



# NWT ARCHIVES

## OPERATIONS MANUAL

# ARCHIVES DES TNO

## MANUEL DES OPÉRATIONS

*Culture and Heritage Division, Education Culture and Employment  
Division de la culture et du patrimoine, Éducation, Culture et Formation*  
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Government of  
Northwest Territories Gouvernement des  
Territoires du Nord-Ouest

# Contents

<b>1. INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>4</b>
Updating .....	4
Distribution .....	4
<b>2. OVERVIEW .....</b>	<b>5</b>
Mission .....	5
Vision Statement .....	5
Organizational Outline .....	5
Archives Collections Management .....	7
Resource Discovery (Access and Reformatting Services) .....	7
Summary of Archives Holdings .....	7
Clients, Stakeholders and Support .....	7
Governing Authorities for Operation: Access and Privacy .....	8
Facilities .....	8
<b>3. ARCHIVES ADMINISTRATION .....</b>	<b>9</b>
General .....	9
Planning .....	9
Human Resources .....	9
Financial Management .....	9
Facility Management .....	9
<b>4. ACQUISITION .....</b>	<b>10</b>
General Policy .....	10
Acquisition Process – General .....	10
Acquisition Process – Government Records .....	10
Appraisal of Government Records .....	10
Acquisition Process – Private Records .....	11
Appraisal of Private Records .....	11
Issuing of Tax receipts .....	12
Deposits .....	13
<b>5. RECORDS PROCESSING .....</b>	<b>15</b>
General Policy .....	15
Accessioning .....	15
Deaccessioning .....	15
<b>6. ARRANGEMENT AND DESCRIPTION .....</b>	<b>16</b>
General Policy .....	16
Arrangement and Description Process .....	16
Levels of Arrangement and Description .....	16
Finding Aids/Inventories .....	16
<b>7. PRESERVATION .....</b>	<b>17</b>
General Preservation Statement .....	17

Authorities and Related Documents .....	17
Preservation Management.....	17
Archival Functions and Preservation.....	18
Administration.....	18
Acquisition .....	18
Preservation .....	18
Access .....	18
Outreach.....	18
Hazard Identification .....	19
Environmental Control and Monitoring.....	19
<b>8. ARCHIVES ACCESS.....</b>	<b>20</b>
General Policy.....	20
Reference Area.....	20
Registration .....	20
Record Retrieval.....	20
Restricted Records .....	21
Legislated Access Restrictions.....	22
Conservation Restrictions .....	22
Donor Restrictions.....	23
Unprocessed Records.....	23
File Lists and Accession Files .....	23
<b>9. REFERENCE SERVICES.....</b>	<b>24</b>
General Policy.....	24
Reference Area.....	24
Inquiries .....	24
Onsite and Electronically Accessible Reference Resources .....	25
Client Computer Use .....	25
PWNHC Reference Library.....	25
Vital Statistics / Legal Registries.....	25
Certification .....	25
<b>10. ARCHIVAL RECORD REPRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>26</b>
General Policy.....	26
Reproduction Requests .....	26
Reproduction Conditions .....	26
Publication Use.....	26
Copyright .....	26
Photocopies and Digital Photography.....	27
Audiovisual Reproduction .....	27
<b>11. OUTREACH .....</b>	<b>28</b>
General Policy.....	28
Facility Tours.....	28
Exhibits .....	28
In-house Exhibits .....	28
External Exhibits .....	28

<b>12. PWNHC REFERENCE LIBRARY .....</b>	<b>29</b>
General Policy.....	29
Collection Description .....	29
Access .....	29
<b>13. WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY .....</b>	<b>29</b>
Health and Safety Responsibilities .....	29
Emergency Situations .....	30
<b>14. GLOSSARY OF TERMS.....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>15. REFERENCES .....</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>16. APPENDIX.....</b>	<b>34</b>

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

This manual contains operational policies and processes of the NWT Archives. It documents the rules and procedures that guide operations and the associated management of archival records holdings.

This manual is a reference guide for current and new employees as well as the public. It supports the importance of consistency, clarity and adherence to standards. It ensures that the activities of the Archives comply with governing authorities for operation, access and privacy. In the interest of transparency for a public body, it is an open document available to the public.

### **Updating**

This manual is a dynamic document that is reviewed annually and updated as required. Revisions are written in the same style as the original text to preserve uniformity of presentation and clarity of content.

Several types of changes can be expected: the revision of existing content, the addition of new information or subjects, and the deletion of obsolete information. Modifications to the manual may come from changes in legislation and/or Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) policies and procedures. Changes in the organization or responsibilities of staff may require that updates be made. Staff use of the manual will identify the need for expansion or removal of information.

The Territorial Archivist is responsible for the master copy of this manual and for coordinating its maintenance. The Archives management team is responsible for approving changes and assessing their urgency. The management team reviews the complete manual annually and produces a fresh master version. A copy of each former version is retained.

### **Distribution**

This manual is available to staff and the public on the NWT Archives' website: [www.nwtarchives.ca](http://www.nwtarchives.ca).

The management team advises staff of interim changes and updated annual versions.

## 2. OVERVIEW

The NWT Archives acquires, preserves and makes available for research, private and government records of enduring value relating to the history and culture of the Northwest Territories. It is the repository for records of permanent value of the GNWT.

The GNWT works to ensure that the NWT's rich heritage is valued and historic resources are preserved and accessible. The [Archives Act](#) provides the official mandate for the NWT Archives.

### **Mission**

The NWT Archives' mission is to acquire, preserve and make accessible records that document the history of the Northwest Territories. These archival functions are performed in accordance with professional codes of ethics and to national and international standards of the archives profession.

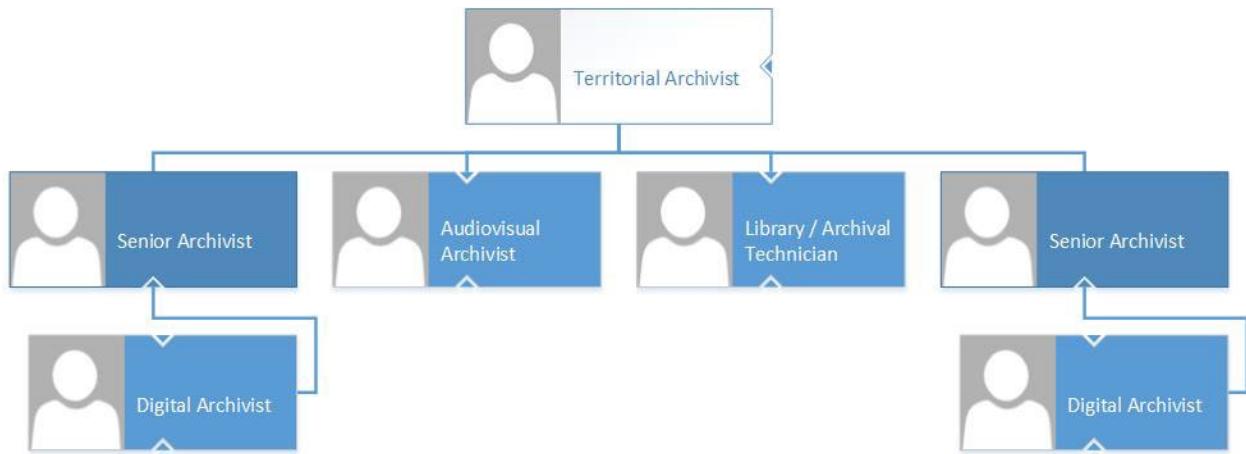
### **Vision Statement**

The NWT Archives is dedicated to preserving and sharing historical records to support culture, research, and the democratic rights of the people of the Northwest Territories.

- The NWT Archives is committed to supporting individuals as they access their personal and collective history, enabling them to move forward as fully realized citizens.
- Service is a cornerstone of the program. The NWT Archives is committed to providing exceptional service to our clients.
- Records in the care of the NWT Archives are witnesses to history. The NWT Archives is committed to protecting the integrity, reliability and trustworthiness of these records to provide access for current and future generations.
- The NWT Archives is committed to the continuing development of an archival community in the Northwest Territories.

### **Organizational Outline**

The Archives operates as a program of the Culture and Heritage Division within the Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE), and ultimately operates under the authority of the Minister of ECE. The Director of Culture and Heritage is responsible for all divisional programs including the NWT Archives and provides support and high level oversight; the Territorial Archivist reports to the Director. The Territorial Archivist oversees the stewardship of the Archives and is responsible for overall vision, leadership and direction concerning staff, archival holdings and programming. The Territorial Archivist is supported by two program areas: Collections Management and Resource Discovery. Additionally, support is provided by the Culture and Heritage Division's Conservation staff. These areas work collaboratively to fulfill the Archives' mission and administer its programs.



## **Archives Collections Management**

The Archives Collections Management program area acquires and preserves records in a manner consistent with professional archival principles and practices, and operates within the legislative, regulatory and policy framework of the GNWT. The Collections Management program area is responsible for obtaining and preserving archival holdings from both the GNWT and the private sector. The Senior Archivists work as a team to oversee collection management activities, and provide vision, leadership and direction to the Digital Archivists.

## **Resource Discovery (Access and Reformatting Services)**

The Resource Discovery program area provides reference and reformatting services to support the function of providing access to archival holdings. Resource Discovery maintains a balance between making records available, conducting essential preservation activities, and complying with federal and territorial legislation concerning access and privacy and donor restrictions. Front-line reference services are provided by the Archival/Library Technician. The Technical Services Coordinator oversees reformatting activities including the production of surrogate copies of archival records.

## **Summary of Archives Holdings**

The NWT Archives is the official repository for records created by the GNWT, its corporations, agencies, boards, and commissions. These records hold evidentiary and informational value for the institutions and citizens of the territory. They document decisions, policies, and actions of GNWT bodies. Records are primarily textual in nature, but may also include maps, plans, photographs, microform, and audiovisual and digital material, regardless of format.

The Archives may also acquire records of territorial significance from individuals, communities, businesses, non-governmental organizations, and other bodies. These records support the documentation of the NWT's past and present, including economic, religious, artistic, organizational, community, sport, and cultural life. Records types include correspondence, diaries, journals, and other written materials, such as maps and blueprints. Holdings also include photographs, audio recordings and audiovisual recordings.

## **Clients, Stakeholders and Support**

The Archives provides services to the GNWT and the public. Clients represent scholarly and general interests. Individuals, groups, and organizations that use the Archives include:

- academics
- archives and museums community
- businesses and organizations
- community and arts groups
- Indigenous governments and organizations
- GNWT departments

- historians
- legal organizations
- media

The NWT Archives supports and works with other organizations, including Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), Indigenous governments, and culture/heritage organizations operating in the NWT.

## **Governing Authorities for Operation: Access and Privacy**

The Archives operates according to the [Archives Act](#).

Under the provisions of the *Archives Act*, the Archives is responsible for the acquisition, description, preservation, and provision to all interested users the permanently valuable records of the Northwest Territories. The *Archives Act* identifies the Archives as the official repository for government records of enduring value.

The Archives has responsibilities under territorial and federal legislation as they relate to privacy, and information, including:

- [Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act](#)
- [Copyright Act \(Canada\)](#)

Access and privacy, as it pertains to GNWT records, are governed by the *ATIPP Act*. However, the Territorial Archivist, under the authority of the *Archives Act* and Northwest Territories Archives Policy 71.06 may impose access restrictions on non-government material as deemed appropriate or necessary.

## **Facilities**

The NWT Archives' public reading room is located in the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre (PWNHC) in Yellowknife. Records are kept at both the PWNHC and also off-site storage.

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Web: <http://www.nwtarchives.ca>

### **3. ARCHIVES ADMINISTRATION**

#### **General**

The NWT Archives operates as a unit within the Culture and Heritage Division of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment. The Director of Culture and Heritage is responsible for the overall administration of the Division, including the NWT Archives.

#### **Planning**

The NWT Archives contributes to the Culture and Heritage Division's corporate planning cycle. This includes providing information as a part of the division submission to the business plan, supporting the development of an annual operation plan, and the setting of priority initiatives and performance measures.

#### **Human Resources**

Human Resources functions and activities are coordinated by the Division of Human Resources. See [Department of Finance, Division of Human Resources website](#).

#### **Financial Management**

The Director of Culture and Heritage oversees divisional budgetary planning, coordination, and control, which is centrally managed by the Finance and Capital Planning division, ECE. All financial processes are undertaken in accordance with legal requirements and GNWT policies within the GNWT Financial Administration Manual. See [Department of Finance website](#).

#### **Facility Management**

The Director of the Culture and Heritage Division is responsible for managing the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre facility site. The Department of Infrastructure is responsible for the maintenance of the building and systems.

## 4. ACQUISITION

### General Policy

The NWT Archives' mission is to acquire, preserve and make accessible records that document the history of the Northwest Territories. The Archives assumes custody and control of these records through transfers, donations, bequeathment or purchase. The authority and responsibility for acquisitions is established and documented in the [Archives Act](#).

### Acquisition Process – General

Archival appraisal is the process of determining and assigning value(s) to records in an effort to determine whether material, in its entirety or in part, should be acquired and permanently preserved. Archivists carry out the appraisal process in adherence to established professional archival practices.

There are two phases to the appraisal process:

- **Appraisal for Acquisition.** This involves the assessment of records for their archival value to determine whether the body of material will be accepted into the Archives.
- **Appraisal for Selection.** This involves the assessment of material that has already gone through the aforementioned appraisal for acquisition phase and has been accepted into the Archives. It involves the selection from an entire body of records those items that are to be preserved and permanently retained.

Each incoming body of records is appraised for acquisition and/or selection based on Territorial Significance Criteria and Standard Appraisal Criteria. Each circumstance relies on the professional expertise of the Archivist. See the [NWT Archives Documentation Framework](#) for details.

### Acquisition Process – Government Records

The NWT Archives is the official repository for archival records of the GNWT, including departments, branches, offices, agencies, boards, commissions, corporations and other government bodies as designated in the [Archives Act](#), [Archives Regulations](#), and [Designation of Government Body Regulations](#). Government records are acquired in adherence to the government-wide records management program as established by the [Department of Infrastructure Establishment Policy 31.00](#), and the [Recorded Information Management Policy 6003.00.18](#). Accordingly, some records of the GNWT are transferred to the Archives after they have fulfilled operational requirements.

### Appraisal of Government Records

The Archives operates within the GNWT policy framework regarding the management of government records. See the [Department of Infrastructure Enterprise Information Management](#) website for further details. The Archives is a full participant in the Records

Disposition Authority (RDA) development and approval process as per the *Archives Act* and Regulations regarding the establishment of “plans” or records schedules. Records series deemed to have archival value are identified in an approved RDA. Appraisal of GNWT programs and records may be supplemented with additional analysis and appraisal reports. Records not selected for retention by the NWT Archives may be destroyed at the discretion of the program department.

NWT Archives staff evaluate records for their archival value and consider factors such as:

- the origins and/or organization of a public body
- the public body's structures, functions, policies, programs and activities
- the process by which laws, regulations and procedures governing the functions, programs and activities of the corporate body are administered
- the corporate body's business operations relating to:
  - the administration of legislated authority
  - internal and external administrative and operational relationships

NWT Archives staff identify records that:

- contain evidence or information required to protect civil, financial, legal and other rights of individuals, communities, institutions and the GNWT
- measure the impact or effectiveness of the corporate body's programs and activities
- significantly add to the information contained in other NWT Archives holdings

The Archivist may undertake an Appraisal for Selection if an item has the final disposition of “Archival Selection.”

## **Acquisition Process – Private Records**

The Archives acquires records from individuals, groups, organizations, corporate bodies, and other groups that are territorially recognized. The Archives obtains records through negotiation with the individual or body donating the records.

### **Appraisal of Private Records**

The Archives evaluates records for their archival value and considers a variety of factors, including Territorial Significance Criteria and Standard Appraisal Criteria.

The NWT Archives is a signatory to the “Statement of Guiding Principles for Identifying ‘Best-Fit’ Repositories for Private-Sector Archival Records”. This statement, developed by the National, Provincial and Territorial Archivists Council, is grounded upon the following eight principles:

- i. **Inclusivity:** All NPTAC institutions, regardless of size or geographic location, are encouraged to initiate and participate in discussions regarding ‘best-fit’ repositories for significant private-sector records of any scope or form.
- ii. **Respect for archival principles:** Decision-making will reflect adherence to the fundamental archival principles of provenance and *respect des fonds*, including the integrity of the fonds.

- iii. **Respect for regional importance:** Decision-making will recognize and give preference to the regional importance of the records under consideration. Retaining private-sector archival records according to territoriality--i.e., in an archival institution located within the region in which the records were created and accumulated, and where it is anticipated they will be most frequently used--acknowledges 'best-fit' and encourages 'best use.'
- iv. **Respect for donors:** Identifying a 'best-fit' repository for private-sector archival records will take into consideration, and if appropriate will defer to, the individual donor's wish to gift records in his, her or their legal possession to a specific institution.
- v. **Respect for partner institutions:** This includes respect for collection mandates, acquisition policies and existing collections of participating NPTAC institutions; acknowledges that 'best-fit' for private-sector records is normally within the federal, provincial or territorial jurisdiction in which the records were created; and recognizes that, while all NPTAC members are encouraged to participate and, if appropriate, to acquire the records under consideration, the level of support that each partner can provide is proportionate to their resources and capacity.
- vi. **Respect for external stakeholders:** Identifying potential repositories for private-sector records entails consideration of researcher needs, the existing external partnerships of institutions participating in the discussion, and the acquisition policies of other archives external to those represented by NPTAC members.
- vii. **Cooperation:** The acquisition of documentary heritage by any one archival institution in Canada contributes to the development of the nation's collection as a whole. Long-term preservation and access goals will outweigh individual ownership goals (i.e., competition) by NPTAC members in identifying potential repositories for archival material, and will warrant consideration of the interest of other members of the Canadian archival community in acquiring private sector records. Identifying 'best-fit' repositories for private archives will therefore result from open communication among Canadian archival institutions and associations, information sharing, and strategic alignment at all jurisdictional and regional levels.
- viii. **Accountability:** NPTAC members will endeavor to demonstrate consistency and transparency in their approach to collaborative acquisition.

For more information on the appraisal process, please refer to the [NWT Archives Documentation Framework](#).

## **Issuing of Tax receipts**

The NWT Archives does not, as a common or regular activity, participate in monetary appraisals. The NWT Archives acknowledges that conducting a thorough, responsible, and accurate monetary appraisal is time consuming and requires developing and maintaining expert knowledge of the market for archival records. The NWT Archives does not have the staff capacity to fulfill this role. The NWT Archives acknowledges that contracting for a professional

appraisal to conduct monetary appraisals may be a significant expense. The NWT Archives does not have the budget to absorb these costs.

The NWT Archives encourages potential donors to donate their records without the request for a tax receipt. The arrangement and description, security, and access that the NWT Archives provides amounts to a substantial contribution to the care of the records.

The NWT Archives recognizes that its inability to provide monetary appraisals may lead to donations being made to other institutions that do offer this service.

The inability of the NWT Archives to be involved in the issuing of tax receipts is discussed with potential donors seeking such service at the time of a possible donation to the NWT Archives.

## **Deposits**

The Deposit program at the NWT Archives has been discontinued, and the Archives is actively addressing outlying deposit agreements. The following program description details the conditions of exceptional circumstances.

When Deposit records are stored by the NWT Archives, and are in the custody of the NWT Archives, they remain the legal property of the depositor. Deposits are of a temporary nature and their contents are not catalogued or accessioned into the NWT Archives' holdings. Taking such possession is not an addition to the NWT Archives' own holdings as mandated by the *Archives Act*. Rather, it is a measure intended to provide short term storage assistance to an organization or institution, ideally as it develops and implements its own archival program.

The NWT Archives is a publicly funded institution intended to acquire, preserve, and make accessible records relevant to the history, cultures, and development of NWT. Storing records that are not NWT Archives property compromises the Archives ability to care for those collections it does manage, with the limited capacity and resources available.

The NWT Archives therefore does not enter into deposit agreements except in exceptional circumstances. Factors relevant to defining the circumstances in which a deposit agreement might be justified include:

- There is a clear and imminent threat to the records;
- The owner of the records has suffered a catastrophe that has impacted its physical infrastructure and thereby the ability of the owner to provide appropriate care for the records.

For those cases where the NWT Archives agrees to enter into a deposit agreement the following conditions will apply:

- The agreement will be documented and described on a standard deposit agreement form prepared by the NWT Archives;
- The deposit agreement will be for a fixed term, not to exceed five years;

- The deposit agreement will allow for cancellation by the NWT Archives with sufficient notice to the depositor;
- The depositor will inventory the contents of the deposit to the NWT Archives specifications;
- Records that are on deposit at the NWT Archives are not accessioned or catalogued by the NWT Archives. They do not form part of the NWT Archives' collections or holdings;
- Accruals will not be allowed to existing deposits; such accruals require reopening and renegotiating the existing deposit agreement;
- The NWT Archives will bear no responsibility for loss of or damage to the depositor's records;
- The NWT Archives will not provide standard reference services for the records;
- Records will only be available to the depositor during regularly scheduled the NWT Archives reference hours and with prior written notification;
- The NWT Archives will provide no conservation treatments or other specialized conservation actions for the records (apart from storage).

## 5. RECORDS PROCESSING

### **General Policy**

The NWT Archives strives to process records in a timely and consistent manner. It acknowledges and documents the acceptance of records into its custody and control. Staff physically re-house records using recognized practices, materials and containers that meet archival standards for permanent storage.

### **Accessioning**

Accessioning is the activity of acknowledging and documenting the acceptance of records into the formal archival holdings of the Archives.

- Accession Number. Records formally accepted into the archival holdings are assigned an accession number.
- Accession File. An Accession File is created and labeled with the accession number. The Accession File contains the completed accession report and associated documentation such as transmittal notices and file lists.

### **Deaccessioning**

Deaccessioning is the process of removing records from the care, custody and control of the Archives. Deaccessioning may only be initiated by the Territorial Archivist.

Disposal of archival material is governed by the [Collections Disposal policy 71.07](#) of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment.

## 6. ARRANGEMENT AND DESCRIPTION

### General Policy

The NWT Archives arranges and describes records, regardless of format or medium, using established archival principles and descriptive standards in accordance with national and international standards of the archives profession. This process is based on the principles of provenance and original order, and the Canadian [\*Rules for Archival Description \(RAD\)\*](#). These measures also support the goal of preservation by fostering intellectual and physical control of records, and facilitate access by providing mechanisms that allow researchers to find relevant holdings.

### Arrangement and Description Process

Archivists arrange and describe records by familiarizing themselves with the material. This involves:

- identifying biographical, administrative or historical information about the creator or source of the records
- identifying the reason, time frame, extent and purpose for which records were created
- describing the physical arrangement and characteristics of the material
- identifying relationships of records to other NWT Archives holdings

The Archivist uses *RAD* as the institutional standard for description at all levels of arrangement and follows the [NWT Archives Style Guide](#) in describing records.

### Levels of Arrangement and Description

In accordance with *RAD*, Archivists arrange and describe records using hierarchical levels of arrangement, as applicable. Intellectual arrangement precedes description. Intellectual arrangement and description typically start at the fonds level and proceed, as deemed appropriate, to more granular levels of description.

### Finding Aids/Inventories

Adherence to *RAD* and the arrangement and description process outlined above yield archival descriptions in formats that constitute descriptive finding aids. These finding aids can be in various formats, depending on their year of creation and resources available.

## 7. PRESERVATION

### General Preservation Statement

The NWT Archives' mission is to acquire, preserve and make accessible records that document the history of the Northwest Territories. The NWT Archives preserves records, regardless of format or medium, to extend the usable lifespan of the material.

The NWT Archives employs an integrated preservation management program using effective, cost-efficient and proactive means of preserving archival materials. The NWT Archives takes a combined approach of preventive measures and conservation treatments.

NWT Archives' staff carry out their duties in accordance with national and international standards and the [Association of Canadian Archivists \(ACA\) Archivist's Code of Ethics](#). Preservation activities, including conservation treatments, are carried out in accordance with the [Code of Ethics and Guidance for Practice of the Canadian Association for Conservation of Cultural Property \(CAC\)](#).

### Authorities and Related Documents

Documents which incorporate elements of the preservation function include the [Archives Act](#), the NWT Archives Operational Guidelines, NWT Archives Policies and Procedures, [NWT Archives Reading Room Guidelines](#), and the [Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre's Emergency Response Plan](#).

### Preservation Management

Preservation involves all of the measures taken to prevent or retard the deterioration of collections, thereby ensuring long-term accessibility. Preservation management is a comprehensive approach that integrates preservation into all functions and activities of the NWT Archives and makes it the responsibility of all staff. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Developing and evaluating policies and procedures to ensure the proper care and preservation of collections, and facilitate access to them;
- Maintaining ongoing assessments of facilities and collections;
- Allocating funds for projects which will extend the usable life as well as enhance accessibility of the collections held in the Archives;
- Providing safe storage environments for collections by monitoring, recording and maintaining standards for temperature, relative humidity, lighting, and air quality;
- Protecting collections from pests, poor handling, fire, flood, vandalism and theft;
- Using appropriate storage enclosures, containers, furniture and retrieval equipment;
- Carrying out a variety of preservation activities to retard the deterioration of, prevent damage to and prolong the useful life of the collection, including stabilization or repair; and,

- Participating in the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre's Emergency Response Plan and Integrated Pest Management Program.

## Archival Functions and Preservation

### Administration

The Territorial Archivist approves preservation and conservation treatment policies and procedures and allocates resources to support the ongoing preservation of the collections.

### Acquisition

Archivists work in partnership with the Culture and Heritage Division Conservator to ensure long-term preservation and access to archival collections. Archives staff are responsible for identifying preservation issues when working with records and for making these issues known to the Conservator.

### Preservation

Archives staff work with the Conservator to observe institutional preservation management policies, procedures and best practices, and for overseeing the integration of preservation into all operations.

The Conservator provides advice regarding preservation policies and activities and supports Archives staff in addressing preservation issues. The Conservator carries out and supervises conservation treatments.

### Access

Archives staff play a role in identifying items from the collections, library, and reading room that require conservation in order to remain useful as research tools. They are also responsible for ensuring that the materials requested in the reading room are returned to the storage area and stored appropriately.

Technical Services staff work in concert with Archives staff and the Conservator to ensure that appropriate procedures and standards are used when reformatting and maintaining digital surrogates.

Technical Services staff monitor equipment and technological changes that may impact the accessibility of vulnerable formats, and plan and undertake actions to maintain access.

### Outreach

Archives staff involved in developing exhibits work with the Conservator to ensure that objects on exhibit are displayed according to museum standards and use substitute facsimiles of original objects where necessary.

Archives staff also support the preservation outreach role of the Archives by making available to the public information about the institution and its practices.

## **Hazard Identification**

Archives staff identify threats that pose a risk to its records holdings, and inform the Conservator of these concerns. Potential hazards such as mould or pest contamination are detected and if material has been contaminated, it is isolated and treated accordingly.

The Archives recognizes the health and safety considerations associated with the handling of contaminated records and the provision of conservation treatments. Conservation treatments are only carried out by authorized staff. Equipment and materials are used in strict accordance with established use and handling standards. All handling of contaminated records, lab materials and equipment is undertaken under the direction of the Conservator.

## **Environmental Control and Monitoring**

Records are housed in designated vaults and storage areas as determined by Archivists and the Conservator. The vaults and storage areas provide customized environments for permanently storing and preserving materials, and environmental conditions are monitored.

## 8. ARCHIVES ACCESS

### General Policy

The NWT Archives adheres to the International Congress of Archives' [Code of Ethics](#) and [Principles of Access to Archives](#) as well as the [Association of Canadian Archivists' Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct](#). The NWT Archives offers client-focused public access to archival holdings. The NWT Archives believes in the importance of access as an element of archival practice. The International Congress of Archives' [Code of Ethics](#) declares:

*Principle 6.* Archivists should promote the widest possible access to archival materials and provide an impartial service to all users.

*Principle 7.* Archivists should respect both access and privacy, and act within the boundaries of relevant legislation.

Access is provided under the authority of the [Archives Act](#) and in accordance with parameters as dictated by applicable statutes, donor agreements and retrieval, privacy and preservation considerations. The Archives is the custodian of its holdings and ensures the safety and security of records through enforcement of document handling procedures and access conditions.

Access to some records may require researchers to enter into a Researcher Agreement (see Appendix) with the NWT Archives. The initial stage of these agreements is to provide a proposal to access personal information records. Upon approval, a researcher would then enter into an agreement which establishes responsibilities of researchers to adhere to a number of measures to safeguard and protect the personal information within the records. The intent of these measures is to keep in balance the archival principle of access against the privacy of individuals whose information may be within archival records.

### Reference Area

Records holdings are available for onsite consultation only.

Reference staff assists clients and provide them with information on access conditions and use of the reading room. For more information, please refer to the [NWT Archives Reading Room Guidelines](#) in the Appendix.

### Registration

In-person clients must complete a [Researcher Registration Form](#) (see Appendix) at the Reference Desk before undertaking research in the Reading Room.

### Record Retrieval

Original records are housed in secure storage vaults that are only accessible to Archives staff. Archives staff will bring the requested item(s) directly to the table/client.

To ensure that archival records are not damaged, lost or removed, staff and clients adhere to retrieval limits and document handling procedures. Exceptions and/or the imposition of additional conditions are at the discretion of Archives staff.

## Restricted Records

Archives staff are responsible for providing the appropriate access to records, including those subject to access and privacy legislation, acquisition agreements or conservation considerations. Overall, access to archival holdings is based on:

- statutory obligations
- the public's right to access records
- the protection of individual privacy
- respect for donor agreements
- the responsibility to preserve records

The Association of Canadian Archivists' Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct provides further clarification of the nuances and responsibilities of the Archivist's professional duty:

**"ACCESS:** We make records available to the widest possible audience in a manner consistent with their content, source, and the statutory obligations that govern the jurisdiction in which we work.

- a) We respect the privacy of the individuals who created or are the subjects of records, especially persons and communities who had no voice in the creation, transmission, disposition, or preservation of the records.
- b) In providing and managing access to records, we are sensitive to the evolving contexts of individuals (living or dead), organizations, or communities that are the subjects of the records, reconsidering access conditions as necessary in light of that sensitivity. [...] we document all such decisions.
- c) We respect the social, cultural, historical, and linguistic contexts of records for which we have responsibility. This might mean, for example, using Indigenous demonyms in describing and making accessible materials pertaining to Indigenous communities [...] or using terminology specific to marginalized or minority groups."

Furthermore, the NWT Archives acknowledges and adheres to the following statement within the ACA Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct:

**"[CONTEXT] d.** We recognize that discrimination, trauma or violence may be inherent in the circumstances of records creation and transmission, and that these considerations may have a bearing on how the records are described, preserved, and accessed."

Archives staff ensure that clients are aware of, and agree to, the terms and conditions of access.

The Territorial Archivist, through the authority of the *Archives Act* and the [Northwest Territories Archives Policy 71.06](#) may impose access limitations beyond any restrictions dictated

by *ATIPP* legislation or by donor imposed restrictions. These may be managed by Researcher Agreement forms as necessary.

## **Legislated Access Restrictions**

The principal statute that governs access to public information in the NWT Archives is the [Access to Information and Protection of Privacy \(ATIPP\) Act](#). The *ATIPP* Act ensures the public has access to public information held by the GNWT, while at the same time protecting personal privacy. This legislation affects territorial government departments, agencies, boards and commissions.

Records subject to the *ATIPP* Act are not disclosed without the proper authority. Options for releasing public records may include:

- severing of information protected under *ATIPP*;
- controlled access and use of records as stipulated by a [Proposal to Access Personal Information for Research or Statistical Purposes and Agreement for Access to Personal Information for Research or Statistical Purposes](#) (see Appendix);
- as directed by an appropriate authority.

Some records of public bodies do not pose great risk of a breach of privacy, such as government photograph collections that were created with the specific intention of being published. These records have been made publicly accessible under the principle of Routine Disclosure as described in the *Act*.

Some records of public bodies are found within private accessions at the NWT Archives. Access to these records is determined by the governance of the creating public body and/or the public body most recently responsible for the records. Public records in private holdings remain restricted if they contain information covered under mandatory exceptions to disclosure, including, but not limited to, an unreasonable invasion of privacy.

Furthermore, records subject to the federal [Privacy Act, Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act \(PIPEDA\)](#) or the Northwest Territories [Health Information Act \(HIA\)](#) may also exist within accessions at the NWT Archives. NWT Archives staff follow recommended actions as required.

## **Conservation Restrictions**

Conservation considerations may result in limited access to archival items and rare books. Records may be deemed by Archives staff and Conservators to be too fragile to be handled without causing damage. Items that are considered too fragile for routine handling are assessed by a Conservator and every effort is made to provide a duplicate.

## **Donor Restrictions**

Although records donated to the Archives by private individuals or non-government organizations are not subject to the *ATIPP Act*, such records may still have access restrictions. Access restrictions requested by the donor are negotiated between the donor and the Archives. Terms and conditions of access are recorded in corresponding accession documentation and archival descriptions.

## **Unprocessed Records**

Access to unprocessed records is limited and in most cases not permitted due to archival responsibilities to preserve the integrity of the records. In the case where a donor or researcher requests access to private records that have been received but not arranged or described, access may be permitted only through the permission of the Territorial Archivist.

## **File Lists and Accession Files**

Many file lists and inventories are available for researchers. When unavailable, reference staff may consult an Accession File. Accession Files contain operational records that may contain personal information. The Archives, therefore, does not allow clients to access an Accession File in its entirety.

Inventory or file lists may not be available for unprocessed records. In these cases, a rough file or box list may, at the discretion of the Archives staff, be provided to the client.

File lists for records subject to the *ATIPP Act* may be reviewed and severed by Archives staff for third party personal information before a public copy is available. This step may impose a time lag before a researcher can view the public copy.

## 9. REFERENCE SERVICES

### General Policy

The NWT Archives is a public facility that offers reference services to support the provision of public access to its holdings. Archives staff provide clients with assistance on the use and content of its holdings. Services are provided consistently, accurately and within prescribed timeframes. Clients are made to feel welcome and receive courteous and well-informed assistance.

### Reference Area

The Reading Room is the primary public access point to reference services and the PWNHC Reference Library.

During opening hours, a staff member is present at the reading room reference desk. Archives staff ensure that clients are familiar with:

- registration procedures
- reading room rules
- personal computer use
- reference services
- retrieval procedures
- reproduction services

For more information, please refer to the [NWT Archives Reading Room Guidelines](#) in the Appendix.

### Inquiries

Archives staff respond to client inquiries in person and through email, fax, regular mail and telephone. There are two primary principles for handling client inquiries:

1. Archives staff provide information to clients on the nature and scope of holdings, the research resources available, and the way materials may relate to an area of interest and research.
2. Archives staff assist and enable clients to conduct their own research.

To ensure all clients have adequate access to reference services, Archives staff:

- provide on-site reference assistance;
- provide research assistance to clients (limited to one hour per week to a maximum of 12 weeks);
- contact other Archives staff members when specialized assistance is required;

- routinely check and respond to email and telephone messages within 1 business day;
- advise clients on other options / sources.

## **Onsite and Electronically Accessible Reference Resources**

In addition to the support of Archives staff, the Archives supports access and use of its holdings through numerous onsite and electronically accessible resources, including:

- online catalogues
- inventories
- annotated guides
- finding aids
- topical common interest reference files
- Northern newspapers and periodicals

## **Client Computer Use**

Public computer terminals are available in the reading room. These terminals provide Internet access and enable users to search the Archives records and library holdings. The computers bookmark recommended resources and websites.

## **PWNHC Reference Library**

The Reference Library provides published materials that document and provide context for the history of NWT, its people and culture. Please see the PWNHC Reference Library section of this document for more information.

## **Vital Statistics / Legal Registries**

The NWT Archives does not hold Birth / Death / Marriage Certificates. Registries containing such genealogical data are such as birth, marriage and death registrations are managed by the [Vital Statistics Division of the Department of Health and Social Services.](#)

Legal registries such as Corporate registries, Personal Property registries and Land Title registries are maintained by the [Legal Registries Division of the Department of Justice.](#)

## **Certification**

The Archives can provide clients with certified copies of its archival records in accordance with Section 8 of the [Archives Act](#). Certified copies are typically used for legal purposes in lieu of the original record.

## 10. ARCHIVAL RECORD REPRODUCTION

### General Policy

The NWT Archives makes archival records available for reproduction. Reproductions are subject to copyright law, donor agreements, privacy legislation and restrictions. Permissions may be required. The Archives reserves the right to withhold any records from handling or reproduction owing to the fragile state of preservation of the record. Reproductions are provided for research or private purposes only, unless permission for publication or commercial use is obtained. Regulations and fees derive their authority from the [Archives Act Regulations](#).

### Reproduction Requests

Onsite, online, phone, fax, email or mail reproduction requests are received by the Library/Archival Technician. Clients may be required to identify the purpose for which copies will be used.

Archives staff ensure that necessary information is recorded, and if a client is requesting reproductions for purposes other than research and private study that the intent is clearly described. While it is the responsibility of the client to clearly indicate what is to be copied, Archives staff assist with proper identification of records and proper completion of the order.

The NWT Archives accepts payment via cheque, Interac, VISA or Mastercard.

When reproduction orders have been completed, Archives staff contact the client or forward copies as requested.

### Reproduction Conditions

#### Publication Use

The Archives may charge applicable reproduction fees for record reproduction for publication or commercial use, including posting on the Internet. The NWT Archives requests that the source of the material and its reference number always accompany any copy to ensure proper citation. All images and documents must be credited to their unique NWT Archives collection (e.g.: **Busse/NWT Archives/N-1979-052: 1234**).

Please see the [NWT Archives website](#) for current rates or consult Archives staff.

#### Copyright

In accordance with the [Copyright Act \(Canada\)](#) any copy of work provided by the Archives, for any purpose, may require authorization of the copyright owner. Generally, material reproduced for the purposes of research and private study is exempt. Reproduction of material for publication, public exhibition, broadcast or commercial use requires authorization of the copyright owner of the work in question. Said use does not absolve the recipient of

responsibility for ascertaining and respecting any copyright restrictions that may apply. The NWT Archives is in no way responsible for any copyright violations.

## **Photocopies and Digital Photography**

Photocopies of original records are handled by Archives staff. Archives staff will carry out photocopy orders as time permits. In special cases, after training and supervision by Archives staff, clients may be permitted to use the photocopier to capture reproductions of original records.

Clients are permitted to use digital photography to capture reproductions of the original record, subject to guidance from Archives staff.

Regardless of reproductive technique (photocopy or digital photograph), the NWT Archives must be properly credited in any use of its collections. (e.g.: **Busse/NWT Archives/N-1979-052: 1234**).

Clients are permitted to make their own copies from microfilm or microfiche using provided reader/printers.

## **Audiovisual Reproduction**

In cooperation with Archives staff, clients complete a public order for reproductions of archival records.

Audiovisual duplication is handled by Archives staff. Requests are processed in the order in which they are received. Processing time varies, depending on the original format, condition and size of material, as well as format of the copy. Orders require prepayment.

The Archives provides audiovisual reproductions of its holdings as follows:

- Photographs are delivered electronically. The standard format for an electronic image is JPEG, and the normal image size is suitable for an 8x10 or smaller print. We do not supply prints of photographs.
- Sound recordings are delivered electronically. The standard format for sound recordings is MP3. Sound recordings can also be provided on CD for an additional fee.
- Video recordings are produced on DVD or delivered electronically if possible. If the NWT Archives is required to outsource reformatting to fill an order, the client may be required to pay the service provider directly.

Fees and processing times vary. The Archives may impose conditions on the completion of orders. For more information on reproduction options, formats and charges, please see the [NWT Archives website](#) or consult Archives staff.

## **11. OUTREACH**

### **General Policy**

The NWT Archives undertakes outreach activities to increase client access to the Archives and reach new audiences. It showcases the content of its holdings and highlights the resources and services it offers. The Archives strives to enhance public understanding of the history of the Northwest Territories, and the documentary and educational importance of archival holdings. It supports the preservation of records in the hands of the public who seek to preserve their own history and records. Outreach activities occur with due consideration for the safety and security of the public and archival records.

### **Facility Tours**

The Archives provides tours of its facility and operations, upon request, to educational and public groups wishing to learn more about the Archives.

### **Exhibits**

#### **In-house Exhibits**

The Archives showcases and supports the content of its collections through physical and digital exhibits, to be installed or managed through the PWNHC. Exhibits including NWT Archives holdings may be initiated by the Archives or by other members of the Culture and Heritage Division working in collaboration.

#### **External Exhibits**

The Archives may develop exhibitions of archival materials to be circulated to other communities and facilities.

## **12. PWNHC REFERENCE LIBRARY**

### **General Policy**

The Culture and Heritage Division Library is known as the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre (PWNHC) Library or informally as the NWT Archives Library, and is managed as a function of the NWT Archives. The PWNHC library provides for the management and development of the collection of published materials significant to the human history of the Northwest Territories.

For more information, please also refer to the PWNHC Library Guidelines in the [PWNHC Operational Guidelines](#), as well as the [PWNHC Library Collection Management Guidelines](#).

### **Collection Description**

The PWNHC library has an interdisciplinary collection of materials with a primary focus on the following subject areas:

- Northwest Territories human history
- Northwest Territories culture and heritage
- Northwest Territories Indigenous languages
- Heritage resource management (Culture and Heritage Division staff reference material)

These published materials cover a variety of genres, including reference materials, scholarly works, popular works, and serial publications.

### **Access**

Service to the public is a function of the PWNHC Library, and the collection has been part of the [NWT Public Library Services online catalogue](#) since 2003. The collection can be searched online by selecting “PWNHC Reference Library” in the Library drop-down menu.

The Reference Library is accessible to registered users, but is a non-circulating resource due to the collection’s rarity and value. Culture and Heritage Division staff may borrow material upon completion of sign-out procedure. Materials borrowed by Culture and Heritage Division staff may not leave the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre and must be accessible at all times for the public consultation. Items in the library may be subject to additional restrictions and handling guidelines at the discretion of the Archives staff.

## **13. WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY**

### **Health and Safety Responsibilities**

It is the responsibility of Archives supervisors and staff to be knowledgeable about, and comply with, the specific health and safety procedures associated with hazard assessments and their

area of work. Health and safety concerns can be directed to the PWNHC Occupational Health and Safety Committee, a supervisor or manager. Work-related accidents, injuries, near misses and illness are directed to a supervisor. Appropriate reporting is completed by the supervisor and manager and forwarded in accordance with [Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission \(WSCC\)](#) requirements. Health and safety incidents are investigated and documented in accordance with the WSCC directives.

In addition to facility-wide measures, the Archives recognizes the health and safety considerations associated with the handling of contaminated archival records and the provision of conservation treatments. For more information, refer to the PWNHC Conservation program for current policies and best practices.

### **Emergency Situations**

The [Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre Emergency Response Plan \(ERP\)](#) is used for handling emergency and security situations.

The ERP includes internal and external emergency contacts for facility and security management. Staff keep a copy of the ERP accessible and are familiar with its contents.

## 14. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

List of archival terms commonly used at the NWT Archives.

**Accession File.** A file of operational records relating to an accession.

**Accession Number.** The sequential identifying number assigned to an accession.

**Accession Register.** An administrative and descriptive register of the scope and content of an accession.

**Appraisal for Acquisition.** The assessment of records for their archival value to determine whether the body of material will be accepted into the Archives.

**Appraisal for Selection.** The assessment of material that has gone through an appraisal for acquisition and has been accepted into the Archives. It involves the selection from an entire body of records that are to be permanently retained.

**Collection.** A collection is a grouping of documents of any provenance intentionally assembled on the basis of some common characteristic.

**Conservation Treatment.** Actions taken to treat and prevent further deterioration of a damaged and at risk record without adversely affecting its integrity.

**Deaccessioning.** The process of removing records from the care, custody and control of the Archives.

**Discrete Item.** A discrete item is an individual item that is without context and is not part of a fonds. A discrete item level description may be modified to become a fonds level description if the fonds to which it relates is acquired at a later date.

**File.** A file is both a level of description and an organized unit of documents, usually within a series brought together because they relate to the same subject, activity or transaction.

**File List.** A list of file titles and related identifiers.

**Finding Aids/Inventories.** The Archives' practices in producing finding aids and inventories has changed through its history. Adherence to *RAD* and the arrangement and description process yield archival descriptions in formats that constitute descriptive finding aids. During processing, entries are created for individual files and sometimes items. These file and item entries constitute the finding aid/inventory for that accession.

**Fonds.** A fonds consists of the whole of documents, regardless of form or medium, automatically and organically created and/or accumulated and used by a particular individual, family or corporate body in the course of that creator's activities or functions.

**Item.** An item is the lowest level of description and the smallest intellectual entity within a fonds that is useful for descriptive purposes.

**Preservation.** The professional discipline of protecting materials by minimizing chemical and physical deterioration and damage to minimize the loss of information and to extend the life of cultural property

**Preservation Management.** Archival program involving a systematic, planned approach to the stabilization and long term survival of the physical form and/or the information of archival records.

**Records Retention and Disposition Authority.** A schedule that describes the records under the control of a government department and specifies how long and where records are to be kept, the format in which they must be stored, and what the records' final disposition will be.

**Series.** A series consists of file units or records within a fonds arranged systematically or maintained as a unit because they are related to a particular function or subject, result from the same activity, have a particular form or because of some other relationship arising out of their creation or out of their receipt and use.

## 15. REFERENCES

[Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act \(R.S.N.W.T. 1994, c.20\)](#)  
[Agreement for Access to Personal Information for Research or Statistical Purposes \(see Appendix\)](#)  
[Archives Act \(R.S.N.W.T. 1988, c.A-6\)](#)  
[Archives Act Designation of Government Body Regulations](#)  
[Archives Act Regulations](#)  
[Association of Canadian Archivists \(ACA\) Archivist's Code of Ethics](#)  
[Code of Ethics and Guidance for Practice of the Canadian Association for Conservation of Cultural Property \(CAC\)](#)  
[Collections Disposal Policy 71.07](#)  
[Copyright Act \(Canada\) \(R.S.C., 1985, c.C-42\)](#)  
[GNWT Department of Finance website](#)  
[GNWT Department of Finance, Division of Human Resources website](#)  
[GNWT Department of Health and Social Services, Vital Statistics Division website](#)  
[GNWT Department of Infrastructure Corporate Information Management website](#)  
[GNWT Department of Justice, Legal Registries Division website](#)  
[GNWT Department of Infrastructure, Enterprise Information Management Division website](#)  
[International Congress of Archives' Code of Ethics](#)  
[International Congress of Archives' Principles of Access to Archives](#)  
[NWT Archives Documentation Framework](#)  
[NWT Archives Reading Room Guidelines \(see Appendix\)](#)  
[NWT Archives Researcher Registration Form \(see Appendix\)](#)  
[NWT Archives Style Guide](#)  
[NWT Archives website](#)  
[NWT Public Library Services online catalogue](#)  
[Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre Emergency Response Plan](#)  
[Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre Integrated Pest Management Program](#)  
[Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre Operational Guidelines](#)  
[Proposal to Access Personal Information for Research or Statistical Purposes \(see Appendix\)](#)  
[Department of Infrastructure Establishment Policy 31.00, Recorded Information Management Policy 6003.00.18](#)  
[Rules for Archival Description \(RAD\)](#)  
[Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission \(WSCC\) website](#)

For unlinked references or documents not available online, please contact the NWT Archives.

## 16. APPENDIX

- NWT Archives Reading Room Guidelines
- NWT Archives Researcher Registration Form
- Proposal to Access Personal Information for Research or Statistical Purposes
- Agreement for Access to Personal Information for Research or Statistical Purposes
- Proposal to Access Personal Information in Private Records for Research or Statistical Purposes
- Agreement for Access to Personal Information in Private Records for Research or Statistical Purposes