Destroying University Information and Records

The University of Minnesota is committed to protecting the security and confidentiality of protected information created or received in the course of business. The University's Records Retention Schedule, found at https://policy.umn.edu/operations/recordretention prescribes the length of time that records created or received by the University must be retained. Once records reach the end of the scheduled retention period, they should be deleted or destroyed. Records disposition is the final phase of a record's life cycle. This document outlines the appropriate methods for disposing of University records slated for destruction.

Paper Records Containing Only Public Information. Most of the records that the University of Minnesota maintains are administrative or financial in nature and do not contain private or sensitive information. These records should be recycled according to regular University procedures. Recycling is the preferred method to destroy paper information as it is not only environmentally friendly, but it also contributes to revenue to the University from the papermills. (http://www1.umn.edu/recycle/recycle.html)

Paper Records Containing Private or Confidential Information. Records that contain private or confidential information (*e.g.,* social security numbers, credit card numbers, personal financial information, student academic information, employee health information, etc.) require confidential destruction procedures. Confidential destruction procedures protect privacy interests and guard against identity theft. There are generally two ways to destroy paper records to maintain confidentiality: confidential recycling and shredding. **Shredding is *required* for personal health information, social security numbers and credit card numbers.** Shredding is also preferred for student records.

1. **Confidential Recycling.** Confidential recycling is provided by the University of Minnesota recycling program. Confidential recycling is appropriate for paper records containing private information such as personnel information, student information or other sensitive information. Information on this program is available at https://facilities.umn.edu/self-help-guide/recycling-self-help-guide-f. If you are not sure whether you should use confidential recycling, please contact the Records & Information Management Office at 612-625-3497.

2. **Shredding.** Shredding may also be used to dispose of records containing private information. **Shredding is *required* for personal health information, social security numbers, and credit card numbers**. Shredding can be accomplished by office shredders within units. If purchasing or updating an office shredder, look for a cross-cut or micro-cut shredder. There is also a U-Wide contract to provide on-site shredding for confidential materials. This contract can be viewed at http://uwidecontracts.umn.edu.

Electronic Information. The destruction of electronic information must be performed according to the Office of Information security standard for data deletion found at http://www1.umn.edu/oit/security/datadeletion.shtml. Disposition of electronic information must be performed in a manner that protects private or confidential information. The sale, donation, scrapping, or internal University transfer of computers or other electronic devices requires the secure destruction of information contained on the computer or electronic device. Old floppy disks, tapes, film, audiotapes, and videotapes must be physically destroyed or the information otherwise securely deleted according to the provisions of the OIT standard, not simply thrown in the trash.