

Authorised Destruction Methods

Purpose

The purpose of this advice is to describe the appropriate destruction methods for various types of ACT Government records. This advice should be used in managing ACT Government records, and can also be applied to other government information and data holdings.

Background

ACT Government records can only be destroyed according to a records disposal schedule issued by the Director of Territory Records. Individual officers should generally not destroy ACT Government records, but should consult with their organisation's records manager to ensure all destructions are properly approved. The Territory Records Office provides a range of advice on the processes for approving the destruction of Government records.

The physical destruction of records, once approved, should ensure that the records, information and data are irreversibly destroyed or deleted so that they are no longer usable or accessible. Destruction methods should also be environmentally sustainable.

Destroying hard copy records

Hard copy records, including paper, film, audiotape and photographs should be destroyed using one of the following methods:

- pulping
- shredding appropriate for any applicable Disseminating Limiting Marker or national security classification applied to the record
- burning in an industrial incinerator.

Burning should be used only in exceptional circumstances.

Destroying electronic records

Magnetic media such as tapes containing information that can be destroyed should be completely erased, not merely deleted or overwritten. This may also be necessary for storage devices such as computer hard drives if the devices themselves are also to be disposed of.

For many other storage media it may also be necessary to destroy the physical medium on which the records, information or data is stored. This includes cutting, crushing or shredding CD-ROM and DVD storage media. Further resources on the destruction of storage media are available in the *Destruction of Data on Storage Media* Fact Sheet from Shared Services IT.

Security considerations

The ACT Government's Protective Security Policy Framework may specify particular requirements for destroying information that is national security classified or sensitive for other reasons. At no time should ACT Government records be sent to rubbish tips, placed in industrial rubbish bins or placed in general recycling bins. Organisations should generally use professional office paper recycling services to destroy all of their hard copy records, information and data, and should consider using secure paper recycling services for all types of official documents.