

Frequently Asked Questions about Vault Records

What are vault records?

LTSA vault records are essential for the operation of the land title and survey systems of BC. They include plans, maps, letters, field books, certificates, registers, indices and more. The records exist in a variety of formats, including paper, linen, mylar, microfilm and leather-bound books, and can be used in analogue or digital format, or both.

Why do you need to keep all these old things?

LTSA is responsible for managing the land title and survey records in its care. This responsibility is outlined in legislation and binding authorities including the *Land Title and Survey Authority Act*, the *Land Title Act*, the *Land Act*, the Operating Agreement, the Transfer Agreement and the LTSA By-Laws.

Who accesses vault records?

Vault records are useful for retracing historic surveys, land ownership and researching complex property boundary issues. They are used daily by LTSA staff, legal professionals, registry agents and land surveyors to conduct their business, and are also of interest to Indigenous and non-Indigenous historians, genealogists, land claims researchers and environmental researchers.

Instead of conserving fragile old things, can you make new versions?

Vault records provide persistent, trustworthy evidence of official surveys, land boundaries and transactions dating back to the earliest days of colonization and settlement in BC. Original analogue vault records are important because they were made by the people legally responsible for a survey or land transaction referenced in a record under the legislation in force at the time.

Can you digitize everything and destroy the originals?

Digitization requires strategic investment and planning. The value and significance of an analogue source record, and the responsibility to manage it, does not disappear once it is digitized. LTSA must ensure that digitized images are trustworthy representations of the analogue source record and that this relationship can be proven over time.

How do you know a digitized image is a true representation of the original?

LTSA links each digitized image to its analogue original source and documents the context of creation and quality of all digitized vault records. Producing trustworthy digitized records requires planning, preparation, metadata, quality assurance, file management, digital preservation, and databases for locating, searching and displaying records and information about them.

Are analogue records still being created, or is everything digital now?

Analogue records were regularly received and stored in LTSA vaults until the 2010s. Today, the majority of land title and survey records are created in digital format; because they are born digital they don't require digitization. In rare cases, a physical analogue record will be deposited, registered and stored in the vault.

How can I access vault records?

People with an identified need to access vault records in person can apply for a Direct Access pass. Direct Access passholders are subject to the LTSA Direct Access to Operational Records Policy.

LTSA provides digitized images for a fee through the [myLTSA self-service portal](#). Many digitized images of Surveyor General records are available through [Tantalis GATOR](#), the Government Access Tool for Online Retrieval.

A selection of Surveyor General vault records are freely available through two University of Victoria Libraries Digital Collections: [Early British Columbia Maps](#) and [Indian Reserve Maps](#).

For more information about LTSA vault records, visit ltsa.ca/VaultRecords.