



The  
**BUSINESS RECORDS MANAGEMENT**  
**BULLETIN**



A Service of **BUSINESS RECORDS MANAGEMENT**

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## **CONTAINERS—THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY**

The good containers are standard-size record boxes that will fit on steel racks having exact dimensions to accommodate X-number of boxes. The bad containers are off-size, non standard boxes that waste rack space and may not be stackable. The ugly ones are the boxes so broken down that they are not protecting their contents, or are in danger of falling apart when handled, or are contaminated with mold or insects.

The merits of cardboard record boxes made of “virgin” cardboard vs. those made of recycled materials prompted a lively on-line discussion among records managers. Some participants felt there was no difference in strength. Others stated the difference came in how a box was made: whether it was glued or stapled; single wall or double wall; and how it was folded and assembled. Construction of hand holes was mentioned as well. (For some detailed information on how paper is processed to become the inner and outer linings of corrugated cardboard, especially as it relates to the 200 pound test that is frequently quoted in talking about storage boxes, go to [www.paigecompany.com](http://www.paigecompany.com) and click on the catalog link.)

Ratings for compression and drop strength were important. For most, 35 pounds was the maximum load although 40 pounds was used by one records manager. Another factor is how often boxes will be pulled and then replaced, with their weight being dragged across the lid of the box below. To be considered is the retention schedule and usage level. If it is short and the records are not actively used, then lower-priced boxes (of either kind of material) may make sense.

Some managers stacked boxes four high while others stacked five high. Keeping boxes stacked correctly so that weight is distributed on the sides of the boxes and not the center is highly important. In its directions for transferring records from an office or agency to a Federal Records Center, the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA)



gives a detailed diagram for stacking 50 boxes of records on a pallet with 10 boxes in each of five layers. Four boxes on each row are placed perpendicular to the rest of the boxes in that layer. These boxes were numbered 1 through 50, and Box 50 is on the bottom row and Box 1 is on the top row. NARA specifies that pallets should be banded with steel, plastic or cord straps before shipping. Find a link to this diagram under Shipping of Records at: [www.archives.gov/frc/records-transfer.html](http://www.archives.gov/frc/records-transfer.html).

### **How to pack a box for transferring records to offsite storage.**

In addition to NARA’s instructions, other institutions have their own guidelines for readying records for movement to storage. All state that boxes should not be packed tightly, leaving 1-1/2” to 4” of space for retrieval of records and refiling them. Make sure all records are facing the same direction and can be easily read. There should be no materials stuck into the sides of the files nor on top. Some organizations do not want hanging folders in the boxes, saying they break down boxes and make them dangerous for staff to handle. Others do not want plastic file folders, manilla folders only, to aid in eventual shredding or recycling.

Each organization will determine exactly how boxes should be labeled but generally this information will include the company or department name, the record series with earliest and latest dates of records within, what portion of a series is within the box, and the box number and total number of boxes (Box 1 of 12, 2 of 12, etc.).

All records in a box must have the same date for destruction. The box may contain more than one series, but only if all the records have the same destruction date. This is a crucial necessity to make retention and destruction schedules function as they should.

### **What about using large transfer boxes?**

Generally sized about 15"x10"x24", these boxes may have internal cardboard drawers that slide out for better access. Standard-sized record boxes, 12"x10"x15", usually weigh about 35 pounds when full. But the large transfer boxes may weigh as much as 60 pounds. Whether in a corporate record center or at offsite storage, staff members should be trained on how to handle these larger, heavier boxes in ways that will prevent accidents that lead to back injuries or other forms of physical harm. According to the United States Occupational Safety and Health Administration, back injuries are the number one workplace safety problem, accounting for one of every five workplace injuries or illnesses, and one-fourth of all compensation indemnity claims.

### **Why non-standard boxes are non grata.**

The steel shelving used in commercial records storage centers is sized to fit standard size boxes for paper records. When non-standard boxes are used, they waste shelf space and usually require more shelf space to accommodate them. The client ends up paying for this. In some situations involving large amounts of records, it may be advantageous for the owner of the records to have them re-boxed into standard containers if the records must be kept for a very long time. Standard boxes are useful if large quantities of records must be transferred back to the owner's office for searches by staff or attorneys. Maintaining standardized systems for moving records as well as storing them will maintain the economies of scale that benefit both sides.

There are times when containers with special dimensions are needed for rolled up maps or blueprints or charts. X-ray boxes are generally 18"x15"x5-1/2" and some have handles. Microfilm or microfiche records need acid-free boxes; diazo prints need sealed plastic film boxes. There is a wide spectrum of containers tailored for electronic media such as hard disks, cartridges, optical disks, floppy disks,

magnetic tape reels, removable hard drives and more. Some cases are designed for transporting media while others are storage cases. Electronic records copied to optical or magnetic media need secure storage in climate-controlled space or Electronic Records Vaults (ERVs). This is the place for backup and vital records as well.

### **These boxes have a bad case of the uglies.**

The following are the kinds of boxes that a storage contractor does not want to find on his or her dock. Boxes with mold whose spores can spread in the air and serve as food for pests including silverfish or firebrats. Boxes with corners nibbled away by mice or rats. Boxes with tiny bits of black or brown debris that indicate insects have made this their home. Boxes full of records still damp from some past disaster with rain or a flooded office or a sprinkler system that went off intentionally or by mistake.

Also suspect are boxes with loose lids and torn hand holes, and in such broken and battered condition that they may fall apart when lifted up to shelving, or may collapse if one or two boxes are stacked on top of them.

Boxes that arrive without clear identification as to subject or series, with labels that have been torn during transit or lost entirely, or with numbers partially covered with tape, will slow down the process for everyone and will cost the client money.

As for the contents of containers, storage contractors cannot accept items or materials that are hazardous such as flammable items, those that exude fumes such as silver nitrate film, or those that would attract insects or other vermin. There may be times when a contractor will have to consult his or her attorney to see if storing certain items or materials will be a liability issue.

Before making a large purchase of containers, talk with your storage contractor to learn about the variety of containers that would be right for your purpose.

## BRM receives NAID Certification

Over the past several months, Business Records Management (BRM) locations in Johnstown and Erie have received AAA certification from the National Association for Information Destruction (NAID) for secure document destruction procedures. In Erie, BRM is the first and only information management company to be so certified.

The AAA NAID certification is the highest level of certification in the shredding industry. It is awarded to companies that adhere to stringent and comprehensive document destruction methods, while meeting security requirements that are designed to protect the privacy and confidentiality of all shredded information.

Both locations underwent lengthy audits prior to being awarded the certification, and are required to subject themselves to annual security audits and occasional surprise audits in the future to maintain the certification. The NAID Certification Program establishes standards for secure destruction processes, including such areas as facility and vehicle security, employee hiring and screening, operational destruction process and insurance. At BRM, the same employees who face NAID scrutiny also control the

company's other services, including records storage and management, backup tape storage and email archiving.

"Identity theft is the fastest-growing crime in the country, and the security of company records is one of the top critical issues that businesses face," said BRM president Steven Wright. "Our clients have always known that their information is in good hands whether it's being stored or destroyed, and this certification provides them with an added assurance."

NAID is an international watchdog organization for the information destruction industry. The association enforces the ethical standards and high security of companies that provide destruction services, and educates business, industry and government of the importance of destroying discarded information.

"Many companies offer information destruction services, and that number grows constantly. The reality is that the security and stability of these companies varies considerably," said NAID Executive Director Robert Johnson. "Some firms have less than acceptable security. In a few instances, we have discovered companies that misrepresent their capabilities."



***Only NAID certified service providers bear this logo.***

To verify that a firm is NAID Certified, visit: [www.naidonline.org/certified](http://www.naidonline.org/certified)

## Employee Profiles



**Tracy Kaib** joined BRM in June 2004 as the Executive Assistant to BRM's President, Steven B. Wright. Her roles include supporting Steven in all endeavors and pulling all the strings together, both inside and outside of BRM, but she doesn't limit herself to

those activities. She enjoys working with people and has been pleased to contribute to the continued success of BRM and its president.

Tracy was born in Pittsburgh, PA but raised in Marietta, GA. Outside of the office, she enjoys spending her time with her daughter, Abby, and her significant other, Guy. She enjoys life to its fullest and loves country music, camping, traveling, helping others and Christmas. Tracy feels that her biggest accomplishment is her daughter.



**John Pudliner** has been a member of the BRM team since 2005, and has been in the industry since 1999 with Stonycreek Shredding and Storage. John is the Operations Manager at the Johnstown facility, and he organizes, plans, staffs, executes, and approves all activities for that

location. Under his direction, BRM achieved AAA NAID certification in June 2007.

John enjoys being part of the growth that has taken place in this industry. His favorite part of working for BRM is to be responsible for offering services to the Central Pennsylvania business community that had not been previously available.

In his spare time, John enjoys spending time with his wife and two children, hunting, fishing and cutting fire wood. He really loves the outdoors.

### Congratulations eNewsletter 4th Quarter Winners

Congratulations to **Ms. Sharon Rosati** of Ericsson, and **Mr. John Walter** of Innovative Systems. They both received a \$50 retail gift card.

On behalf of everyone at BRM, thanks again and we hope you have a great time shopping!



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