

Document Security and Confidentiality

Information is power. In the wrong hands, the information stored in your files can damage your business, your personal life and the privacy of your employees and customers. Increased identity theft and other security breaches have emphasized the importance of maintaining control over access to your records. Beyond simply protecting information for confidentiality, many businesses also have privacy regulations imposed on them by government or industry groups.

PHYSICAL SECURITY

At it's simplest level, document security means physical protection of the records themselves. Many filing systems use supplies that offer inherent protection to documents. File folders with fasteners or built-in pockets hold papers safely inside and prevent documents from accidentally falling out.

Expanding files and wallets with protective flaps offer protection during transportation. Self-adhesive pockets applied to folders hold small items such as business cards or digital media safely inside file folders.

ACCESS SECURITY

Limiting the number of employees who can access records provides a high level of document security. Locked file cabinets or file rooms with security systems in place help prevent unauthorized personnel from using confidential records. Document tracking using bar code technology can restrict user access to entire filing systems or to specific folders. Usage histories reveal who has taken files from the filing system, and how long they have used them.

A balance must be achieved between making sure adequate protection is in place and hampering quick access to information by legitimate users. Cumbersome security procedures can lower productivity and encourage non-compliance.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY

Protecting the personal information of patients, customers and employees is a responsibility that no business should take lightly. Health care entities must comply with HIPAA regulations that prevent personal health information from being available to unauthorized persons. Numeric indexing systems avoid readable text on file labels that would identify patients. Human Resources departments must follow guidelines to ensure that medical and investment information is only available to authorized personnel.

When designing a filing system, be sure to address the appropriate level of protection for your records. Building in security measures can avoid big headaches by keeping your critical information away from those who would use it against you.

