



# CARE AND PRESERVATION OF PAPER RECORDS

Our information is a valuable business asset and has an ongoing importance to the University in terms of its operations, legislative obligations and for historical purposes. Under our [Information Management Policy](#), we are all required to protect Curtin's records so that they are secure, well-maintained, but also able to be accessed by those who are appropriately authorised. The protection of our records throughout their lifecycle will ensure we have access to them, for as long as is required.

## What can you do to help?

The care and preservation of paper records is especially important, as they can easily deteriorate if not managed correctly.

### **PEST CONTROL:**

Pests such as insects and rodents can be attracted to storage areas in search of food and shelter. Moths, ants and spiders are not likely to damage paper-based information, however they may attract other pests that do.

Rats, mice, silverfish and cockroaches are the most common problems. Silverfish and white ants provide the worst threat to paper as they can produce considerable damage in a short period of time and are only noticeable when an item is retrieved or their habitat disturbed.

To reduce the possibility of pest damage:

- Keep storage areas clean and free of dust – dirty surfaces can be a breeding ground for mould and insects.
- Do not eat or store food where paper-based information is kept - food scraps can attract pest.
- Check storage areas regularly for outbreaks of insects and rodents. Should an infestation occur, baiting or fumigation may be necessary. For further advice, please contact the [University Archivist](#).

### **FIRE HAZARDS:**

It is imperative that your storage and work areas are free of clutter. Regular monitoring of the work environment should also be conducted to identify potential hazards and reduce the possibility of fire.

### **STORAGE:**

- Storage areas should be clean, dust-free and, if possible, within a temperature controlled environment. For example, areas that are free from insects, rodents, moisture and large temperature changes.
- Hard-copy records should be stored in secure environments, especially those that are confidential or sensitive. For example, locked filing cabinets, compactus, locked storerooms or vaults.
- Alternatively files can be stored in approved archive boxes, which can be ordered through our [website](#), ready for transfer (*to Records & Information Management storage facilities*) at a later date.

## **HANDLING:**

Correct handling will assist in preserving paper records:

- Ensure your hands are clean and that the files are not used in the vicinity of food, drink or other liquids.
- Do not use a wet finger to turn pages.
- Take care not to tear or damage records.
- Any fragile or damaged records should be placed in a good quality plastic sleeve.

## **WHERE POSSIBLE AVOID THE FOLLOWING:**

- The use of highlighters on records of long term value, as the highlighter will eventually fade.
- Post-it-notes should not be used to convey important information that is placed on a file. The glue may attract insects and the information could be lost if the note falls off.
- Do not use staples for long term or archival records. It is recommended that plastic paper clips be used so they can be removed easily without damaging the records. Alternatively, good quality plastic sleeves may also be used.
- Never use elastic bands, as over time they dry out and break, causing broken pieces of the elastic band to get stuck to the paper.
- Never use any kind of sticky tape to mend or join paper records. This is particularly important for records of long term or archival value. The glue from the sticky tape may migrate into the paper leaving yellow stains and the tape will eventually become brittle and fall off.
- Any records printed on thermal paper should be photocopied, as the information on the paper will fade very quickly rendering the record unreadable.
- Electronic records should NOT be copied onto removable media such as CD's, DVD's or flash drives and stored in plastic sleeves on a file or in boxes within offices. The media will deteriorate &/or may become unsupported making the records unreadable. These records should be stored on shared network drives where they are backed up.

## **Additional information and useful links.**

- [What are Archives?](#)
- [Using Paper Files.](#)
- [Disaster Recovery.](#)

## **Need further assistance?**

Please do not hesitate to contact us via phone on 9266 7050, or by email at: [rim@curtin.edu.au](mailto:rim@curtin.edu.au), should you require additional assistance.

For information management advice of a general nature, you may wish to visit our website at: [rim.curtin.edu.au](http://rim.curtin.edu.au).

This advice sheet is made under and supports the [Information Management Policy](#) and associated [Procedures](#).