

Government Records Policy

Office Paper Shredders

**Government Records Office
Archives of Manitoba**

GRO POLICY: Office Paper Shredders

Issued: 1999

Revised: 2003

Updated: 2013 (to correct contact information)

PURPOSE

The policy provides direction concerning the acquisition of office paper shredders.

The policy applies to all Manitoba government departments and agencies. It is directed to department/agency Records Officers, managers responsible for records and those responsible for procurement of office equipment.

Separate policy and procedures for local destruction of government records in remote locations (outside Winnipeg) are provided in Procedure GRO 2: *Transferring Government Records*.

AUTHORITY

The Archives and Recordkeeping Act, A 132.

POLICY

Procurement of office paper shredders requires approval by the Manager, Government Records Office, Archives of Manitoba.

Destruction of government records by use of paper shredders located in department or agency offices is not normally permitted. Widespread use of office shredders provides opportunities for unauthorized destruction of records and involves unnecessary expenditure of resources.

Government records are normally sent to the Government Records Centre (GRC) for off-site shredding using high volume shredding and baling equipment. Shredding is undertaken in accordance with retention periods and disposition actions set out in approved Records Schedules. This controlled destruction process provides the following benefits:

- It provides a secure method of records handling and disposal, and ensures that all transfer and disposal actions are authorized and documented.
- The use of high-volume equipment operated by dedicated personnel is significantly more cost-effective than use of office shredders. Staff time required to shred one Records Centre box of paper is up to 20 times slower than using the industrial shredding system coordinated by the GRC.
- It provides for recycling of the paper shredded.

There is one exception to the above policy:

- An office shredder may be approved for purchase in situations where the normal transfer of the records to the Government Records Centre for destruction does not meet the special needs of an office. This may be due to an exceptional security risk or other unusual recordkeeping requirements.

An office paper shredder approved under this policy must be maintained and operated in accordance with the following standards:

- The shredder must be stored in a locked room which is accessible only to staff authorized to use the machine.
- Responsibility for operating the shredder should be assigned to specific employees by the manager responsible.
- Only those records for which office shredding was approved should be shredded in the office. Destruction of the records must be in accordance with the provisions of an approved Records Schedule.
- Documentation of records destruction should be maintained internally by the office responsible. This may be in the form of a log recording the records series, end date of records (where applicable), date of shredding and signature of the employee responsible.

HOW TO REQUEST APPROVAL FOR ACQUISITION OF A SHREDDER

Requests for acquisition of an office paper shredder must be made in writing to the Manager, Government Records Office, Archives of Manitoba (at the address below). Requests should state the exceptional circumstances which make the procurement of a paper shredder necessary, and indicate the internal procedures that will be followed to ensure that destruction of records is undertaken in accordance with an approved Records Schedule and appropriately documented.

CONTACT

For more information on this policy or the government records management program, contact:

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