

# LCC PAPER RECORDS STORAGE GUIDELINES

Guidance for properly storing paper records at Lansing Community College

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## INTRODUCTION

Part of any effective records and information management program is the timely disposition of records that are obsolete or past the period of their active use, but until records can be disposed of it is the responsibility of every LCC employee to help their department properly manage its records. This includes storing them in proper containers, in the proper environment, and with proper security measures in place.

The information below will help ensure that each department's records are protected and stored according to LCC's guidelines until they reach the end of their approved retention period.

**NOTE:** This document focuses on the proper storage of *paper* records. For information about where and how to store digital files, please refer to LCC's [File Storage Guidelines](#) document.

## CONTAINERS AND ORGANIZATION



### Containers

Records should be stored in containers designed for records storage purposes such as filing cabinets or records boxes. The ideal box is a 10" x 12" x 15" Bankers-style box.

Printer/copier paper boxes are not sturdy and should be avoided. Two-foot "long" records boxes should also be avoided due to their increased weight and lack of structural support in the middle. Boxes should not be stacked more than four high as the bottom boxes will collapse under the weight of taller stacks.

When storing records in record boxes, be sure to load the box with enough space to allow for easy removal of folders but without too much space which can cause the records to slide down and bend or buckle. A good measure of the right amount of space is the approximately width of two fingers.

### Folders

Folders are commonly used to store related records. Folders should not be stored in a pile but, rather, they should be stored upright to allow for retrieval without disturbing nearby folders. The use of hanging folders is encouraged as they will prevent folders from sliding underneath one another and losing their contents if the file cabinet drawers or records boxes are not full.

## Arrangement

Records should be arranged in a manner that allows for easy retrieval and disposal. For instance, financial files might be grouped by fiscal year and then arranged alphabetically by vendor. When possible, avoid storing different categories of records together or storing records together that cover long spans of time as this can hinder retrieval and disposal.

## Labels

For labels the key word is “unique.” Each **folder** should have a unique title, such as a person’s name or an account number about which the records relate. Each **box** or file cabinet **drawer** should also be labeled with a unique title to identify and distinguish its contents from other boxes or drawers. This label will typically also include the date range of materials inside the box or drawer.

## Inventory

A records inventory is an essential tool for effective records management. A list of what records are in each file cabinet and box, including date ranges, locations and box or drawer numbers, should be maintained to identify the office they belong to, to ensure easy retrieval, and to account for the records. Where possible, the inventory should also include a list of folder titles as well as the date when the records may be disposed of or transferred to the LCC Archives.

## ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROLS



### Temperature

Prolonged exposure to extreme heat or cold or excessive temperature variations should be avoided, particularly for archival, audio visual, and other sensitive materials or for records that require long-term retention. Unconditioned space such as attics or basements may be acceptable for storage of material requiring only short-term retention (5 years or less), but should always be monitored for environmental changes that may have adverse effects on the records.

### Relative Humidity

Like temperature, excessive humidity and excessive variation in humidity should be avoided. Because excessive humidity can promote the growth of mold, relative humidity should not exceed 60%, while long-term or sensitive materials should ideally be stored below 40% relative humidity. In addition, proper air circulation is an important factor to take into account in regulating the effects of humidity.

### Water

Water is one of the greatest threats to records. Floods, burst pipes, and roof leaks are all common sources of water which can rapidly destroy records. Care should be taken to protect against such sources of damage. Records should be stored at least 3 inches off the ground on shelving or pallets. Where possible, records should be located away from overhead sources of water including pipes and sprinkler systems, or they should be covered to prevent damage caused by a possible leak. If your records do get wet, or have fire, smoke, or other damage, please contact Linnea Knapp, [Records Information Specialist](#), for assistance as soon as possible after the crisis has been stabilized.

### Pests

There are a variety of insects and rodents that will cause damage to files. Storage areas should be inspected on a regular basis for the presence of pests and appropriate pest control measures should be implemented as soon as possible if pests are detected. Avoid the storage or consumption of food near records storage areas to limit the potential of attracting pests to these areas.

## SECURITY



### Access

To avoid intentional or unintentional loss of records, it is important to know who has access to the records storage space and to take appropriate precautions to restrict access as necessary. The location for stored records should be carefully chosen to minimize the potential for unauthorized personnel gaining access to the records.

### Locks

Records should be stored in a locked environment, ideally behind a keyed door with no other easy entry points such as windows. A key log should be maintained in order to know who has access to the space. Using locking file cabinets may also be considered when shared access is needed for the space. The door and lock should be sturdy enough to withstand attempts at forceful entry or vandalism.

### Visibility

The storage space should be in a visible location and regularly visited in order to identify actual or attempted vandalism. Notify authorities ([Public Safety](#)) as soon as possible if an attempt at unauthorized access is identified.

### Safety

The storage space should have sufficient lighting to allow staff to work in the space safely. When working in the space, care should be exercised to ensure that shelves and cabinets do not tip due to an unbalanced weight distribution such as what occurs when multiple drawers are open at the same time. Boxes should not be stacked more than four high to prevent their collapse or accidental toppling (bottom boxes will collapse under the weight of taller stacks). Storage above shoulder height requires additional safety considerations such as the use of a step ladder.

## FURTHER QUESTIONS

If you have further questions about the appropriate storage of records at LCC, please contact Linnea Knapp, Records Information Specialist, at 517-483-1676 or [lcc-rim@lcc.edu](mailto:lcc-rim@lcc.edu).

## REFERENCES

LCC [File Storage Guidelines](#)

Records Center Operations, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition – ARMA International TR01-2011

University of Illinois RIMS – [Departmental Records Storage](#)