: _____

Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

Email: _____ Phone #: _____

The following agreement concerns the repatriation (digital and/or physical) of materials currently held in the custody of the Carrier Sekani Tribal Council's ("CSTC") Library and Archives to the originating Community/Organization or Individual as indicated above. By signing this form, the CSTC Archivist and the requestor verify that the repatriated files were created by, or have mutually been evaluated to be most relevant to, the requesting Community/Organization or individual. If specific records pertain to other Communities/Organizations/Individuals not included in this agreement, and those entities ask for a copy of the materials outlined here, the requestor agrees to negotiate access to the records and/or to create copies. In the event of multiple competing claims from different entities for the materials indicated in this document, all parties will submit their case to the CSTC Board of Directors for consideration and deliberation.

_____ Initial here to signify that the requestor has submitted and attached a copy of a Band Council Resolution (BCR) to indicate to CSTC that the requestor has the backing and authorization of their Chief and Council. If the requestor is not indicated as "Self" above, this document is not a valid contract without the addition of an accompanying BCR.

Specifically, this agreement outlines the transfer of rights and restrictions of the following records:

For each item, include a title and/or a short description (if content is not obvious from title) and item format (i.e. digital or physical). Attach additional page(s) if needed.

*Examples: 1. (Digital) – Interview_JohnSmith.mp3 – audio file of John Smith interview from 2001
2. (Physical) – Land Claims documents folder (1992-1994)*



Would the requestor and, if applicable, the Community/Organization they represent allow CSTC's Library and Archives to retain copies (physical or digital) for the purpose of preservation:

- No
- Yes (digital)
- Yes (physical)
- Yes, but with access conditions/restrictions as indicated below:

Please describe access conditions/restrictions (if necessary). Attach additional page(s) if needed.

Requestor Signature: _____ Date: _____

Name (please print): _____

Authorized by (signature): _____ Date: _____

Name (please print): _____ CSTC Job Title: _____