

Creating Electronic File Folders

Setting up Folders on a Network Drives

Many of the file management techniques used in filing paper records also apply to electronic records. When there are multiple levels of folders, the name for each folder needs to be taken into account when deciding which file naming elements are required and whether or not to establish abbreviations for naming files. An agency should classify its folders on the network first by:

- reviewing physical records file arrangements;
- creating categories based on records retention and disposition schedules;
- creating secondary categories which reflect the business process of the agency;
- creating file folders on agency shared network drives that correspond with the findings.

Directory and folder names should be established on network drives containing information that defines the content of the folders. For example, the Fiscal Unit might have multiple accounting folders; one for Accounts Payable, one for Account Receivable and subfolders within such as Purchasing Card, Travel Expense, etc.

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| F: | Specific agency network drive |
| AccountsPayable | Primary folder in the directory structure |
| PurchasingCard | Subfolder within the Primary folder directory structure |
| 2009_10 | Sub-subfolder within the directory structure (fiscal year) |

NOTE: It is advisable not to use dots or special characters when naming files or folders because it may cause the file to become unusable or misread.

Example of Folders on An Agency Network Drive

The folder names shown in the below example on the left include the SAP code of the organization (eg., Forms_Policies_3010299000). The SAP code identifies ownership of the records contained therein and is useful not only for inventorying records but also when attempting to isolate a contact for issues with any associated subfolders or files. The structure of folders in both examples below are also linked to records retention and disposition schedules as indicated by the records schedule item number within the folder or subfolder names.

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>This example includes both agency-specific records as well as General records (eg., ERM_Inventory_Final_00000479 [agency-specific], and Grants_G005 [General])</p> | <p>This example is strictly limited to records on the General Records Retention and Disposition Schedule.</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> [-] ArchProject_3010299000 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> [+] 2002ElectronicRecordsInventory_00000479 [+] EmailGuidelines_G006_002 [+] ERM_Inventory_Final_00000479 ARIAS_3010220000 Bookstore_3010240000 BureauActivityReports_3010299000 CWMOR_3010220000 DeaccessionCommittee_3010220000 DRAIS_3010231000 E_Archives_3010299000 Forms_Policies_3010299000 PHMC_LibraryCirculation_Statistics_3010230000 Publications_3010240000 [-] PublicServices_Outreach_3010230000 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> [-] Grants_G005 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> [+] Grants_Issued_G005_001 [+] Grants_Received_G005_003 [+] Grants_Received_Reports_G005_004 [+] SAD_3010220000 [+] SRC_3010231000 [+] WEB_3010299000 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AdminCorrespondence_SubjectFiles_GeneralProgram_G001_006 [-] AdminCorrespondence_SubjFiles_Exec_G001_001 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> [+] 2008 [+] 2009 Annual_Special_Reports_Publications_G001_008 ArchitecturalPlans_Drawings_Maps_Specifications_G010_005 [+] ContractAdministrationFile_G102_004 [+] ContractUnawardedCancelled_G002_006 [+] Deeds_AgencyProperty_G010_004 [+] DisasterRecoveryPlans_VitalRecords_ContinuityPlans_G009_004 [+] FormsManagement_G008_002 [+] LegalOpinions_G004_003 [+] LegislativeCorrespondence_G003_001 [-] MeetingMinutes_Exec_G001_005 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> [+] HistoricalMuseumCommission [+] RecordsAccessCommittee [+] StateHistoricalRecordsAdvisoryBoard [+] Policies_Procedures_Exec_G001_002 [+] PressReleases_G002_001 [+] Studies_OperationalPlans_Exec_G001_003 |

In standard desktop applications the entire path and file name are treated as the name of an item. If the complete name is longer than 255 characters the system may truncate it and important sections of the name may be lost. Agencies may want to consider using standard naming conventions (abbreviations) for folder names to reduce the number of characters (see guidance in Guideline 6 "Filing & Naming Electronic Records"). In the above example, left and bottom, SAD = the State Archives Division and SRC = the State Records Center. The folder immediately above could use a standard abbreviation of PSO (Public Services & Outreach) to reduce the number of characters and maintain consistency.

Other considerations for filing electronic records:

- Records may be stored centrally on systems such as document or content management systems or shared agency drives, or stored on network drives in a decentralized manner where only one person has access to the files.
- File folders may be secured and restricted, such as who has privileges to access the files for read or write access on the drives.
- Agencies need to maintain the folders on the network drives so that they are well organized; appropriate organization will enhance retrieval. It may be advisable to designate a person in each bureau or each functional business unit to maintain the folder structure of the drives.
- Employees should not use the hard drive on their personal computer to store official records since information can be lost if no backup records are maintained or the PC malfunctions.
- Electronic documents should be filed within folders according to the content.
- Folder and file names should be meaningful and understandable to all users.