

## **University of Minnesota Destruction of University 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 Record Retention Schedule](#) 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 disposed of. Records disposition is the final phase of a record's life cycle. This policy 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 protected 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. Shredding is also preferred for student records.

**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 <http://www1.umn.edu/recycle/recycle.html>.

**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. For student records, shredding is the preferred method of destruction. Shredding can be accomplished by office shredders within units. The University also has a contract with Document Destruction to provide on-site shredding for confidential materials. This contract can be viewed at <http://uwidecontracts.umn.edu>.

**Credit Card Information.** Any records containing credit card information, including credit card numbers or merchant receipts must be shredded.

**Social Security Numbers.** Any records containing social security numbers must be shredded.

**Personal Health Information.** Shredding is the *only* acceptable means for disposing of unneeded personal health information (PHI).

**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. 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.

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