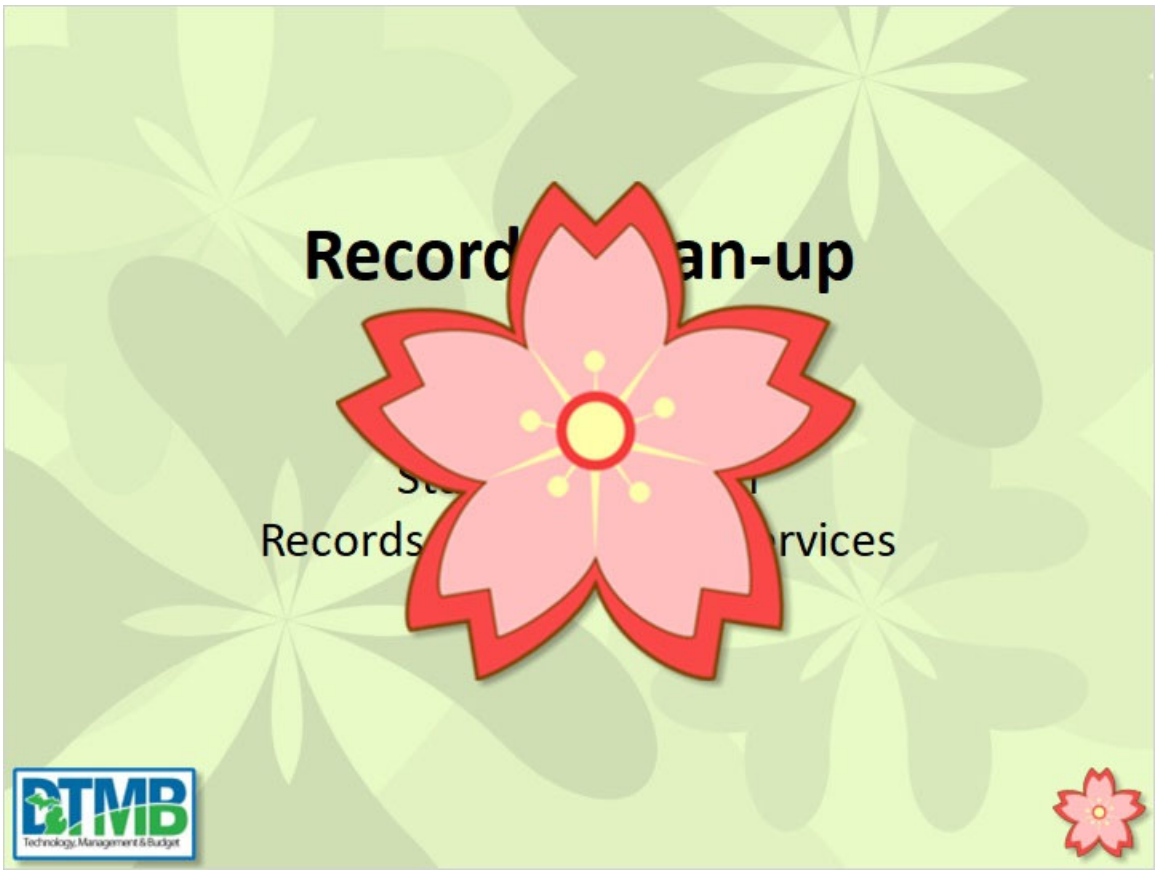
Records Clean-up



Notes:

Welcome to the training module titled, “Records Clean-up.” This training is offered by the State of Michigan, Records Management Services.

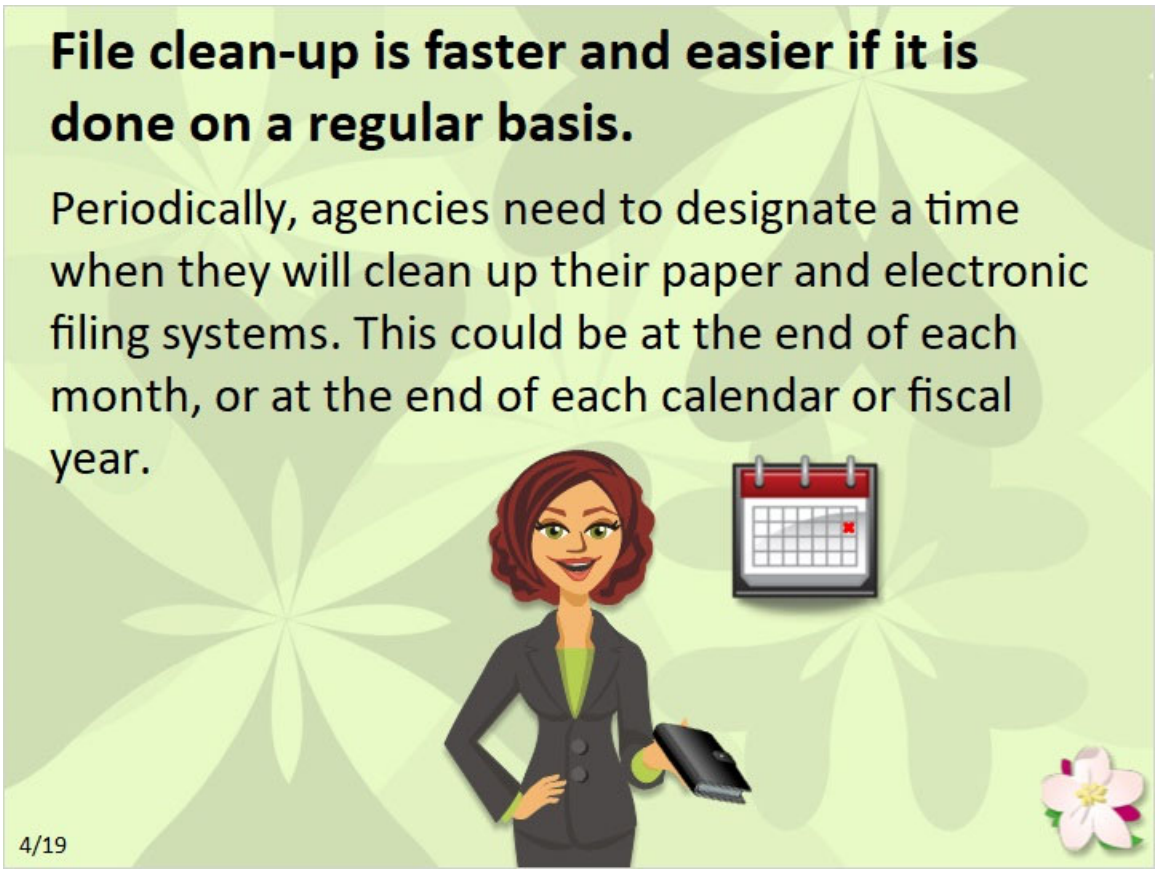
Notes:

After this training you will be able to reduce clutter by routinely cleaning up your office's records, and securely destroy your office's confidential records.

Notes:

Think spring! It’s time to:

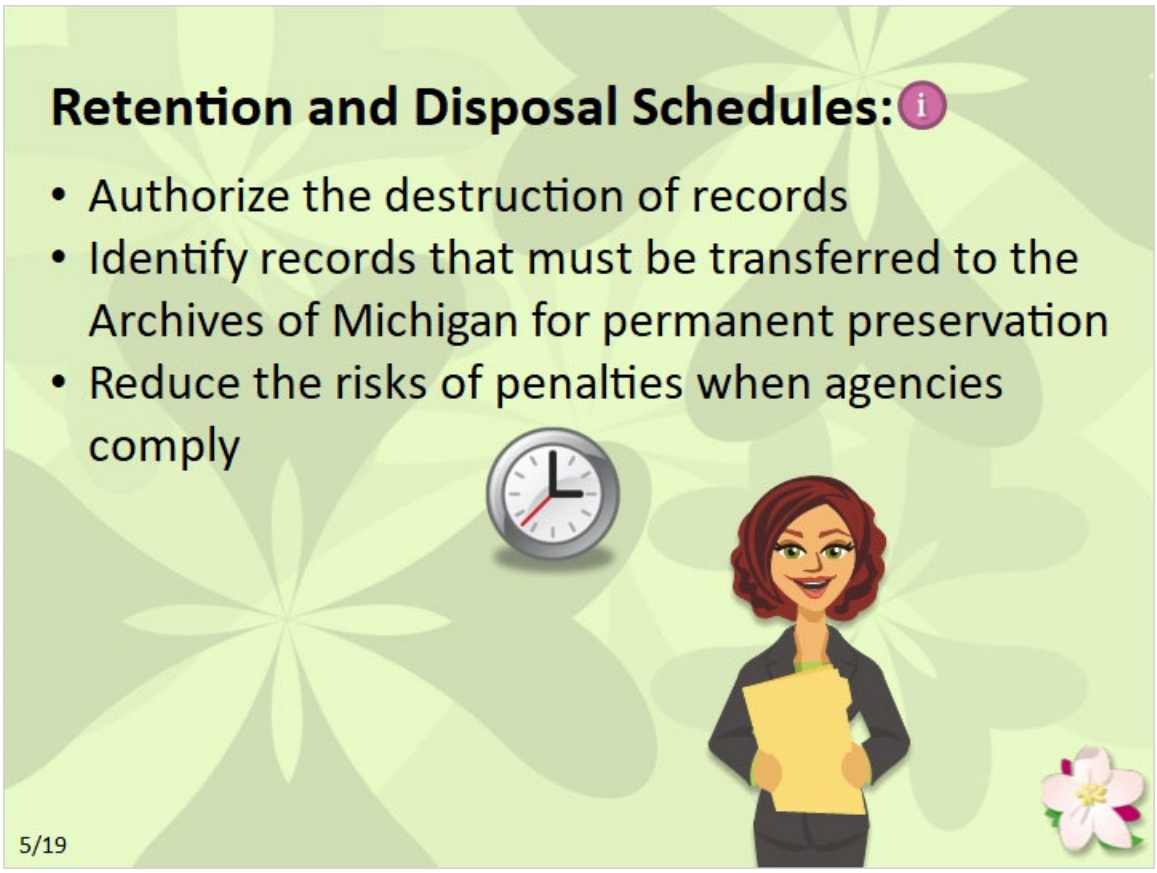
- Pack up records that should be stored off-site
- Dispose of records you don't need
- Reduce the clutter in your office and electronic storage spaces



Notes:

File clean-up is faster and easier if it is done on a regular basis.

Periodically, agencies need to designate a time when they will clean up their paper and electronic filing systems. This could be at the end of each month, or at the end of each calendar or fiscal year.



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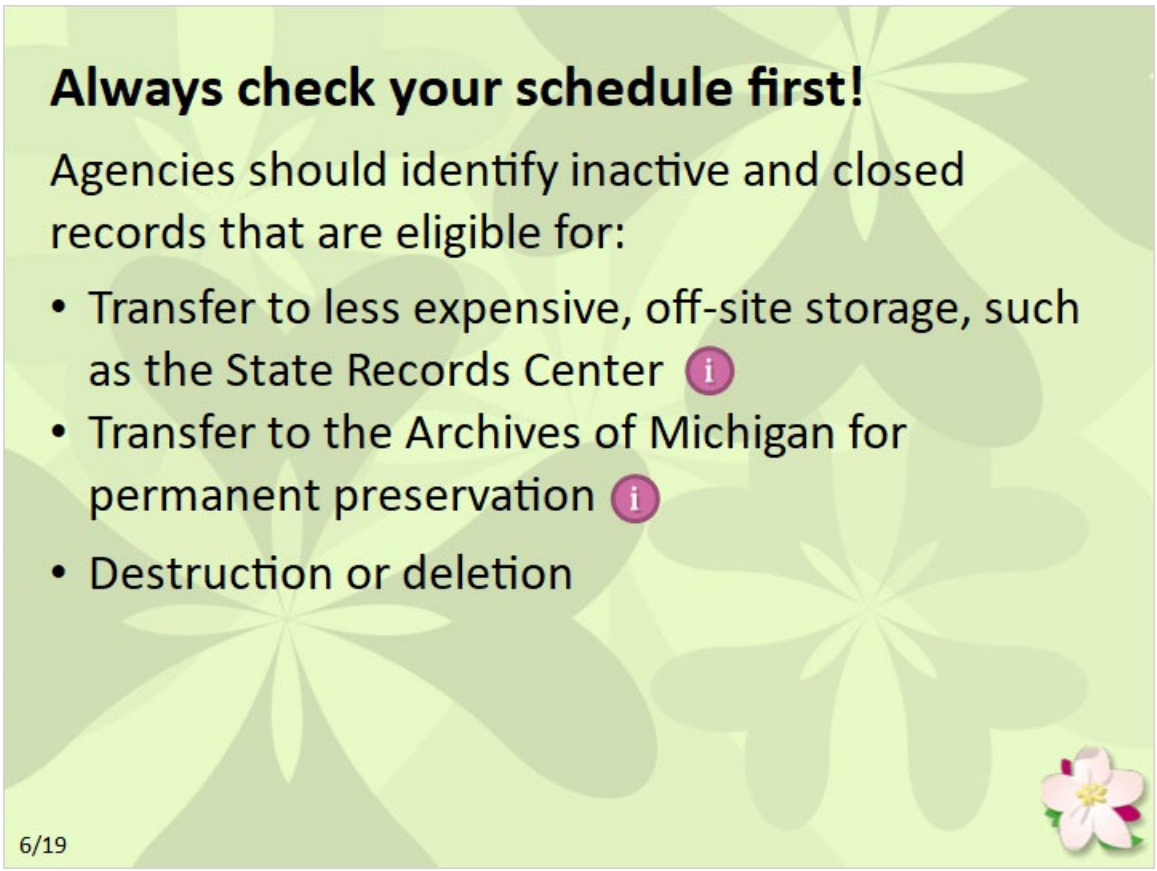
Notes:

Retention and Disposal Schedules

- Authorize the destruction of records
- Identify records that must be transferred to the Archives of Michigan for permanent preservation
- Reduce the risks of penalties when agencies comply

To learn more about schedules, see the training module, “Understanding Records Retention.”



Notes:

Always check your agency's schedule before starting a cleanup project. Agencies should identify inactive and closed records that are eligible for:

- Transfer to less expensive, off-site storage, such as the State Records Center (physical records only).
- Transfer to the Archives of Michigan for permanent preservation (paper and electronic records).
- Destruction or deletion.

Note: The State Records Center is operated by DTMB - Records Management Services, and it can only be used by state government. The Archives of Michigan, also part of DTMB, preserves historical records for state and local government.

Notes:

Do not destroy records that are not listed on an approved schedule! The default retention period for unscheduled records is permanent, because there is no authorization to destroy them.

If your office has records that are not listed on a Retention and Disposal Schedule, contact Records Management Services to revise the schedule and add the records.

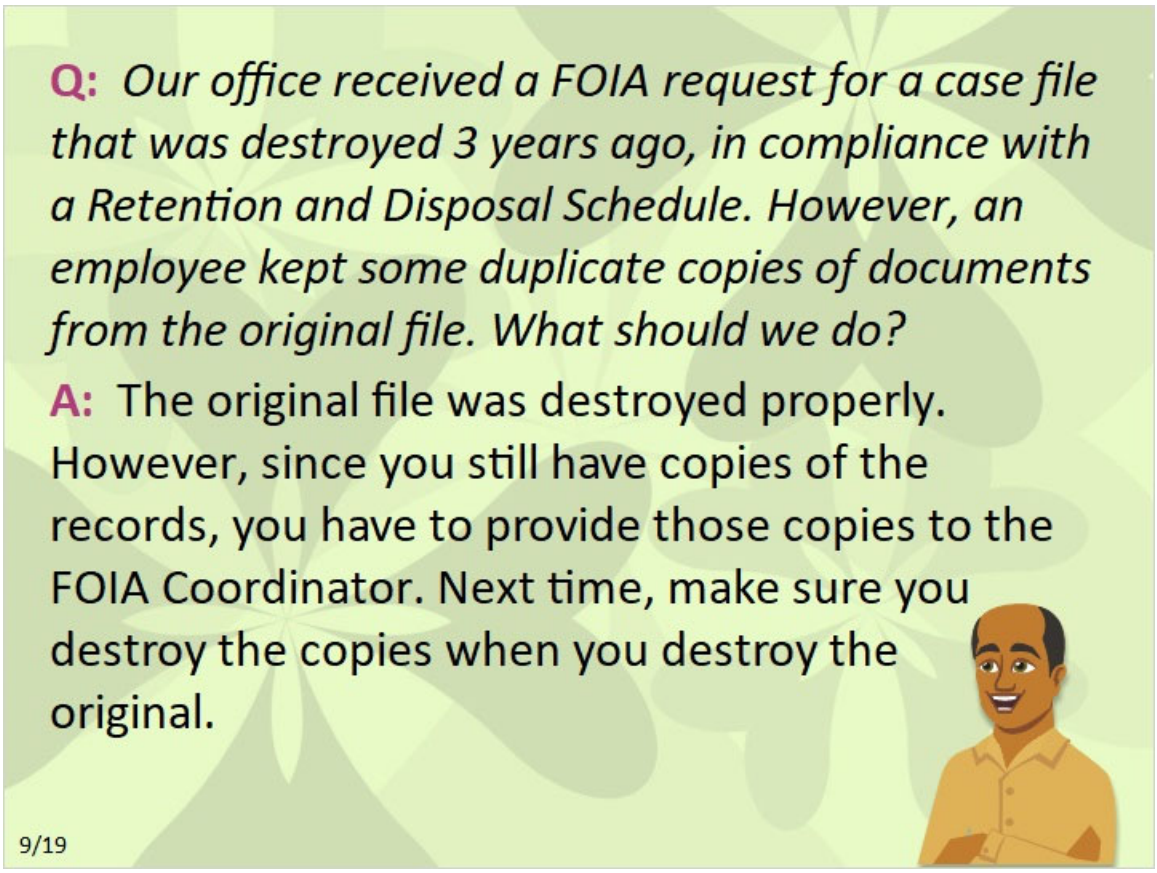
No single individual has the authority to set a retention period or override an approved schedule.

Notes:

Prevent the accidental destruction of requested information or evidence.

You need to know which records are affected by current Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests and litigation holds when cleaning up records.

Check with your manager about legal holds before destroying records.



Notes:

Question: Our office received a FOIA request for a case file that was destroyed 3 years ago, in compliance with a Retention and Disposal Schedule. However, an employee kept some duplicate copies of documents from the original file. What should we do?

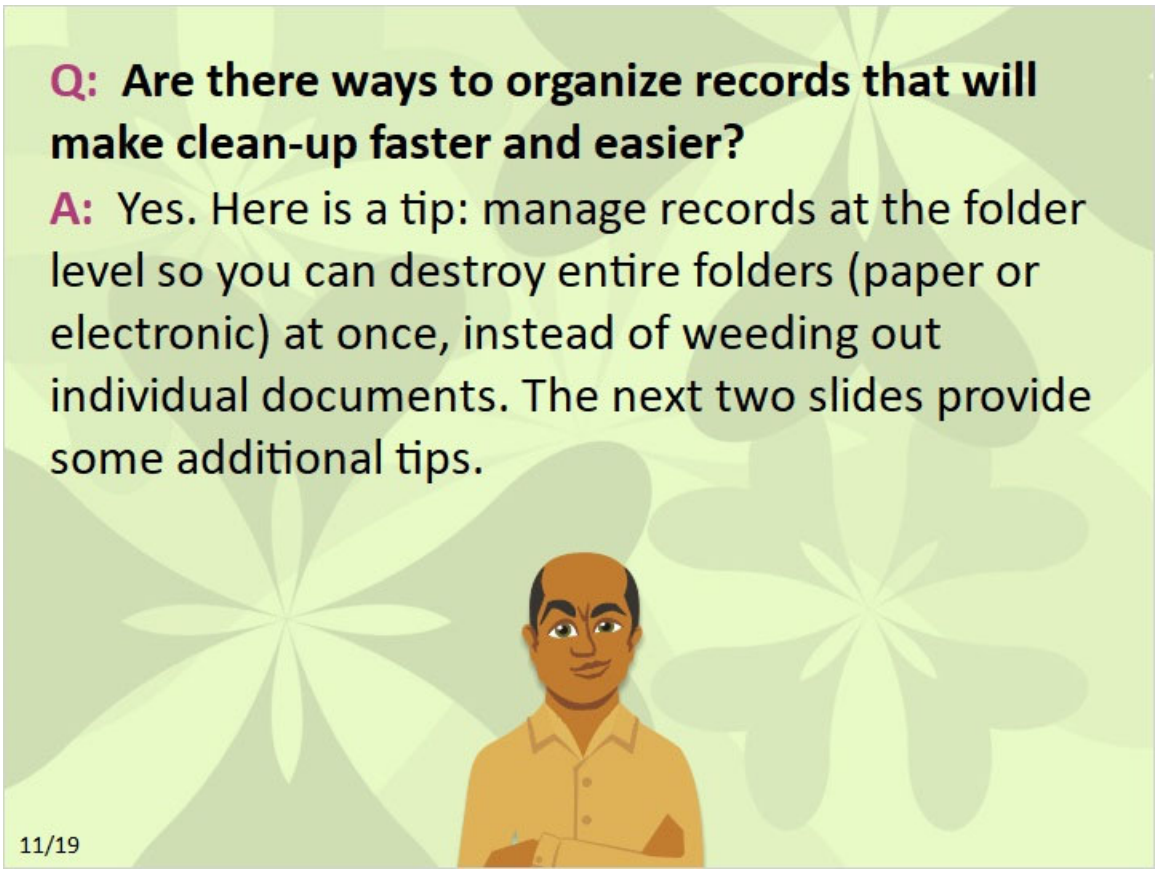
Answer: The original file was destroyed properly. However, since you still have copies of the records, you have to provide those copies to the FOIA Coordinator. Next time, make sure you destroy the copies when you destroy the original.

Notes:

Cleaning up records can feel overwhelming, especially if it has not been done for a while.

If you have a big clean-up job, you may want to encourage employees to dress casually and clear their calendar of appointments for the clean-up day.

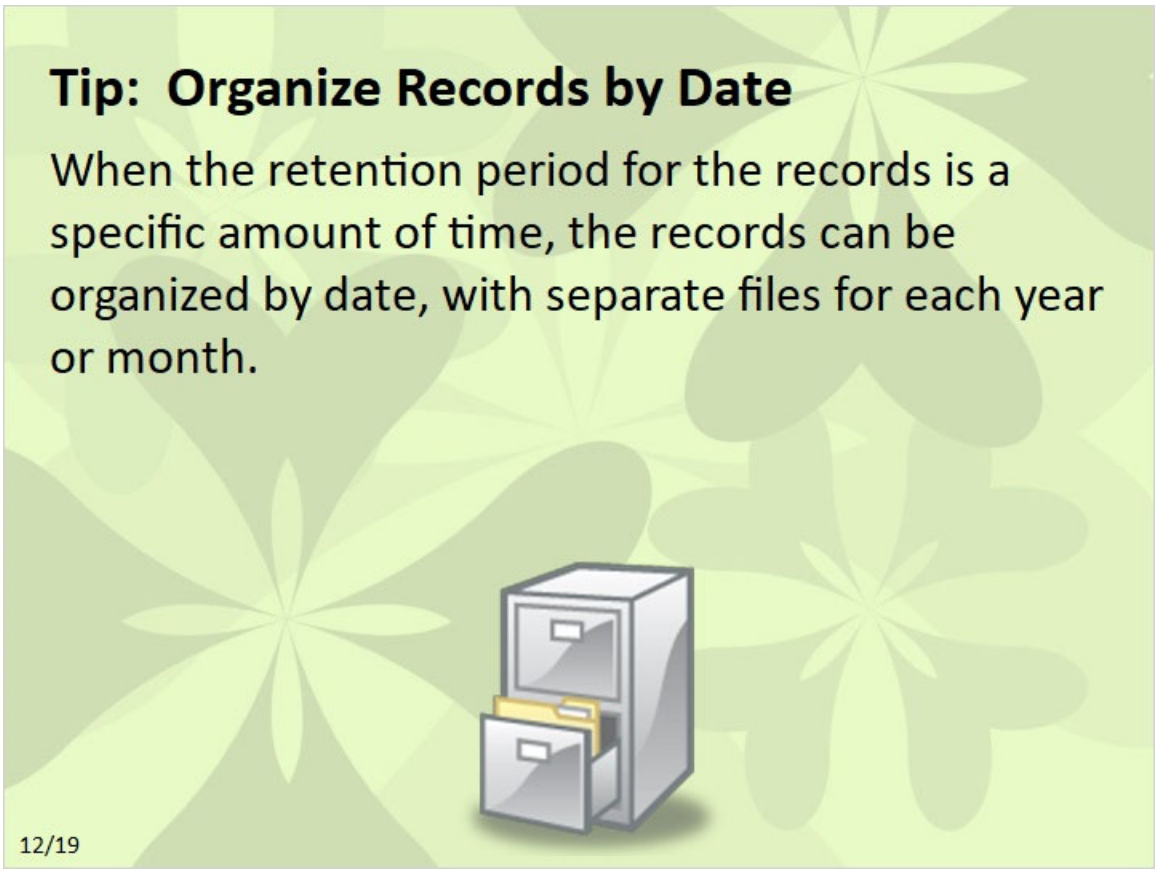
Don't forget to clean up email accounts and network shared drives on clean-up day!



Notes:

Question: Are there are ways to organize records that will make clean-up faster and easier?

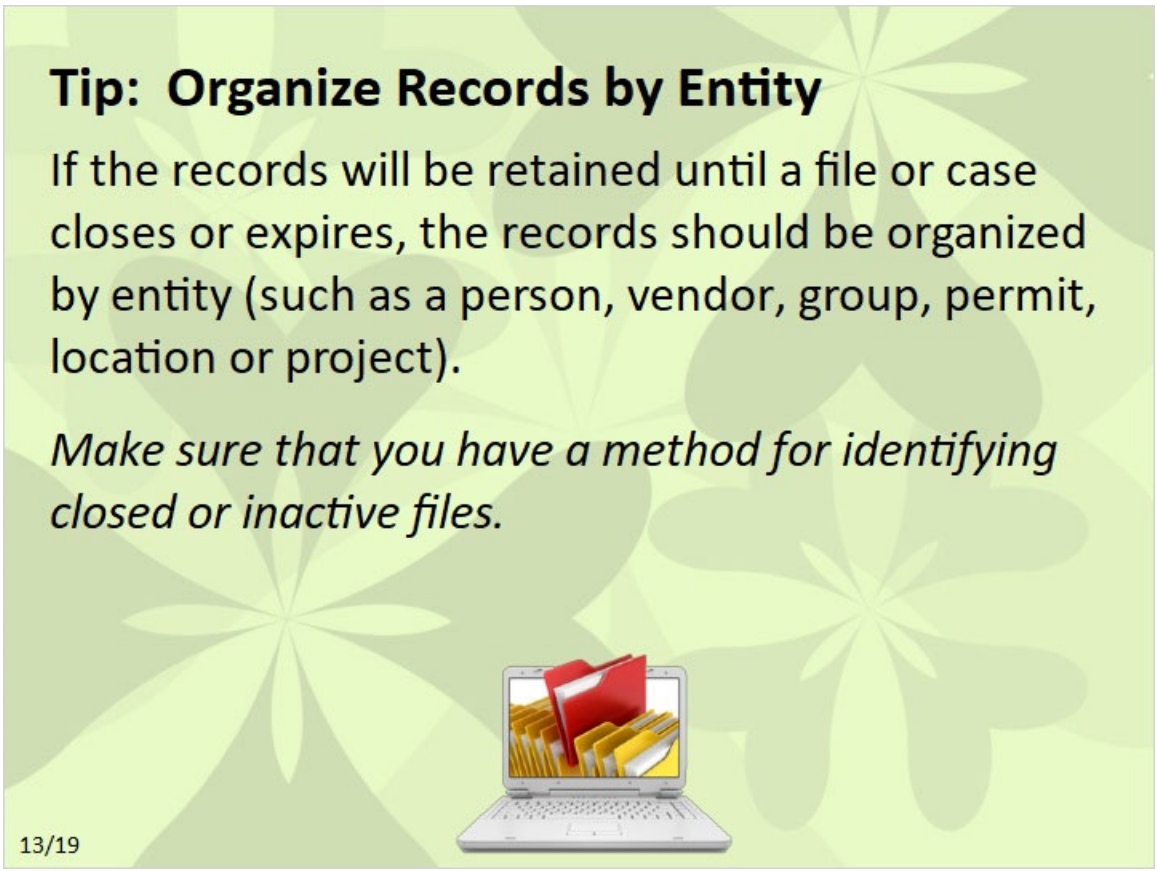
Answer: Yes. Here is a tip, manage records at the folder level so you can destroy entire folders (paper or electronic) at once, instead of weeding out individual documents. The next two slides provide some additional tips.



Notes:

Tip: Organize Records by Date

When the retention period for the records is a specific amount of time, the records can be organized by date, with separate files for each year or month.

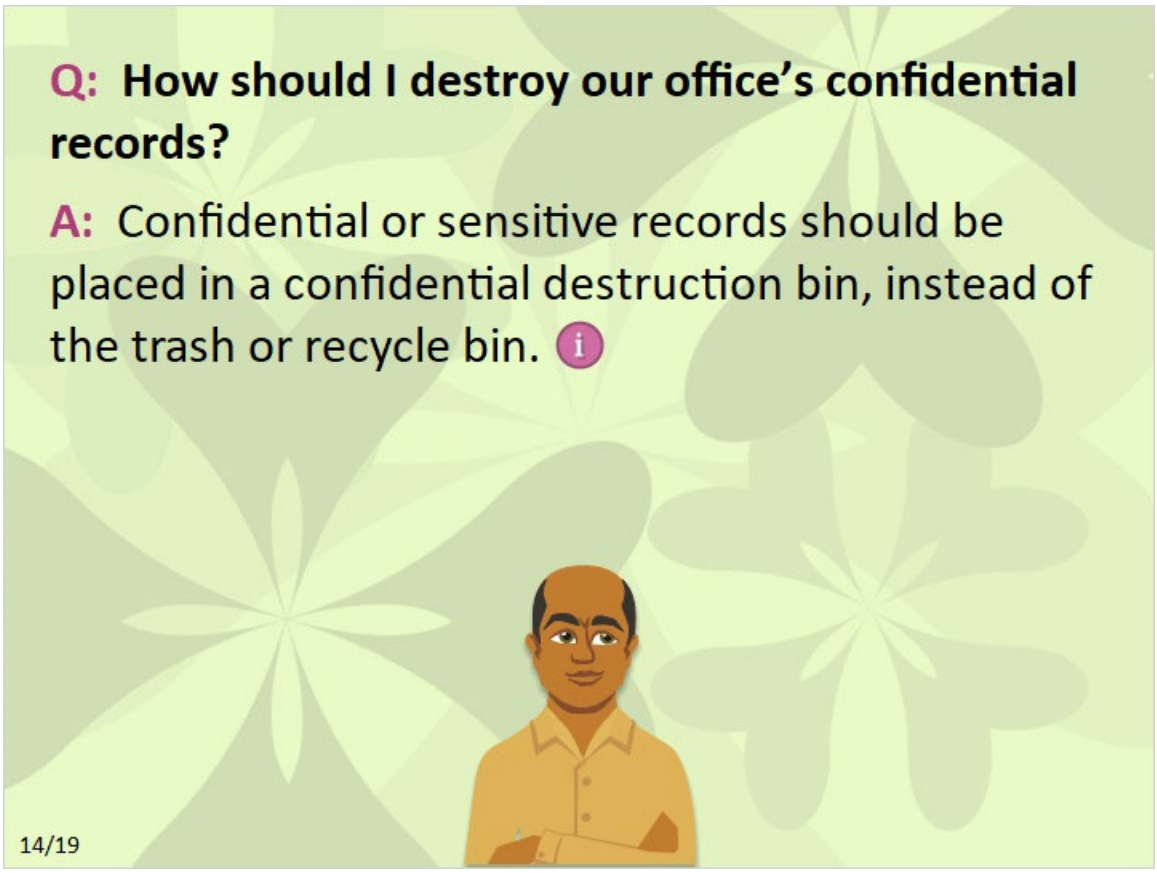


Notes:

Tip: Organize Records by Entity

If the records will be retained until a file or case closes or expires, the records should be organized by entity (such as a person, vendor, group, permit, location or project).

Make sure that you have a method for identifying closed or inactive files.



Notes:

Question: How should I destroy our office's confidential records?

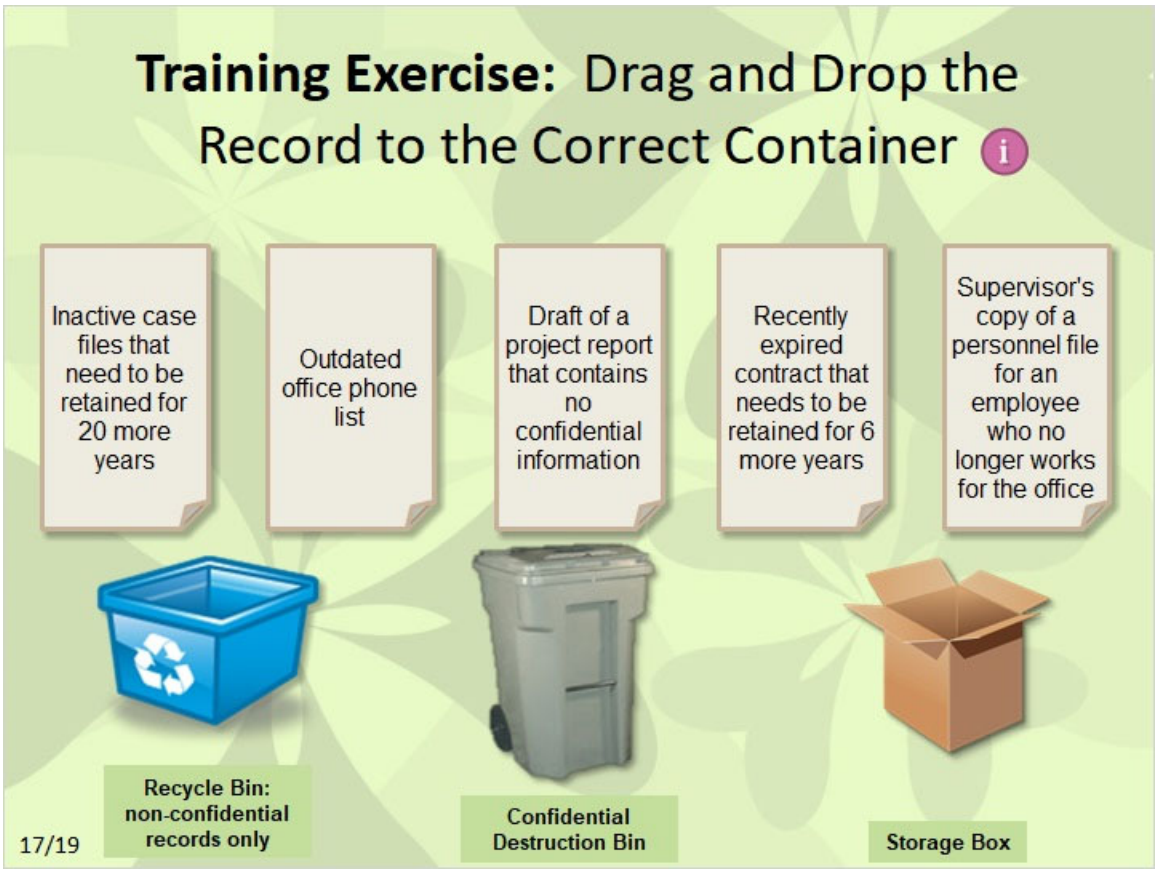
Answer: Confidential or sensitive records should be placed in a confidential destruction bin, instead of the trash or recycle bin. Waste that is placed in trash and recycling bins is not transported, handled and destroyed in a protected manner.

Notes:

Locked bins are available in many state office buildings for collecting confidential records that have met their retention period. The confidential records placed in these bins are destroyed to a tiny particle size and then the material is recycled.

Notes:

Confidential records destruction services have procedures, safeguards and tools that are designed to prevent the inappropriate release of information that the State of Michigan is responsible for protecting.



Notes:

Should the following records be placed in a recycling bin, a confidential destruction bin, or a storage box?

- Inactive case files that need to be retained for 20 more years (answer: storage box)
- Outdated office phone list (answer: recycling bin)
- Draft of a project report containing no confidential information (answer: recycling bin)
- Recently expired contract that needs to be retained for 6 more years (answer: storage box)
- Supervisor's copy of a personnel file for an employee who no longer works for the office (answer: confidential destruction bin)

Notes:

It feels good to have a clean workspace! It's good for employee morale. Implementing Retention and Disposal Schedules periodically and consistently will keep records organized, and will make it easier and faster to find the records you need.

Notes:

Find Records Management online at inside.michigan.gov/recordsmanagement for state government, and www.michigan.gov/recordsmanagement for local government. Thank you.