

filing. Open-shelf filing is very desirable because of the ease of handling large bulky files and the minimum amount of floor space required. Despite the term "open-shelf" they do come with doors that can be locked for security if necessary.

Whether you use file cabinets or open-shelves, the filing system can remain the same. With some open-shelf filing, the tabs are placed on the end of the file folder, but not always if proper file guides are adapted to your use.

The matter of fire protection as well as protection from other hazards may indicate the need for fire resistant, locked file cabinets. These are relatively expensive and very heavy. Their weight may be a factor considering the floor-load capacity of your building. The expense is relative to the risk. What would happen if your building was destroyed by fire? Possibly there is a need to keep duplicate copies of vital files at an alternate location. This is relatively inexpensive and a good alternative to fireproof file equipment.

This discourse has been kept as simple as possible for a reason. Filing is simple, keep it that way. If your system gets too complicated, there is good cause to suspect you are doing something wrong. This subject is the opening move into the field of Records Management which is a rather lengthy topic in itself.

Records Management is a matter with which you should become familiar as soon as possible. It has to do with the creation of paper within the firm as well as its receipt into the firm, its flow during its active life, and its eventual disposition.

Microfilming has a great deal of application in modern business but for a great many reasons should be approached with caution and made the subject of a great deal of study. It has certain hazards as well, being rather expensive. It is not the panacea that some would have you believe.

Retention Schedules should be developed as soon as possible to prevent the unnecessary accumulation of files beyond their useful life. At the same time, these schedules should insure that nothing is destroyed prematurely. The modern tax structure and the great many government suits involving price fixing, anti-trust actions, etc., ad inf ad nauseum, make this a rather delicate subject. In fact, in some cases, you are better off if you destroy some records a little prematurely. Any retention schedule has an element of a "calculated" risk involved. In the area of Records Management, expert help should be obtained.

If any specific advice is desired on any related subject, please feel free to contact the author for such guidance as might be possible.

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