



Guidelines for Selecting Storage Supplies

Summary: Selecting supplies to store records, whether temporary or permanent, can be complicated. This handout seeks to simplify the process by providing descriptions of products commonly used by the archival and records management community. Definitions of some of the terms appear at the end of the handout.

ARCHIVAL SUPPLIES

Record Storage Boxes — Acid-Neutral

Use for: *Temporary* storage and transport of records. Commonly used corrugated cardboard storage box for the temporary transport and short-term storage of permanent records. Boxes with separate lids and double layer flat bottoms are preferred for superior strength during handling and stacking. Avoid automatic set-up-type boxes with collapsing bottoms.

Guidelines:

- Constructed of sturdy, corrugated board
- Double strength end walls and double thickness bottom
- Color should be light fast and non-bleeding, such as tan or off white
- Have a pH not lower than 7.0

Record Storage Boxes — Acid-Free/ Low-Lignin, Buffered

Use for: *Permanent* bulk storage for a wide variety of paper records with long term value, as well as for photographic materials.

Guidelines:

- Constructed of sturdy, corrugated board
- Double strength end walls and double thickness bottom
- Color should be light fast and non-bleeding, such as tan or off white
- Have a pH between 7.0 and 9.5
- Contain a minimum 2% calcium carbonate alkaline reserve
- Contain no more than 1% lignin
- Be made from cellulose fibers (cotton or purified wood pulp)
- Should not have glued or stapled seams
- Passes the Photograph Activity Test (PAT), if being used to store photographic materials. (Vendor should be able to certify that the material passes the PAT.)



THE GEORGIA ARCHIVES
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Document Cases

Description: Upright, hinged-lid box with reinforced metal edges. Boxes come in two depths and in letter and legal size. Choose a consistent box size according to the predominant size of the documents within a single collection or series.

Size:

	<u>Width</u>	<u>Height</u>	<u>Depth</u>
Letter	12 ¼"	10 ¼"	2 ½"
Letter	12 ¼"	10 ¼"	5"
Legal	15 ¼"	10 ¼"	2 ½"
Legal	15 ¼"	10 ¼"	5"

Use for: *Permanent* storage of archival documents, not for records to be maintained temporarily. Should be used with archival file folders.

Guidelines:

- Constructed of sturdy, chemically stable, 60-point board
- Should not have seams or protruding edges that could pose damage to the contents
- Should fully close without gaps or handle holes (Cases with pull strings are preferred.)
- Have a pH between 7.0 and 9.5
- Contain a minimum 2% calcium carbonate alkaline reserve
- Contain no more than 1% lignin

File Folders

Description: A single piece of paper board folded along the primary score line.

Size:

	<u>Height</u>	<u>Width</u>
Letter	9 5/8"	11 ¾"
Legal	9 5/8"	14 ¾"

Use for: Secondary support for storing similarly sized letter and legal size documents before placing into document cases or record storage boxes.

Guidelines:

- Constructed of 10 point folder stock
- Reinforced 1" tab across the top of the back flap for identification
- At least two additional score lines above the primary score line on the front flap
- Color should be light fast and non-bleeding, such as tan or off white
- Have a pH between 7.0 and 9.5
- Contain a minimum 2% calcium carbonate alkaline reserve
- Contain no more than 1% lignin
- Made from cellulose fibers

Map and Print Folders

Description: Large sheets of folder stock folded flush and straight cut along longest dimension.

Size: Range from 18" x 24" up to 36" x 48"

Use for: Permanent storage of oversized flat paper items such as maps, newspapers, prints, and posters. The folder provides secondary support and should always be used in conjunction with a primary enclosure (large flat oversize/newspaper storage box) or a map filing cabinet.

Guidelines:

- Constructed of 10 or 20 point folder stock
- Should not be glued
- Color should be light fast and non-bleeding, such as tan or off white
- Have a pH between 7.0 and 9.5
- Contain a minimum 2% calcium carbonate alkaline reserve
- Contain no more than 1% lignin
- Made from cellulose fibers

Photographic Enclosures

Photographic materials (prints, negatives, slides, etc.) should be stored individually in a paper or plastic enclosure and then placed in standard size boxes. The three types of plastics that are acceptable for archival storage are polyester, polypropylene, and polyethylene. To determine if paper or plastic is more appropriate, discuss with the Preservation Services Manager at the Georgia Archives

Alkaline Buffered Paper Enclosures

Description: Paper envelopes and sleeves in a variety of sizes for storing photographic materials

Size: Range from 4 3/8" x 5 5/8" to 8 1/2" x 10 1/2"

Use for: Storing most all types of black and white and color negatives and prints, slides, as well as color processes, cyanotypes, blueprints, and albumen prints.

Note: Unbuffered paper may be preferred over buffered paper in some situations. Discuss with the Preservation Services Manager at the Georgia Archives.

Guidelines:

- Envelopes should have side seams, which are sealed on the outside
- Envelopes should not have flaps if they are to be placed into boxes
- pH neutral adhesive used to fasten the seams

- Have a pH between 7.0 and 9.5
- Contain a minimum 2% calcium carbonate alkaline reserve
- Contain no more than 1% lignin
- Passes the Photograph Activity Test (PAT), if being used to store photographic materials. (Vendor should be able to certify that the material passes the PAT)

Plastic Enclosures

Description: Plastic envelopes and sleeves in a variety of sizes for storing photographic materials.

Use for: Storing most types of high-use black and white and color negatives and prints. (Fragile paper based collections may also be stored in plastic enclosures.)

Size: Range from 2 ½" x 4" to 11" x 14"

Guidelines:

- Pure and chemically inert
- Naturally flexible, no added plasticizers
- Have adequate strength
- Should be clear; no coloring, dyes, or coatings
- No additives, such as UV inhibitors or slip-agents
- Flexibility of the film should match the need

Photograph and Print Boxes

Use for: Storing photographic materials in envelopes or sleeves. Photo boxes come in a variety of sizes. Store 10" x 12" and smaller items in upright boxes. Add rigid boards every six inches for added support. Larger items should be stored in flat (clamshell, drop front, or full lid telescoping) boxes.

Size: Various

Guidelines:

- Constructed of sturdy, chemically stable, 60-point board
- Should have reinforcing metal edges
- Should not have seams or protruding edges that could pose damage to the contents
- Should fully close without gaps or handle holes
- Have a pH between 7.0 and 9.5
- Contain a minimum 2% calcium carbonate alkaline reserve
- Contain no more than 1% lignin

Shelving

Use for: Long term storage of permanent archival records.

Guidelines:

- Constructed of heavy gauge steel
- Smooth and non-abrasive with rounded corners and no sharp edges
- Finish should be chemically stable; powder coating finish is preferred
- Adjustable shelves
- Shelves should be wide enough to fully support oversized volumes and various box sizes

NON-ARCHIVAL SUPPLIES

Record Storage Boxes (acidic)

Description: Corrugated boxes suitable for use in local government records centers where documents are NOT being stored for long-term retention.

Size: 12" W x 15" L x 10" H (one cubic foot)

Guidelines:

- Select a common single size to maximize shelving space
- Boxes larger than one cubic foot tend to be extremely heavy when full, placing strain on shelving and posing danger to staff.

Note: If local governments have archival records, follow storage guidelines for archival collections above.

DEFINITIONS

Alkaline reserve: Creates a buffering effect by neutralizing acidic gases that can be emitted by acidic documents stored in the enclosure.

Cellulose fibers: Cotton or purified wood pulp.

Lignin: A highly acidic substance that occurs naturally in plant matter, which if not removed causes paper to deteriorate and turn yellow rapidly.

Photograph Activity Test (PAT): The Photographic Activity Test (PAT) is a worldwide standard (ISO Standard 14523) for archival quality in photographic enclosures. Developed by the Image Permanence Institute at the Rochester Institute of Technology, this test predicts possible interactions between photographic images and the enclosures in which they are stored. The PAT is also used to test the components of enclosures, such as adhesives, inks, paints, labels, and tapes.

pH: pH values are calculated in powers of ten. When the pH is above seven, the solution is basic (alkaline), and when it is below seven, the solution is acidic.