



Principles for
Environmentally-Friendly
Records Management

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Principles for Environmentally-Friendly Records Management

RM and the Environment

- Increased environmental emphasis brings challenge and opportunity
- Records management supports environmental stewardship, compliance
- Records management has its own environmental impact
- How do we lessen the impact?





Principles for Environmentally-Friendly Records Management

Principle 1: Throw Away to Save

- Records occupy physical space, consume resources
- Recycling frees up material for productive use
- Identify & purge non-records
- Dispose of eligible records
 - Records retention schedule
 - Disposal authorization process





Principle 2: Efficient Storage Design

- Aim to maximize space utilization
- Choose filing equipment supplies carefully
 - End tab vs. Top tab folders
 - Lateral vs. Vertical filing
 - Mobile vs. Stationary filing
- The right choices can allow you to store 3x the records on 1/2 the floor space





Principle 3: Use Inactive Storage Wisely

- Offsite storage offers smaller footprint per file
- Retrieval and transport can negate this advantage
- Strategy: Identify records for offsite storage based on retrieval patterns
- Alternative: Near-line storage, regularly scheduled bulk retrievals





Principle 4: Choose Environmentally Friendly Filing Products

- Save the environment and reduce cost
- Product options to minimize waste, pollution, materials consumption:
 - Expandable folders, pockets
 - Durable materials, construction
 - Reusable enclosures
 - Paper: Fully recyclable?
 - Non-paper: Biodegradable?





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Principle 5: Promote a Less Paper Office

- Printing and copying to paper easier than ever
- Many organizations seeing paper output increase rather than decrease
- Strategy: Central controls to decrease copies, versions
 - Paper: Shared filing areas
 - Electronic Document Management Systems





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Principle 6: Look Beyond Your Loading Dock

- Is shredded paper recycled?
- How “green” is the recycling operation?
 - Product output vs. Resources used
 - Chemical agents, pollutants?
- What happens to computing equipment?
 - Hazardous waste disposal?
 - Raw materials recycling?
 - Reuse by non-profits (e.g. schools)?





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Making it Happen: Ask Yourself

- Does my program:
 - Make optimal use of land space through retention controls and smart storage design?
 - Make efficient use of resources needed for manufacturing, facility operation, transportation?
 - Manage waste output through recycling, reuse, composting?

