

## Storage

### Paper Records

#### General Guidance

- Do not overstuff file folders—if a folder is getting full, start a new one.
- Do not overstuff filing cabinets—it damages the records and makes retrieval difficult.
- Label file folders clearly and meaningfully.
  - See our [Tip Sheet](#) on Naming Conventions for additional assistance.
- Use dividers to label sections of files within your filing cabinet and within your files folders, if necessary.
- Use coloured file folders or dividers for particular sections/functions to make filing and searching easier.
- Make good use of dates on folders or dividers.
  - Dates you will find useful to record could include: the date the file was opened, date the file was closed, date that disposition is to take place (destroy or send to Archives), or some combination of these.
- Keep track and organize the records using a file plan.
  - This will help you know where to file records, where to search, and know what disposition is required and when that should happen.
  - Most offices have a draft file plan already. If you would like to create, update, or finalize a file plan, please contact the Records Manager.
- Cabinets should be lockable and in a secured area - especially if the records contain private, personal, or other sensitive information.
- Avoid keeping records on open desktops overnight, especially in an open office area.

#### Semi-active Storage

[Semi-active records](#) are infrequently accessed paper records. It's not uncommon for records to have a semi-active period as they transition from regular use to their eventual disposition. Semi-active records are kept by their departments and if there is no cabinet space, they can be stored in a departmental storage area. Managing these semi-active records is much like managing paper records generally, with a few key differences:

- The storage area should be secure and only accessed by authorized employees.
- If records are stored in boxes they should be sturdy bankers boxes with an attached lid. Do not overstuff (keep about a hand width of space per box) and do not re-use printer or copy paper boxes. These lose lids and collapse more easily.
  - Boxes are kept on sturdy shelves, not piled on the ground.
  - Boxes are not stored on the top shelf under pipes that may leak.
  - Boxes are well [labelled](#) with their contents, date range, and date of disposition (destruction or archival transfer).
  - Box contents are recorded in [an inventory](#) kept in the office.

**Tip!** If boxes contain confidential records, you may not wish to list the contents on the outside of the box. In this case, ensure the box is numbered and easily linked to the inventory.

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## Electronic Records

Electronic records should also be kept organized and secure. Local computers and servers should be stored and backed up securely. For more information on managing electronic records, review our [Electronic File and Folder Naming](#) guidance or contact the Records Manager for assistance.

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