

SOP Template: Physical and Digital Document Sorting Protocols

This SOP establishes **physical and digital document sorting protocols**, detailing standardized procedures for organizing, categorizing, and managing both paper and electronic documents. It includes guidelines for labeling, filing, indexing, and archiving to ensure efficient retrieval, secure storage, and proper record-keeping. The goal is to enhance document accessibility, reduce misplacement risks, and maintain compliance with organizational and legal requirements.

1. Purpose

To define standardized procedures for sorting, labeling, filing, indexing, and archiving physical and digital documents to ensure efficient retrieval, secure storage, and compliance with regulations.

2. Scope

Applies to all personnel handling organizational documents, both physical and digital.

3. Responsibilities

- Document Owners:** Ensure records are correctly categorized and submitted to proper storage mediums.
- Records Management Staff:** Maintain the accuracy, accessibility, and integrity of stored documents.
- All Staff:** Follow sorting protocols and report discrepancies immediately.

4. Definitions

Term	Definition
Indexing	Assigning identifiers or tags to documents for facilitated search and retrieval.
Archiving	Storing inactive documents in a secure long-term storage system.
Document Owner	Designated person responsible for document maintenance and management.

5. Procedures

5.1 Physical Document Sorting

- Receiving:** Stamp the receipt date, check document category, and assign to the relevant owner.
- Labeling:** Clearly label using predefined naming conventions (e.g., ProjectCode_Date_Type).
- Filing:** Arrange in appropriate folders, cabinets, or binders by category, date, or department.
- Indexing:** Log document metadata in the records register (physical or electronic index).
- Archiving:** Transfer inactive files to secure storage with restricted access. Maintain archive log.

5.2 Digital Document Sorting

- Uploading:** Save files using standardized naming conventions (e.g., YYYYMMDD_Project_Type).
- Classification:** Organize in dedicated folder structures mapped to departments or projects.
- Indexing:** Use document management systems (DMS) tags, properties, and metadata for tracking.
- Access Control:** Set folder/file permissions based on role and confidentiality level.
- Archiving:** Move outdated files to a secure, read-only archive folder. Record in digital archive log.

6. Labeling & Naming Conventions

- Physical:** Label with project code, date, type, and owner initials.
- Digital:** [YYYYMMDD]_[Project/Dept]_[DocType]_[Version].[ext]
- Example:** 20240610_HR_Policy_v2.pdf

7. Indexing & Record Tracking

- Maintain a master index for quick reference (physical: register; digital: DMS/log files).
- Include fields: Document Title, Type, Owner, Date, Location/Folder, Access Permissions, Retention Period.
- Review and update index quarterly for accuracy.

8. Archiving and Disposal

- Archive documents per retention schedule.
- Securely dispose of documents after expiry with proper authorization (shredding/purging digital files).
- Maintain destruction log with date, type, and authorization signature.

9. Compliance & Auditing

- Conduct periodic audits of random samples.
- Review labeling, filing, and access control for adherence to protocols.
- Log findings and corrective actions as needed.

10. Revision History

Revision	Date	Description	Author
1.0	2024-06-10	Initial SOP release	[Your Name]