

# Good Practice Guidance

## Routine Destruction Guidance

Many documents that we create or use on a routine basis have no significant operational, informational or evidential value requiring a long-term retention. These documents may, therefore, be destroyed as soon as they have served their immediate purpose. Such material should not be kept within files, and where it is, the files should be regularly weeded of it.

### **Examples of documents and information that can be routinely destroyed**

- Stocks of in-house publications which are obsolete, superseded, or otherwise of no value, e.g. newsletters, bulletins, guidance notes, marketing materials, service leaflets, forms and other material produced for wide distribution.
  - The department issuing these publications should retain at least two copies for possible permanent retention.
- Published or reference materials received from external organisations which require no action, and are not required for "record" purposes. These may include newsletters, magazines, catalogues and flyers.
- Transmittal documents such as letters, fax coversheets, e-mails, routing slips and compliment slips which accompany documents but do not add any significant information to them.
- Working papers where the contents have been written into an official document and are not required to support it.
- Requests for stock information such as service leaflets, comments/complaints cards, brochures, travel directions etc.
- Duplicate material such as:
  - CC & FYI copies
  - Printouts or extracts from a database
  - Unaltered drafts of documents
  - 'Day Files' (chronological copies of correspondence)
- Announcements and notices of meetings and other events, including notifications of acceptance or apologies.
- Requests for, and confirmation of, reservations with third parties (e.g. travel, hotel accommodation, restaurants) when invoices have been received.
- Requests for, and confirmations of, reservations for internal services (e.g. meeting rooms, car parking spaces) where no internal charges are made.
- Message slips or while-you-were-out slips.
- Superseded address lists, distribution lists etc.
- Personal diaries, address books etc.

In implementing this guidance, departments and staff should be aware if they hold the master, or original, record. Where a department holds the master record, this must be retained for the appropriate length of time as set out in the department's records

retention schedule. Specific guidance on the retention of records can be obtained from the [Records and Information Management Service](#).

For guidance on paper waste disposal and confidential information destruction please see the A to Z entry [Paper Waste Disposal and Confidential Destruction](#).

**Further advice**

For further advice on routine destruction or records and information management issues please contact the:

**Records & Information Management Service**

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