



May 13, 2013

TO: Records Offices and Authorized Agents

FROM: Government Services

SUBJECT User's Guide to Storage and Use of Archival (Acid Free) and Double Walled Boxes

Box Storage procedures:

1. Acid Free and Double-Walled storage boxes should be stored in their original master shipping cartons until they are used.
2. The boxes and cartons should be stored off the ground and in a location that is not prone to moisture.
3. Fluctuations in heat and humidity may damage storage boxes. The temperature variations also encourage pest infestations and promote the growth of mold; therefore, an agency should maintain their storage boxes in a temperature and humidity controlled environment (approximately 70°F and 50% relative humidity).
4. The basic rule of thumb for maintaining storage of boxes: Store the boxes in the same manner as if they already contain the records they are purchased to protect.
5. The Delaware Public Archives (DPA) will not accept moldy or water damaged boxes for the transitory or permanent storage of records. The appearance of mold indicates a serious condition and agencies should immediately contact DPA when it is discovered. Please DO NOT move or try to remove mold.

Using boxes to store records:

1. Replace boxes that are physically damaged (exhibiting such characteristics as broken hinges or missing flaps) and no longer capable of supporting or protecting archival records adequately with new storage containers.
2. Test the pH level (acidity) and alkaline reserve of boxes that are of an unknown or suspect quality to determine whether they shall be replaced with new acid-free boxes. The pH is measured using a standard, scientific scale from 0 to 14. Values between 0-7 will indicate that the boxes are acidic and values of 8-14 indicate the boxes are acid-free.

Inexpensive pH test pens from art, photography and scrapbook suppliers can be used to test boxes and papers for acidity.

3. Recommended record storage procedures.

A. Do not over pack boxes. Files will be damaged when they are forced in and out boxes that contain too many records. Allow approximately one to two inches of space at the end of each box.

B. Do not under pack boxes. When boxes are not filled to capacity, records will bend, slump, become curved, and distorted. Agencies should use corrugated spacer boards to support records in an upright position when files are stored in partially filled boxes.

a. Temporary record boxes may use corrugated spacer boards made of normal cardboard.

b. Permanent record boxes must use acid-free corrugated spacer boards.

C. Spacer boards should be folded along the score lines at each end and be positioned in the backs of boxes so that the folders rest against the flat side of the board.

a. The State of Delaware does not have a contract for spacer boards; therefore, this is an open market item. Spacer boards may be made from boxes/lids.



D. Place records in boxes that are large enough to accommodate them without damage. Archival boxes are available in a variety of sizes.

E. Examples for processing records for storage may be found in the following records management handbooks located on the DPA website:

a. [Prepping Boxes for Permanent Storage](#)

b. [Prepping Boxes for Short Term Storage](#)

F. Do not store permanent records in areas where the temperature and humidity are not regulated (e.g. portable storage units, basements, attics, sheds or other facilities without the ability for heating and cooling). Extreme temperature and humidity changes can cause rapid deterioration.

G. The State of Delaware has a contract pertaining to the purchase of acid free and double walled records storage boxes:

State of Delaware Contract #: GSS12458-STORAGE_BOX
ACID FREE, DOUBLE-WALLED AND DESTRUCTION STORAGE BOXES

THE PAIGE COMPANY
PO BOX 443, 1 Paul Kohner Place, Elmwood Park, NJ 07407

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Point of Contact: Peter Brown:
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References:

[Records Transfer and Destruction Boxes](#)
[Preparation of Records for Permanent Preservation](#)
[Preparation of Records for Temporary Storage](#)
[Procedures for Ordering Records Boxes](#)
[User's Guide to Processing Destruction Notices](#)
[User's Guide to Processing Transfer Documents](#)