

Section 2.2

Records Management

Records Management is an integral component to a municipality's operation.

In section 34 of the *Municipal Government Act*, there is a provision for council to adopt a policy regarding the management and destruction of records. As municipalities increase in size and the complexity of services they provide increases, a proper records management system becomes an integral part of the municipal operation. Quite simply, a municipality's ability to effectively conduct business may be compromised without: a systematic approach to the cataloguing, filing and retrieval of files; the protection of files from premature destruction; the safe and secure storage of files; and a system for the destruction of files once their value ceases.

Generally there are a variety of reasons for the implementation of a records management program, including:

Why Records Management is important.

- **Administrative Value:** Records serve the municipality as the “official memory” of past decisions and the factors considered to reach a decision. They have value to the municipality if they assist in the performance of current or future activities.
- **Legal Value:** Some documents are required by legislation, for example by-laws, policies, minutes of meetings, land transactions, and development agreements. The value of these types of documents usually does not diminish over a period of time
- **Fiscal Value:** Some records relate to financial transactions, such as financial ledgers, debenture records, audit files, budget files, expenditure files, taxes etc.
- **Research/Historical Value:** Records which contain information on persons, places and events as they relate to major milestones and history and development of the municipality and its citizens. These documents provide information on how a municipality made decisions and provide the background to making future informed decisions on any municipal matter.

- **Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIPOP):** Part XX of the *Municipal Government Act*, requires that certain municipal information be available within 30 days of a request. Therefore, there must be a system in place to be able to locate these files in the allotted time.

Therefore a Records Management system has become more of a necessity for a municipality rather than a luxury.

AMA Records Management Manual

In 1997, the Association of Municipal Administrators produced the *Records Management Manual*, which combines a standard classification system and records retention and disposal schedule for municipal records. This 669 page manual provides a standard for the identification and management of administrative and operational records regardless of the physical storage format, including executive and legislative records. Accordingly, any municipality considering a records management system should review the *AMA Records Management Manual*.

Introduction to Records Management

This review on records management should be considered as an adjunct to the AMA manual, and provides:

- A. a review of the MGA provisions on records management;
- B. a step by step approach to records management;
- C. a model policy for records management; and
- D. a reprint of the *AMA Records & Information Guide*, which provides guidance on how to implement the *Records Management Manual*.

Schools in Library studies.

A number of municipalities have hired students and graduates from recognized schools in library studies to assist them in the planning and implementation of a records management program. The following provides a listing of the schools in Nova Scotia and contacts for recent graduates or summer students.

Nova Scotia Community College
Library Technician Program
Marlene Mortimore
Phone: 902-491-4660
E-mail: mortimmj@nsccl.ns.ca
College
Web site: <http://www.nsccl.ns.ca>

Mount Saint Vincent University
Co-operative Education Program
Bachelor of Applied Arts - Information Technology
Sonya Horsburgh
Phone: 902-457-6429
E-mail: sonya.horsburgh@msvu.ca
University
Web site: <http://www.msvu.ca/coop/index.htm>

Dalhousie University
School of Library and Information Studies
Judy Dunn, Graduate Co-ordinator
Phone: 902-494-2471
E-mail: dunn@is.dal.ca
University
Web site: <http://www.mgmt.dal.ca/slis/>

Part A

Municipal Government Act

Section 34 of the MGA states:

**MGA Provision on
Records
Management**

- 34 (1) *The council may adopt a policy for the management and destruction of records.*
- (2) *Records that are required by an enactment to be kept and minutes, by-laws, policies and resolutions of the council shall not be destroyed.*
- (3) *The council may, by policy, specify further classes of records that are not to be destroyed or that are to be kept for specified time periods.*
- (4) *Where*
- (a) *a municipal record is destroyed; or*
 - (b) *an original municipal record is not produced in court, and*
 - (c) *the clerk certifies that a reproduction is part of the records of the municipality and is a true reproduction of the original municipal record,*
- a photographic, photostatic or electronic reproduction of the record is admissible in evidence to the same extent as the original municipal record and is, in the absence of proof to the contrary, proof of the record.*

This provision in the MGA enables councils to adopt the necessary policy for records management and the destruction of records once their value ceases. It also prevents certain records from being destroyed (34(2)) as does 483(4) of the MGA:

483(4) Where a municipality uses an individual's personal information to make a decision that directly affects the individual, the municipality shall retain that information for at least one year after using it so the individual has a reasonable opportunity to access it.

Part B

Step-By-Step Approach to Records Management

If a municipality wishes to proceed with implementing a records management system, the following provides the eight steps to implementing a records management program in a municipal unit.

Step 1

Develop Records Management Plan and Policy

- ◆ Develop a plan, determine goals, and set objectives for the establishment of a records management program
- ◆ Use sample policy provided
- ◆ Policy helps ensure senior management support (seek council approval)

Step 2

Establish Authority and Responsibility

- ◆ Seek approval to establish program
- ◆ Determine legislative, legal, and policy requirements (regarding record retention)
- ◆ Announce the establishment of the program

Step 3

Conduct a Records Inventory

- ◆ Use provided sample form or something similar that will work for your municipal unit (there is also a sample form in the *AMA Records Management Manual* on page 459)
- ◆ Collect all forms together for Records Management Designate to then determine records series, record values, and recommended retention

Step 4

Develop a Classification System and Retention Schedule

the steps for developing a classification system and retention schedule are listed below, but the *AMA Records Management Manual* already provides this for municipal unit use — you may want to establish a committee or working group to ensure that retentions meet your municipal unit's needs

- ◆ Establish a committee/work group to develop classification system and retention schedule
- ◆ Consider record values (transitory, administrative, operational, legal, audit/fiscal/ historical/archival, long-term operational needs, etc...) and when to determine retention periods
- ◆ Ensure compliance with legislation (Municipal Government Act - Part XX, Revenue Canada Act, etc.), and municipal unit policies
- ◆ Submit schedule for approval

Step 5

Ensure Efficient Information Retrieval

- ◆ Determine best arrangement for records in each location or area
- ◆ Create electronic file lists
- ◆ Develop an indexing system

Step 6

Implement file Controls

(there are file arrangement guidelines on pages 469 to 494 of the *AMA Records Management Manual*)

- ◆ Cross reference related files to one another
- ◆ Use file charge out cards/guides

Step 7

- ◆ Establish a file tracking system
- ◆ Split large files into volumes
- ◆ Keep track of what is destroyed and when it was destroyed and what authority

Commence Records Disposition

- ◆ Ensure authority for disposal by using a disposal authorization form, and attaining sign-off from appropriate municipal unit officials (sample form on page 589 of the *AMA Records Management Manual*)
- ◆ Follow retention schedule and destroy only when retention period expires
- ◆ Provide for permanent preservation of historical, archival, or long-term records

Step 8

Future Program Goals

- ◆ Establish records disposal and other companion guidelines, procedures, and instruction to complete the program
- ◆ Ongoing training of staff
- ◆ Promote and communicate the program
- ◆ Determine essential/vital records and develop a disaster recovery plan
- ◆ Update procedures, policies, schedule as required

Records Inventory Form

Record Type

File or System Name:

Accountable Staff:

Department/Office:

Specific Location:

**Copy in Another Location
(Yes/No):**

Administrative or Operational:

Record Value:

Recommended Retention Period:

**Related Legislation or Policy:
(If known)**

Medium/Formats(s):

Date Range:

Physical Condition:

Ease of Accessibility:

Estimated Volume:

**Personal Information:
(If known)**

Security in Place:

Security Required:

Inventoried By:

Date Inventoried:

Part C

DRAFT RECORDS MANAGEMENT POLICY FOR MUNICIPAL UNITS

The following draft policy may be adopted as provided, or it can provide a starting point for a municipality to craft a records management policy which best suits their needs.

Policy should include a **SCOPE** note:

1. **SCOPE**

- 1.1 This policy is applicable throughout the municipal unit, including all departments in the municipal unit falling under the authority of the (Municipal Clerk/CAO), and throughout all of the municipal unit’s agencies, boards and commissions.

Policy should include a **PURPOSE** statement:

2. **PURPOSE**

- 2.1 To establish effective management control and administration over the receipt, creation, use, maintenance, storage, and ultimate disposition of all information, regardless of format, and to do so in a flexible manner that is user-friendly and tailored to meet user needs.
- 2.2 To support compliance with the *Municipal Government Act, Part XX Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy* and the *Revenue Canada Act*, and any other relevant legislation.
- 2.3 To designate responsibilities and accountability for the management of municipal information, regardless of format.

Which municipal departments are affected by this policy?

Management and Control of records

FOIPOP

Responsibilities and Accountability

Policy should include a **POLICY STATEMENT**:

**AMA Records
Management Manual**

3. POLICY STATEMENT

3.1 It is the policy of the municipal unit to create, classify, maintain, access, retrieve, store, destroy, and preserve information resources throughout their life cycle according to the standards and procedures prescribed under the Association of Municipal Administrators Records Management Manual.

Purpose of policy

3.2 It is the policy of the municipal unit to manage information resources as a valuable asset for the following purposes:

3.2.1 supporting effective decision making;

3.2.2 meeting operational requirements;

3.2.3 ensuring the widest possible use of information resources within the municipal unit;

3.2.4 protecting the legal, financial, and other interests of the municipal unit, and the public; and

3.2.5 restricting access according to the *Nova Scotia Municipal Government Act, Part XX Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy*, and other relevant policies and legislation.

**Identify and Preserve
Information**

3.3 It is the policy of the municipal unit to identify and preserve information resources that serve to reconstruct the evolution of policy and program decisions or that have archival value. It is also the policy of the municipal unit to ensure that such information is organized in a manner to be readily available for the study of decision making in the municipal unit and for other research purposes which help explain the historical role of the municipal unit.

**Current and Future
Information
Technology**

3.4 It is the policy of the municipal unit to ensure that records management functions are incorporated into existing and future information technology applications.

FOIPOP

3.5 To facilitate an efficient records management and retrieval system, it is the policy of the municipality to eliminate the unnecessary collection of information by maintaining only records which are pertinent to the operational requirements of the municipality, coordinating information collection to avoid duplication, and to ensure that the collection of personal information is in accordance with the *Nova Scotia Municipal Government Act, Part XX, Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy*.

3.6 It is the policy of the municipal unit to ensure that all information resources, regardless of format, are subject to timely public access according to the provisions and limitations of the *Nova Scotia Municipal Government Act, Part XX, Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy*.

4. ADOPTION OF CLASSIFICATION AND RETENTION SCHEDULE

Approved System

4.1 The municipal unit in accordance with the *Nova Scotia Municipal Government Act* adopts the Association of Municipal Administrators Records Management Manual as its approved classification system and records retention schedule.

5. DESTRUCTION OF RECORDS

Minutes, By-laws, Policies and Resolutions

5.1 The Municipal Unit will not destroy minutes, by-laws, policies and resolutions of council in accordance with Section 34 of the *Nova Scotia Municipal Government Act*.

Records Management



Part D

AMA Records & Information Guide

The **AMA Records Management Manual** was developed in 1997. It is a 669 page manual providing the details necessary to implement a standard classification and records management system across Nova Scotia. A copy of this manual was distributed to all municipal units. If additional copies are required, please contact:

Association of Municipal Administrators
Suite 1106, 1809 Barrington Street
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 3K8

Tel: (902) 423-2215
Fax: (902) 425-5592
E-mail: amans@istar.ca

*The following guide was produced by the 1997 Records Management Committee as an introduction to records management and how to implement the **AMA Records Management Manual**. The contents of this report are still relevant and are provided in its entirety.*

**Association of Municipal Administrators
Nova Scotia**

**Records and Information Management Guide
for Nova Scotia Municipal Units**

(Note: The following document was prepared by the AMA Records Management Committee in 1997 and it been reprinted by permission from the Association of Municipal Administrators, Nova Scotia)

Introduction

The AMA Records Management Committee was established to give municipal officers direction and assistance in the management of records. Its terms of reference were to establish:

- guidelines for records management

- a standard records classification system for municipal unit records
- a records retention and disposition schedule for municipal unit records

The AMA members have access to the Records Management Manual which combines a standard records classification system and a records retention and disposition schedule for municipal unit records. The RM manual is a standard for the identification and management of administrative and operational records regardless of physical storage format, including executive and legislative records.

Training sessions for the introduction of the basic concepts of a records management program and to the RM manual have been offered to the municipal units of Nova Scotia.

At this point municipal units are asking questions about the practical steps to implement an effective records management program. The task to identify, classify, organize, and maintain information holdings through its disposition is not simple and should not be underestimated.

The following information is intended as a practical guide to assist municipal units to have an understanding of the various aspects of the implementation of a sound records management program.

It is important to understand that a records management program is more than a filing project. A project has a specific start and finish date with a short-term achievable goal. A records management program is a process which must contain a plan of action describing various phases of development and implementation, includes a number of projects, and is ongoing as long as the municipal unit actively fulfills its mandate.

A records management program ensures the care and preservation of important records and the destruction of unnecessary records. It is the systematic control of records from creation to final disposition. This systematic approach to the control of all phases of a record's life is essential if a municipal unit is to:

- reduce paperwork proliferation
- have access to requested information

- dispose of obsolete records
- provide documentation of compliance with municipal, provincial and federal regulations, and
- maintain archival records

Inadequate records management may lead to obsolete records being retained which would create an unnecessary and costly storage burden.

Many municipal units with no records management are forced to move older records from crowded offices into storage in attics, basements, and storage rooms where no list of records is kept and, after a while, no one knows what records are there. In addition, extreme fluctuations in temperature and humidity and dust may break down the records stored in these storage areas.

In essence, poor records management results in a loss to tax payers and loss of the corporate memory of the municipal unit.

Records and Information Management (RIM) Guide

How to begin a records management program?

Municipal units without a records management (RM) program face space shortages, loss of information and inability to retrieve documents. When the decision to establish a RM program is made, it is important to identify records management priorities and to determine which elements of a program to undertake first.

This guide lists important elements to be considered when developing a records management program which will utilize the RM manual developed by AMA.

Records Manager and Support Staff

Identification of a records management coordinator or records manager to take responsibility to plan and lead the program. Adequate support staff provides assistance to all municipal unit staff in the various facets of a comprehensive program.

Users Group

AMA has already established a forum for network for its members with specific activities which are important to use as a means for discussion and exchange of experiences related to records management:

- AMA conference (organized twice a year)
- a published newsletter
- regional meetings

It is recommended that each municipal unit establish an internal communication strategy with identified assignment of responsibilities. Each municipal unit is unique and shares a set of common issues and routine administrative tasks. The records management program should establish a management network with the participation of:

- a legal advisor
- a senior financial officer
- the municipal / town clerk

Development of Records Management Policy

The RM policy should be easy to read and include information about the scope of the records management program. It should be established by bylaw or administrative order and be communicated to the office managers and employees. The policy is not a static document and should be reviewed at least every two years.

- approved policy reinforces the principle that the records management program applies to all types of records regardless of form
- policy is a complement to the RM manual and documents the decision to adopt the use of the RM manual as a records classification system and as a retention schedule

- the policy should focus on:
 - identification of relevant main groups and primaries
 - grouping information into categories by function and office
 - classifying information from the general to the specific
 - assigning accountability for records custodians and office of primary responsibility (OPR)
 - if the system will be centralized or decentralized or a combination of both
 - including the control of:
 - e-mail
 - correspondence tracking
 - reports management
 - forms management
 - filing system
 - access and privacy considerations
 - essential / vital records
 - disaster and recovery plan

Records Management Plan

Municipal units without an existing RM program will have a variety of records management issues to resolve and a plan is needed to determine the municipal unit’s information priorities. Continuous monitoring and maintenance of all phases will ensure that the right information is provided to the right individual at the right time in the right format at the lowest possible cost. The RM plan should list:

- phases of program implementation;
- give time frame and dates expected for completion of tasks including the time expected to develop and approve the RM policy;

- describe ongoing activities and progress to-date;
- pilot project;
- training;
- network;
- specific projects (like clean up of 'fat' files);
- strategy for conversion from the old system into the new system

Legislative and Legal Requirements

Acts, regulations, and bylaws make reference to primary functions of the programs and services they establish and sometimes describe specific requirements. It is important to review any legal and legislative requirements with the municipal unit's solicitor, financial officer and municipal / town clerk at the time of:

- drafting the RM policy;
- planning for the implementation;
- customizing the classification and retention / disposition plans for the municipal unit.

Use of the RM Manual

The RM manual was developed as a tool for any type or size of municipal unit. With the broad perspective in mind when reviewing the descriptions of administrative and operational functions, it might be necessary to add records series which are absent from the manual.

- The RM manual is intended as a standard template covering records description and classification from the general to the specific.
- It is recommended that each municipal unit focus on

relevant main groups and primaries needed as opposed to making the entire manual available to everyone.

- The size of the manual may intimidate some of the users who only need specific primaries.
- It is recommended to try to group the municipal unit's functions and offices into categories first and then review the main groups which describe those categories.
- Users who only deal with a specific group of records might only receive a copy of the main groups which are directly related to their specific office. However, they should understand that different functions would also be described in the manual as a whole. This is primarily important with workers that do not have a good understanding of the classification system and are not interested in the complete picture.
- The system should be used with flexibility.

Pilot Project

Before implementing any new system, a pilot project is always recommended. A RM program is no exception and a small office should be chosen for a pilot project of the new records system. The pilot would be used to fully learn the implications, test the planned strategy, write a report of results before full implementation is carried to the rest of the municipal unit.

The choosing of the office for a pilot is very important. Some factors to look for are:

- willingness of staff involved in carrying out the task;
- agreement to test a new system and a full understanding of the implications of that;
- commitment from management and support from staff;
- an office of influence in decision making is preferred;

- commitment to the program implementation as a whole as the pilot will be first to carry on;
- willingness to provide feedback and support for the entire program;
- whether the office has an existing inventory of their files (if a willing office has a file list under the present system this would reduce the time for the inventory and allow a quicker review of the present system)

A review of the present system in the municipal unit as a whole is recommended. This would give an idea of:

- how many offices there are;
- whether all the offices follow one common system;
- whether each office or staff have their own system;
- whether the present system is centralized or decentralized;
- good/ positive points of the present system which should be maintained;
- problem areas which need review need to be analysed in detail;
- whether the office has a manual system or an electronic system or a combination of both;
- whether there is microfilming being done;
- what is the quality of the film and what information does it cover;
- whether there are records stored offsite, in an organized manner or just piles of boxes

A plan should be developed for the pilot project containing:

- the starting date of the pilot;
- the time for the pilot to take place;
- the office or division which the pilot should cover and the records or information to be covered;
- who is involved directly and indirectly at what phase of the pilot;
- how can the old system (or no system) be converted into the new system;
- electronic information if used in the office;
- all the software packages available to staff for the day-to-day activities;
- a list of procedures being used in the office;
- whether a new set of procedures (or updates to the old one) shall be developed during the pilot;
- who will be responsible for the procedures, and other aspects of the pilot project

Staff meetings

All staff of the municipal unit should be briefed on how the RM program is planned and how it will be implemented, including general information about how the pilot project fits the whole activity. If staff is not involved at the early stages of the program, many problems occur as a result -- some feel threatened, intimidated, skeptical of their job security, that they will be given increased workload, etc. Good communication is fundamental for the full implementation success at all times, within the municipal unit as well as, within the smaller pilot areas involved.

Updates

A bulletin might be issued at regular intervals updating the staff of the plan, how it has been followed, etc. Training in-house should be coordinated with the pilot office/s.

Training

A coordinated approach to training is recommended. The staff directly involved in the pilot and with hands-on in the implementation process should receive introductory training session about the new system and be trained on delivering and supporting internal subsequent sessions, tailored to the environment of the municipal unit.

There is a need to provide different types of training:

- introductory sessions with overview of the new system;
- training on the hands-on aspects of the new system (a new filing system;
- how to classify records;
- a new software that needs to be learned;
- how to write procedures;
- review and reinforcement training;
- updating sessions;
- ongoing support training sessions;
- review sessions;
- customization to each type of environment but also at several levels of need depending on the level of involvement of staff.

Other aspects to be considered about training include:

- who is delivering the initial sessions;

- who will be responsible to review and update the text and exercises delivered;
- how much money is available for training;
- location factor;
- supplies needed;
- evaluation of training

Conversion of old system (or no system) into new system

Conversion requires careful planning:

- which areas will implement;
- will it be phased as opposed to changing everything at once and its implications should be analysed. It is recommended to move from office to office in a phased approach;
- establish phases and evaluation at the completion of every phase with recommendations before proceeding;
- learn the system by using it for new information as it is created (e.g. starting in the new calendar year or fiscal year every record created or received by the office will be classified and filed in the new system);
- old records/files should be incorporated into the new system as they are retrieved and accessed for the daily running of the office;
- the new information should be classified and filed under the new system then a plan would be developed for the semi-active records store in the office;
- an evaluation and decision is needed for who and how will the conversion be done to semi-active records

stored offsite;

- two systems will need to run simultaneously for a period of time therefore it is fundamental to be able to have the two systems working together (for example, if records are stored at a records centre using the old classification numbers, the lists will need the old number converted to the new number so that retrieval can be done using both systems until the old system is totally discontinued.);
- records eligible for destruction under the old system and their destruction should be documented;
- existing files need to be reviewed to determine whether they should be handled according to existing system or classified under the new system and decisions should be documented;
- whether some of the material classified under the old system might require to be broken down into several new numbers or several old numbers might be grouped into one single new number.
- The semi-active and active records maintained in the office kept under the old system may:
 1. be converted into the new system as access and retrieval occurs if required for long term use;
 2. be disposed of under the old system if possible avoiding the conversion altogether whenever possible.
- The use of students and casual / contract workers may be feasible for the conversion of existing records.
- Proper training and supervision of new staff is required.
- The use of a new system requires the acceptance of its implementation by everyone in the office (there are a number of staff who will accept the new system up-front and there are those who will not accept to convert to the

unfamiliar system.) This is why open communication and the approval of policy are required.

Management of Inactive Records

The conversion of inactive records is an area which may be done by contract or students with records management training under a co-op program from a local university. Summer students may be used for this phase of the process under proper coordination and supervision. The disposition of inactive records should be addressed as a separate phase of the implementation process:

- Records with archival value need to be appraised by and transferred to the municipal unit’s designated archival repository;
- inactive records with long term value need to be converted into the new system and kept for the time specified under the new retention schedule;
- inactive records due for destruction should be destroyed under the old system whenever possible or converted into the new retention schedule and properly disposed of

Essential vital records

Municipal units are advised to identify their essential records during the development of their RM program.

For information about essential / vital records see page 607, glossary in appendix H of the RM manual.

Disaster and Recovery Plan

If the municipal unit has a disaster and recovery plan, it is a good idea to review how it is set up and what changes are required to make it valid under the new RM system. If there is not previous plan, then a plan needs to be drafted covering the information evaluated as

essential, with procedures developed for urgent situations. This usually contains a list of people names, addresses, locations, sensitive issues and information will be handled in special ways and by specific people and this should be listed, what alternative location for work during the disaster, numbers of emergency organizations to be contacted for help, etc.

Federal, provincial and local governments usually have designated offices that are trained to handle emergency situations and they should be contacted. Procedures would already be in place for these emergency organizations and they should be consulted as much as possible. Many of these emergency agencies have home pages available through the Internet for initial review.

Sharing and Networking

It makes sense to share experience among municipal units and also gain from sharing of already established services whenever possible, like using standing offers already in place by other levels of government in purchasing new equipment, supplies, software, etc.

Destruction of Inactive or Obsolete Information

Consideration is needed for issues relating to the recycling of paper or other media containing private or confidential information. The review of methods of destruction and factors also require consideration (e.g. unauthorized destruction versus secure shredding.)

Software and Electronic Document / Records Management Systems

System integration and compatibility is fundamental for long-term planning. Before the purchase of any system it is important to consider its compatibility with other systems already in use by other municipal units, provincial and other levels of government and local organizations. It provides the opportunity to improve communication and network of electronic systems whenever possible (specially in this day and age of amalgamations and re-structuring).

Resources

Networking and sharing expertise and experience in developing RM program is fundamental among the Nova Scotia municipal units for a greater success of the proposed program. It is important to make use of available resources outside the municipal unit and to review ways to allow for sharing of resources.

The Municipality of the District of East Hants has hired a consultant to establish a RM program. The project will be completed by mid May 1997 and the results of their pilot will be made available as reference to other units.

The Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) is developing their RM program and have agreed to share their experience and expertise with the members of the RM Committee.

There are a number of universities and community colleges in Nova Scotia which teach records management and have students that may be used in various projects during co-op programs, summer jobs, and other endeavours. These students have a theoretical view of the RM field and need the practical experience; the municipal units need the hands-on assistance.

Professional Associations is another form of resources which municipal units should use:

- IIMC (International Institute of Municipal Clerks);
- Association of Municipal Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario;
- Association for Records Managers and Administrators (ARMA) has a local chapter (Halifax Chapter of ARMA) offering a number of events and program sessions which may assist the training of staff;
- CLARA (Canadian Legislative and Regulatory Affairs Committee of ARMA);
- ACA (Association of Canadian Archivists);
- CNSA (Council of Nova Scotia Archives);

- CIPS (Canadian Information Processing Society)

These organizations also hold conferences and seminars, publish newsletters, provide forum for network and sharing, and for professional development.

The use of Internet is another way to share information. HRM and Cape Breton municipal units already have home pages and use the www to search for information around the world. This together with e-mail, listserv, electronic bulletin boards, are just some examples of what may be explored as another way to improve communications and network among municipal units.

Development of specific procedures and guidelines

The RM manual is just one of the tools available during the implementation of a sound RM program. Each municipal unit is responsible to document details of procedures and have written guidelines for their users to consult and follow.

The documentation of the process of implementation is important for any municipal unit. Evaluation of each aspect and phase of implementation is also important to assist the review of the program as is established and for ongoing maintenance and improvements.

Promotion and Communications Plan

The promotion of RM program is ongoing and may be achieved by communicating the benefits and opportunities which the RM program may bring to the municipal unit.

List of Check-points

The AMA RM Committee plans to develop a series of check lists to assist municipal units in implementing and reviewing their RM system.