

ARCHIVE RECORD STORAGE

The problem that grows on you

Every company has records that it needs to keep... for years. The storage problem gets bigger every year and no matter how much we all wish it, the problem won't go away! Here we will summarize all the information necessary to determine the best Archive Record Storage solution for you and your company. So, get ready to tackle the problem **NOW!**

The first step is to determine the *level of access* that you need for your older records. There may be several levels required, depending upon the type and age of the documents stored. There are 4 common storage level options:

1) Smaller Quantities/Maximum Access Required

- Additional file cabinets or in-office shelving provide quick access to frequently referenced files.

2) Large Quantity/Similar Records/Occasional Access

- Outside subcontracted record storage services can solve space problems in-house, but increases time and costs required to access records.

3) Large Quantity/Minimal Access Required

- Rarely accessed records, mandated for long term storage, can be palletized and stored in bulk in conventional pallet storage racks.

4) Small to Moderate Quantities/Regular to Occasional Access

- In-house Record Box Storage racks provide secure and quick access to a large group of archived records and files.

Smaller Quantities/Maximum Access Required

Many companies, where services are rendered on a long-term or on-going basis, such as law firms, medical providers and insurance companies, elect to keep a full set of records for the last year or two available in file cabinets. This allows rapid access to records for cases or projects that continue from one year to the next. Companies that do a large volume of custom work may also elect to keep their records easily available for orders that are repeated, but not within the same year. Used file cabinets can be purchased at very reasonable prices, especially when purchasing several at one time. Resist the temptation to buy 'bargain special' *new* cabinets at the local office supply store. They are of inferior quality and will not stand up well. You will get better performance and durability from a top quality *used* file cabinet without spending any more than you would on a new 'bargain' cabinet.

Large Quantity/Similar Records/Occasional Access

Outside companies specializing in archive storage are the choice of many larger corporations. The volume of records generated by these larger companies makes using their valuable manufacturing, production, and warehousing facilities uneconomical for record storage. Outside agencies provide secure storage for large quantities of record storage boxes or files. Many companies provide a shuttle service that will retrieve boxes from storage and deliver them to your facility, returning them when you have finished with that group of files. The expense, however, can be greater than storing your records in-house and access to records can take longer.

Large Quantity/Minimal Access Required

If your company is required by law or by company policy to keep rarely accessed records for many years, then bulk storage may be an option for you. Records are boxed and labeled, and then, either palletized for storage on conventional pallet racks or stacked several boxes high and deep on heavy duty racking. It is more difficult to access the records if needed, but is very cost effective for large quantities of record storage boxes.

Small to Moderate Quantities/Regular to Occasional Access

The majority of companies elect to store their records in-house. Many companies find that a separate room or caged area is the best option for long-term record storage. Procedures for the storage and retrieval of the documents and access to sensitive records can be more easily controlled. There are **4 questions** that need to be answered in order to achieve the most efficient record storage area.

1) What size boxes are you going to use to store your records?

Maximum storage efficiency is achieved by standardizing on a single box size for all of your regularly accessed files. The most common archive storage box is the 12" w x 15" d x 10" h corrugated box, available with either lift-off lid or overlapping lid flaps with string and button closure. This size box accommodates both letter and legal size documents and is easily lifted by office personnel, even when fully loaded. The longer 24" deep boxes are recommended only for rarely accessed records, as they are much heavier and harder to handle.

2) How many boxes do you have to store now... How many in 5 years?

If you do not have all your records boxed, you can estimate that each fully packed vertical file cabinet drawer will use two 15" deep archive storage boxes (laterals can use up to 3 depending on width). Look at how many file cabinets you are using for this year's records and convert to number of boxes. Typically, as you make room for each new set of yearly files, this many boxes will be added to your storage system each year.

Note: Each box should be marked with a 'Destroy Date'. At some point in the future, you will begin to remove and dispose of old records. This space then becomes available for current records that need to be added to storage. Consult

with your accountant and legal advisors for required storage times for the different types of your documents.

3) What level of access do you need to your records?

Record boxes can be stored in many configurations. *Single Level* storage puts one box on each shelf for easiest access. In a *Double Stacked* system, boxes are stacked two high on each shelf. *Double Deep* systems store one box behind another. The double high and double deep systems require moving at least one box to get the one under or behind. However, these storage layouts provide more efficient use of storage space and they are less expensive than single level systems.

4) What area do you have available for record storage?

The area you choose could be a separate room or a partitioned area in your office or warehouse. Measure the ceiling height and, if applicable, check the local fire codes for minimum distance required from your sprinkler heads. This will determine how high you can stack your boxes. You should consider using as much height as possible. This may mean obtaining a rolling ladder to access the higher levels. If you have a tall warehouse space, a two-tier mezzanine storage system may be the best option to utilize all of your available storage space.

With this information in hand, you are now ready to specify the best system for your archive record storage. Keep in mind that the 'best' system may turn out to be a combination of 2 or 3 different types of record storage products.

For questions or help with your Archive Record Storage applications:

Call Preferred Equipment Resource at 800-711-8698 or you can e-mail us at info@prefeq.com. For layout information, visit our website and look in the Product Info>Installation section for dimensions and drawings of typical archive storage racks.