

Filing Basics for Electronic Records

Set up a new agreed-upon structure for managing new information *as it is created*.

- Decide on what folders you need:
 - Think about functions, activities and transactions. This will help with retrieval, and make it easier to apply retention periods and develop security classifications.
- Avoid having folders 4-5 layers deep

Establish some rules.

1. Decide on authorizations. Who can:
 - Add, modify and delete folders and documents?
 - Access folders and documents?
 - Establish naming conventions for folders and files/documents
 - Avoid unintelligible names such as non-standard abbreviations, initials, and numbers.
 - Names should contain enough descriptive information, independent of the file's location as this could change.
 - Identify the official record.
 - Use unique names, simple and easy to understand
 - Make names as short as possible (<25 characters)
 - Use alphanumeric characters only – avoid special characters such as: `!@#$%^&*~\|'<>`
 - Use underscores `_` and dashes `-` to represent spaces.
 - Use date standards, ie: YYYY-MM-DD
 - Use version numbers, ie: v01, v02; use the word “final” without a ‘v’ number on the final version.
 - When using numbers, leading zeros will help with sorting files. Use **01, 02** for short lists, and **001, 002** for lists that may grow past **100**.
 - Put the components of your naming conventions in logical order based on retrieval. For example, if you retrieve by date, put that first.

Examples:

- **2015-05-15_building_staff_mtg_minutes.pdf**: Building staff meeting minutes for May 15, 2015.
- **2015_emerg_plan_for_franklin_bldg.pdf**: 2015 Emergency Plan for 1111 Franklin St. Building.
- **FY17_its_budget_draft.pdf**: Draft ITS budget for Fiscal Year 2017.
- **2015_its_org_chart_11x17.tif**: 2015 ITS Organizational Chart for printing on 11x17 paper.

Regularly review your structure. Make sure it works for you, make changes as needed.