

# Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

## Secure Document Disposal and Shredding Process

This SOP describes the **secure document disposal and shredding process**, detailing the methods for safely handling, collecting, shredding, and disposing of sensitive documents to prevent unauthorized access and data breaches. It covers the classification of documents, approved shredding techniques, employee responsibilities, secure storage of documents prior to destruction, and compliance with legal and regulatory requirements to ensure confidentiality and protect organizational information assets.

### 1. Purpose

To outline the procedures for secure disposal and shredding of documents containing sensitive or confidential information in order to protect information assets and ensure compliance with applicable regulations.

### 2. Scope

This SOP applies to all employees, contractors, and third parties who handle physical documents maintained, generated, or received by the organization that require secure disposal.

### 3. Definitions

Term	Definition
Sensitive Document	Any record containing personal, financial, proprietary, or confidential information as defined by law or company policy.
Shredding	The process of physically destroying paper documents into small, unreadable pieces using approved equipment.
Retention Schedule	The period of time a document must be retained before disposal, as defined by policy or regulation.
Secure Bin	A locked, tamper-proof container for collection of documents prior to destruction.

### 4. Responsibilities

- **Employees:** Identify and deposit all sensitive documents for disposal in secure bins; follow this SOP.
- **Department Managers:** Ensure staff compliance; ensure sufficient and accessible secure bins; escalate non-compliance.
- **Facilities/Document Management Staff:** Manage collection, transport, shredding, and final disposal; maintain destruction records.
- **Compliance Officer/Data Protection Officer:** Audit disposal activities; update protocol as needed.

### 5. Procedure

- Document Classification**
  - Identify documents for disposal per organizational retention schedule and classification policy.
  - Only documents classified as confidential, personal, or sensitive are covered by this SOP.
- Secure Storage Prior to Shredding**
  - Place all sensitive documents scheduled for disposal in an approved secure bin immediately after use.
  - Ensure bins are kept locked and labeled “For Shredding.”
- Collection & Transport**
  - Authorized personnel collect full bins on a designated schedule or as needed.
  - Transport bins directly to an approved shredding area or secure holding area if immediate shredding is not possible.
- Shredding**
  - Use only approved cross-cut or micro-cut shredders (or authorized third-party shredding services) to render documents unreadable and irretrievable.
  - Complete shredding in a secure, access-controlled environment.
  - Log date, time, and responsible personnel for each shredding batch.
- Final Disposal**
  - Dispose of shredded paper via recycling or waste, as permitted by policy and regulation.
  - Certificates of destruction must be obtained from third-party shredding providers and retained for records.

## **6. Incident Reporting**

- Report any suspected loss, theft, or improper disposal of documents immediately to the Compliance Officer/Data Protection Officer.

## **6. Compliance & Legal Considerations**

- Follow all applicable data protection regulations (e.g., GDPR, HIPAA, local laws).
- Retain destruction logs and certificates as required by compliance guidelines.
- Conduct regular training and audits on document disposal procedures.

## **7. Records and Documentation**

- Maintain a log of all shredding and destruction activities including personnel, date, and method.
- Retain records as per organizational retention policy and compliance requirements.

## **8. Revision and Review**

- Review this SOP annually or upon significant regulatory or policy changes.
- Document all updates and communicate changes to relevant personnel.