

Document Storage - Fragile Removals

Canonical: <https://www.fragileremovals.com.au/moving-house/document-storage/>

Details:

While a lot of documents can be handled digitally and 'in the cloud' these days, many people and businesses still like to – or need to – store plenty of physical documents.

A physical copy can provide another way to access information if a computer or IT system fails; it also needs protection from loss and unauthorised access.

A computer crash or a breach of your security systems could cause a lot of headaches if there is not another copy of your documents floating around.

There are legal obligations for businesses to keep records about finances, taxes, employees and operations.

The ATO describes a general five-year retention period, with different start dates and situations requiring records to be kept longer. Check the rule for each record category and any other obligations before disposing of documents.

These documents that the ATO requires you to keep include copies of invoices and receipts for goods you sell or services you provide, invoices for goods or services you buy or bills you pay, payments to employees, financial statements, tax return information, bank account and credit card statements and end of year stocktake records.

Even for a small business, the piles of paper documents can quickly build up – and get in the way.

Why document storage is a better way

If your house, garage or small business premises is swimming in boxes of documents, you should consider document storage.

Off-site storage can free space and provide a separate location for physical records. Confirm security, environmental conditions and retrieval arrangements before relying on the service for business-critical documents.

Boxes of documents are not only an eye-sore at homes and businesses, but they can also be a safety hazard and take away much-needed space which could be better utilised for other things.

In addition, you want to make sure that any confidential information in your files is behind lock and key so it is not put at risk of theft.

You also want your documents to be at the smallest possible risk of being ruined by fire or flood.

These are just some of the reasons why so many people and small businesses choose to store their documents off-site at storage facilities.

How to organise your documents for storage

Before putting your documents into storage, there are a few things you might want to do – including making sure they are well-sorted.

If they are not already, separate documents by type and file them in chronological and alphabetical order.

Creating a colour-coded system can also make it easier to keep track of your documents.

Be sure to clearly label the boxes you are storing your documents in with what they contain. Consider digitising documents for access and backup. Verify that scans are complete and readable, and confirm retention and original-document requirements before destroying paper records.

Document storage in Melbourne and Perth

If you are looking for a storage facility for your documents, we can help.

We offer document storage in Melbourne and Perth. Tell us the quantity of boxes, how long you expect to store them and how often you will need access so we can discuss a suitable arrangement.

Ask us to confirm the facility address, current access hours, required notice, collection arrangements and charges for your chosen storage format. Agree how an authorised person can retrieve records before sending active or time-critical files into storage.

For a storage estimate, call us today on 1800 500 584 .

Decide what belongs in storage

Separate active records from archive records before booking. A file needed for a transaction next week may need to remain with the responsible person, while older records can be boxed for planned retrieval. Keep an inventory that makes this distinction clear. The most suitable arrangement depends on how often you need access, who is authorised to collect records and how quickly an urgent request must be met.

Group documents by purpose, date range and owner. Financial files may include sales invoices, purchase invoices, bills, payroll records, financial statements, tax information, bank and credit-card statements and stocktake records. Those categories are useful for organising boxes; they do not all share one disposal date.

Check the ATO's record-keeping overview and its guidance on records kept longer than five years . Ask the person responsible for your records to establish the retention schedule before packing. Storage staff cannot determine the disposal date from a box label alone.

Create an index that works without opening every box

Give each box a unique identifier and record its document category, date range and responsible owner in a separate index. Keep enough detail to locate a file while avoiding unnecessary confidential information on the outside. Colour coding can help distinguish categories, but use written identifiers as well so the system remains understandable when colours are similar or labels are replaced.

Keep the index accessible outside the storage location. If it exists digitally, make sure an authorised person can still retrieve it when the usual office computer is unavailable. Check a sample file against the index before the boxes leave. Correct an unclear label while the contents are still easy to inspect.

Choose boxes suited to paper records and their intended handling. Paper can create a heavy load before a large box appears full. Follow the box supplier's loading guidance and discuss handling with the removal team. Do not infer a safe loaded weight from the box's volume. Inspect boxes and closures, and tell the team about damaged containers before collection.

Agree access, protection and responsibility

Compare storage formats with your retrieval needs. Ask who can enter or request a box, what identification or authorisation is required, how collection is booked and whether handling or retrieval has a separate charge. Confirm the address and service arrangements for Melbourne or Perth rather

than assuming every facility offers identical access.

Tell us if records need particular environmental protection. Ask for the facility's relevant security, fire and flood precautions and environmental conditions before committing sensitive records. Discuss insurance separately from physical security and confirm that the proposed arrangement meets your organisation's requirements.

Record the handover and keep the index current

Check box identifiers and quantities at collection and delivery. Note visible damage and keep the handover details with the index. When a box is retrieved, record who received it and whether it has been returned, replaced or authorised for disposal. An accurate index becomes less useful if records move between boxes without an update.

If a file cannot be located, check the last recorded movement and the box identifier before arranging repeated searches. If a box is wet or damaged, document the condition and contact the storage provider for an appropriate handling plan. Do not silently rebox affected records and lose the information needed to investigate the problem. For an office relocation, coordinate this archive plan with the office moving guide .

Does every business document have the same five-year retention period?

No. The ATO describes a general five-year retention period, but different start dates, longer-retention situations and other obligations can apply. Group records by category and have the person responsible for them establish the applicable retention schedule using current guidance. Record the review date on the archive index without exposing confidential contents on the carton. Do not destroy originals merely because they have been scanned or stored for five years.

How do I arrange access to stored documents?

Ask us to confirm access hours, required notice, who can retrieve a box, identification or authorisation requirements and any retrieval charges for the facility and storage format you book. Explain whether you expect frequent access or occasional archive retrieval, and discuss urgent requests before committing time-critical files. Keep active records with the appropriate person until a suitable arrangement is confirmed. Record the agreed process so authorised colleagues can use it consistently.

What should be recorded on a document-box index?

Give every box a unique identifier and record its document category, date range, responsible owner and storage location or reference. Add the agreed retention-review date and keep a retrieval history showing who took a file or carton and whether it was returned. Use an external label that supports identification without unnecessarily revealing sensitive contents. Keep an accessible, controlled copy of the index outside the storage location so an authorised person can request the correct box without searching the whole archive.

How should I prepare business records for off-site storage?

Separate active files from archive material, then group the archive by purpose, date and owner. Check that cartons suit the load, avoid overfilling heavy paper boxes and label them against the index. Confirm the quantity and retrieval needs when requesting storage in Melbourne or Perth. Ask about security and environmental arrangements before relying on the facility for important records. Digitising may improve access, but check scan completeness and original-document requirements before deciding what paper

can be removed.

How should document collection and return be controlled?

Nominate the people authorised to request records and agree the facility's collection or retrieval process. Have requests identify the box and the person receiving it; record the transfer and expected return on your own index. Keep frequently needed records outside deep archive storage where appropriate. If responsibilities change, update the authorisation list rather than assuming the facility knows. Discuss urgent retrieval needs in advance so an important business deadline does not depend on unconfirmed warehouse access.