
Handling Records

Correct handling of files will aid in preserving them for as long as they are required:

- Handle with care.
- Ensure your hands are clean and free from food, grease and hand creams.
- Use pencil when working near archival records, not marker pens or ink pens.
- Avoid tearing pages off the file pin.
- Do not use a wet finger to turn pages.
- If you need to mark a page in a file use a piece of clean white paper – avoid using 'post-it' notes and remove the paper when finished.
- Do not use adhesive tape to repair tears. It will discolour and degrade the paper and eventually fall off.
- Polypropylene, polyethylene or polyester plastic bags are very useful for placing damaged pages back on files and isolating photographs and other materials from other pages on the file.
- File pins and other metal pins will eventually rust. Use stainless steel pins and paper clips. Placing a piece of archival quality paper between the clip and the document will prevent damage to the paper.
- If folios are protruding from files then the papers should be carefully re-aligned. Any torn or loose folios can be placed into a polyester sleeve.

Storage Equipment

- Shelves should be made of coated metal. Wooden shelving should be avoided, as it can release harmful vapours, can contribute to the spread of fire and may harbour insects.
- Shelves should start at least 150 mm off the floor in case of flood.
- Paper records should not be stored on the top of shelving units as they will be too close to ceiling lights and there is also the possibility of water damage from fire sprinklers.
- Aisles between shelving should allow easy access to, and removal of, the records.
- Suitably sized tables should be located next to the storage cabinets, so that staff can comfortably and safely check the contents of boxes and drawers and retrieve individual items.
- Storage drawers should be clearly labelled with their contents so that items may be retrieved with a minimum of handling. To prevent damage to the items when the drawers are opened and closed, they should:
 - operate smoothly
 - have stops to prevent them from being pulled completely out when they are opened
 - have a lip at the front to prevent items from falling onto the floor and one at the back to prevent them from falling behind the drawers
 - never be overfilled