

City of Edmonton Archives

Procedure: Access to Unprocessed Material

Governance

- *Principle D1 - Governance*
 - *Rights Management Guideline*
- *Principle D5 – Making Records Available*

Definitions¹

Accessions: material accepted into formal physical and legal custody and control by the City of Edmonton Archives. Receipt is documented and ownership and applicable rights are transferred where possible from the Producer to the Archives.

Processed: accessions that have been fully appraised, documented for rights management, arranged and described so that there is intellectual and physical control. Access conditions are known and documented.

Partially processed: accession has been assigned to a fonds and has been rehoused without being fully appraised, documented for rights management, arranged or described. Access conditions may be partially known and documented.

Unprocessed material: accessions where only basic triage has been done but there is minimal intellectual control. Access conditions have not been fully reviewed.

Purpose

To create a standardized, transparent, and accountable system whereby qualified consumers can request and receive access to records in the archives that have yet to be processed. This process would clarify who qualifies as an eligible consumer, which records would fall in scope and under what conditions. It will also provide direction on the process for making the request, how the material is reviewed, what conditions could be imposed on the consumer, and how the archives will document when and by whom unprocessed materials have been accessed.

Scope

The Archives acknowledges that there is backlog of unprocessed material which can delay access for specific researchers looking at targeted material (accessions of government records for example). However, until accessions are fully processed access must be restricted because of high risk to the records themselves, and the opportunity of inappropriate dissemination of sensitive or personal information information. A certain level of intellectual control of the records

¹ For additional definitions, see *City of Edmonton Archives Glossary*

must be attained by the Archives before even limited access will be allowed (at minimum a file list and/or box list must be available).

Usually the general consumer does not see unprocessed material due to the risk of loss or damage to the records, or privacy breaches. Since the material has not been appraised, the archives cannot guarantee the preservation of all material in the accession during processing. It may be deaccessioned so it will be no longer available. Therefore, access to such material should be limited and under strict conditions (including but not limited to researcher agreements, review and negotiation by the City Archivist) as to what can and cannot be made available and limiting the parameters of the request.

This procedure applies to:

- City employees or their agents, looking beyond their department's records as a function of their employment
- Academic researchers associated with an accredited institution seeking information which cannot be gathered from any other available sources

Out of Scope:

- Donors of the records in question or their agents
- City employees or their agents, accessing their department's records as a function of their employment or their agents (ie: consultants)

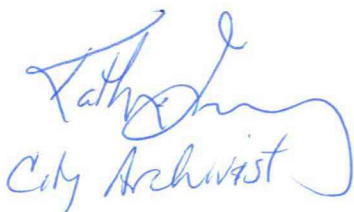
Procedure

1. All requests must be in writing using the *Request for Access to Restricted Materials* form [link] to the City Archivist, including their credentials and the parameters of their research.
 - The researcher should receive initial contact within 3 working days of the City Archivist receiving the request.
 - The City Archivist may negotiate with the researcher to further define the parameters of the request.
 - The City Archivist will work with Archivists to review the documentation for the accession for the sensitivity of the material (privacy and FOIP) and the suitability of the request.
 - Timing of this review and provision of access depends upon the size, scope and condition of the material. If the consumer is under a time constraint the Archives may not be able to meet specific deadlines.
2. If request receives preliminary approval, the Lead Archivist in that area, or their designate, further reviews accession material to ensure personal or confidential material is identified for the City Archivist's notation in the agreement. Some materials may be

redacted. Depending on the extent of the collection, a contractor may be required to be hired to process the collection.

3. The City Archivist's will respond in writing, [via the form response] and include specifics about what material can be accessed (ie. specific files from specific accessions) and any conditions to be imposed. The agreement as to the stipulations of the research parameters must be signed by the researcher before access is granted.
4. The Reference Archivist provides access only to files specified in the agreement within the Reference Room at the City of Edmonton Archives.
5. Researchers will be allowed to make notes - but reproductions (including photographs) will not be allowed. Citations will need to be general to the Accession Number "unprocessed at the time of research" (since processing may reorganize the material). The Archives will not be responsible for relocating the material after processing.
6. Any follow up requests for material would start the process anew.

Date Adopted: 2018-01-09 Date Revised: _____


City Archivist