

## Why is it important to protect confidential information?

Many state and federal laws identify confidential or sensitive information that must be protected. Agency management is responsible for identifying applicable laws for each business function and for informing affected employees. Each law has different penalties for violations. Records containing confidential information need to be destroyed properly to:

- Protect and maintain the privacy of individuals
- Maintain the public's trust in government
- Prevent identity theft, financial theft and fraud
- Avoid the costs associated with compromising confidentiality, including:
  - Fines
  - Individual notification
  - Credit monitoring
- Prevent legal and/or disciplinary action against employees



## Records Management Services

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## Records Management Services

### Destruction of Confidential Records

Maintaining Public Trust



## Confidential Destruction

Confidential destruction prevents reconstruction of destroyed materials and the inappropriate release of confidential information. The State of Michigan competitively bid a contract with a vendor (Vital Records Control - VRC) to provide these services to Michigan government agencies.



The contract requires that items be destroyed to a tiny particle size to prevent reconstruction. The vendor can destroy paper, microfilm, computer hard drives, disks, tapes, uniforms and more. Please contact the vendor if you have questions about specific types of materials, witnessing destruction, etc.

## State of Michigan Vendor - VRC

- Locked bins are available for storing records until they are picked up for destruction (only use bins that are labeled with the VRC name)
- Each location that hosts a bin is linked to an agency's index code for billing
- Flexible scheduling for pick-up of materials is available
- Vendor must destroy records within 24 hours of pick-up (chain of custody is documented)
- Transportation and processing areas are secured to authorized employees
- Employees are bonded and must pass background checks
- Paper particles are recycled, and plastic particles are incinerated

**VRC Contact: 616-735-2900**



## Warnings About Other Destruction Methods

- Shredded records may leave confidential information visible, if the shreds are too large
- Shredded records can be scanned and reconstructed
- Bags of shredded records contain a treasure trove of information for dumpster divers
- Trash and recycling containers are not locked
- Trash and recycled materials remain intact and all content is visible
- Trash and recycled materials may be transported to other states or countries
- Trash and recycled materials could be accessed by anyone
- Trash and recycling handlers may not receive security screenings

