



State of Michigan

Records Management Services



Frequently Asked Questions about Digital Imaging

Q: Is it legal to scan paper records and destroy the original after the digital image is created?

A: Yes. If the paper records are scanned in compliance with the [Standards for Capturing Digital Images from Paper or Microfilm \(effective August 15, 2005\)](#), the paper can be destroyed and the digital images can be used as records. Compliance with these standards ensures an acceptable reproduction of the original that can be used in a court of law as evidence.

***Note:** Municipal construction documents have special requirements, see [MCL 24.402a](#) "Reproduction of construction documents; electronic or digital file format; requirements; disposal or destruction of certain construction documents; definitions" for additional information.*

Q: Do I have to keep paper records if the records have a long retention period?

A: No. The standards do not require that paper or microfilm be used to retain records; however, computer technology changes quickly. Migrating paper records to digital images comes with the responsibility of making sure those records remain accessible throughout their life cycle, which may include migrating them to a different format at some point.

Q: Our office is running out of space to store records. Will digital imaging solve this problem?

A: Maybe. There is no one-size-fits-all solution for how records should be stored and managed. Agencies should conduct a needs analysis to identify the right solution for each type of record. Records Management Services (RMS) published a [tip sheet](#) to help offices clean up their office space, and a [brochure](#) to help determine if digital imaging is a good solution. State agencies may want to use the State Records Center to address their storage issues, and local governments may want to find an [off-site storage service](#).

Q: Does the State of Michigan certify vendors or equipment that is compliant with the Standards?

A: No. However, the State of Michigan does have a contract with a vendor for digital imaging and microfilming services that can be used by state and local government agencies. The contract is competitively bid, so agencies can use these services without going through a bidding process. RMS monitors the vendor's compliance with the Standards, handles billing and other customer service issues. Each record reproduction project will have a written Statement of Work that specifies the agency's responsibilities, the vendor's responsibilities and the finished product.

Q: I have other questions. Who can I call for help?

A: Contact DTMB Records Management Services at 517-335-9132 or visit us at www.michigan.gov/recordsmanagement.