

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

Confidential Document Handling and Shredding Processes

This SOP details the procedures for **confidential document handling and shredding processes**, covering proper identification, secure storage, controlled access, and authorized transportation of sensitive information. It also outlines the shredding methods to ensure complete destruction of confidential materials, compliance with data protection regulations, and proper documentation of the shredding activities to maintain information security and prevent unauthorized disclosure.

1. Purpose

To prevent unauthorized access, use, or disclosure of confidential documents and ensure their secure destruction in compliance with legal and regulatory requirements.

2. Scope

This SOP applies to all employees, contractors, and temporary personnel who handle confidential or sensitive documents during their lifecycle within the organization.

3. Definitions

- **Confidential Document:** Any document containing sensitive information that must be protected from unauthorized access.
- **Authorized Personnel:** Individuals who have been granted explicit permission to access or handle confidential documents.
- **Shredding:** The process of destroying documents such that reconstruction is impossible.

4. Responsibilities

- All staff: Identify and handle confidential documents as per this SOP.
- Supervisors: Ensure team compliance, provide necessary training, and oversee adherence.
- Records/Facilities Manager: Oversee shredding and maintain documentation of destruction.

5. Procedure

1. **Identification of Confidential Documents**
 - Label documents containing private, personal, financial, or proprietary information as "Confidential".
 - Refer to the organization's data classification policy to determine if a document is confidential.
2. **Secure Storage**
 - Store physical confidential documents in locked cabinets or secure rooms accessible only to authorized personnel.
 - Documents should not be left unattended in open or shared spaces.
3. **Controlled Access**
 - Grant access to confidential documents on a need-to-know basis only.
 - Maintain an access log for sensitive document storage areas.
4. **Transportation**
 - Transport confidential documents in sealed containers or envelopes.
 - Only authorized personnel may transport such documents outside secure areas.
5. **Shredding and Destruction**
 - Shred all confidential documents using a cross-cut shredder or equivalent secure destruction method.
 - Place documents awaiting shredding in locked shred bins, not general disposal bins.
 - Witness shredding of highly sensitive information when necessary.
6. **Documentation**
 - Record each shredding activity in the destruction log (see template below).
 - Include date, document types, quantity, name of person shredding, and witnesses (if applicable).
7. **Compliance**
 - Follow all applicable local regulations regarding data protection and destruction.

6. Documentation Template: Shredding Activity Log

Date	Document Type	Quantity	Shredded By	Witness (if required)	Remarks
yyyy-mm-dd	e.g. Client Files	e.g. 10 folders	Employee Name	Witness Name	-

7. Review and Training

- Review this SOP annually or after any incident/breach involving confidential document handling.
- Provide training to all staff upon hiring and as part of regular security awareness programs.