RECORDS MANAGEMENT SERVICES

METHODS OF RECORD DESTRUCTION

There are four methods that are generally acceptable for destroying records. However, it is important to note that, when dealing with confidential information such as law enforcement and personnel information, these types of records must be destroyed in a secure manner so as to prevent them from being reconstructed by unauthorized parties.

Shred: This method is most suited for the security destruction of confidential records such as the ones mentioned above.

Burn: This method is most likely confined to the rural parts of the state where unregulated burning is still allowed.

Landfill: This method requires that the records be buried in a trench 3 to 4 feet below the surface of the landfill and immediately covered over to prevent the wind from blowing records about. It is recommended that, when possible, once the records are placed in the trench, they be sprayed with water to facilitate a more rapid decomposition.

Recycle: This method is desirable for nonconfidential records where possible. It promotes good conservation and reuse of paper resources.

Remember to check whether the records you want to destroy are the subject of a legal hold order! Municipalities should keep a record of the records destroyed, regardless of whether destruction is coordinated at a centralized or decentralized level, to be able to show that destruction took place in the normal course of business. A log or form used to keep track of records destruction should include the following information at a minimum:

- Date of destruction.
- Destruction method.
- Volume of records destroyed, usually in estimated cubic feet.
- Records descriptions, such as the types and date ranges of the records destroyed [for instance:
- Election records (2005) or project files (1979—1980)] or a listing of the specific file folder titles,
- depending on the level of tracking the municipality wants to do.
- Who authorized, supervised and/or accomplished the records destruction.
- Retention Schedule reference numbers.