

Halifax Regional Municipality Archives Access Policy

Policy Statement

In accordance with its mandate the Halifax Regional Municipality Archives will provide and promote access to their holdings, within legal and preservation requirements. The Municipal Archives is committed to the principle of access to information within the limitations outlined in Part XX: Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIPOP) of the Municipal Government Act (MGA) and the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA).

Objective

This policy will provide staff and researchers of the Municipal Archives with guidelines to accessing archival and reference holdings, in terms of access to information rights and potential restrictions.

Scope

This policy applies to the entire archival collection of the Municipal Archives, and to all staff, researchers and volunteers working with or using the Archives.

Pertinent Legislation, Policies and Procedures

- Part XX: Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIPOP) of the Municipal Government Act (MGA)
- Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA)
- Personal Information International Disclosure Protection Act (PIIDPA)
- Reference and Research Policy
- FOIPOP Access Policies and Procedures

Policy Statements

The Municipal Archives may refuse access to records or reference material only in the following situations:

- Records or reference material are within the scope of FOIPOP or PIPEDA and contain information exempted under FOIPOP or PIPEDA.
- Access is restricted through legal agreement with donors. Donors will be encouraged to provide open access with only reasonable and time-specific limits accepted.
- Records or reference material are fragile to the extent that further damage might result from providing access.
- Records are unprocessed or partially processed to the extent that there is uncertainty to the contents and condition of the records.

- The Municipal Archives will inform researchers of specific access restrictions in archival descriptive records and research materials.
- The Municipal Archives will facilitate researchers in requesting access to restricted records; however researchers must provide written authorization to view restricted records or research materials.
- The Municipal Archives will provide access to its original records and reference material only within the controlled environment of its Research Room. The Research Room will be open to the public three half-days per week and by appointment on other days.
- The Municipal Archives will provide equal access to all registered researchers, but may cancel researcher privileges should persistent violation of the Research Room Rules or mishandling of the records or reference materials take place.
- Should access be restricted on the basis of the fragility or condition of the records or reference materials, the Municipal Archives will attempt to make suitable copies of the originals available to researchers.

Roles and Responsibilities

Manage, Information Management - will ensure that staff are aware of their responsibilities under any relevant legislation and this Access Policy.

FOIPOP Co-ordinator - will explain procedures and rights to researchers wishing to make a FOIPOP access request.

Municipal Archivist - will ensure that access is provided to the archival holdings except within the limitations set out in any relevant legislation and this Access Policy. The Municipal Archivist will ensure that access restrictions are explained in archival descriptions and that no records are acquired with unreasonable or lengthy access restrictions. The Municipal Archivist will maintain current and adequate Access Policies and Procedures, and will pursue available training opportunities.

Staff and volunteers, Information Management - Individuals working with the archival records or with reference material will provide access to the archival holdings except within the limitations set out in any relevant legislation and this Access Policy, and pursue FOIPOP training opportunities when appropriate.

Researchers - Individuals wishing to consult the Archives' holdings will visit the Research Room and, by signing the Registration Form, agree to abide by the Research Room Rules. Researchers have the right to submit an access request to records covered by FOIPOP.

Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years by the Municipal Archivist. Comments or concerns should be directed to the Municipal Archivist.