

**Shredding-101**

Identity theft and unauthorized disclosure of private information has reached epidemic proportions. According to the Better Business Bureau, last year alone this crime claimed more than 8.9 million victims. But information theft is not just something that affects consumers. The FBI estimates that information theft costs American businesses as much as $24 Billion in losses each and every year.

With over 40 federal laws mandating that all businesses, healthcare facilities and financial institutions protect the confidential information of their customers, clients and patients, it’s imperative that you establish a shredding program. Failure to do so can expose your organization to severe fines, bad publicity and lost business.

**How to Choose the Right Shredding Company:**

**What type of shredding services do you offer?**

**INFORMATION SECURITY**

There are two types of secure shredding services; on-site and plant-based shredding. On-site shredding means all confidential materials are shredded on-site, at your location. Plant-based shredding means that all material is brought back to the company’s facility for shredding. If your organization wants to witness the shredding process without having to visit the shredding company’s facility, then choose a company that offers on-site shredding. If you’re looking for a more cost-effective option, then plant-based shredding is your best choice.

Absolute Shredding offers both on-site and plant-based shredding and the option to witness the entire process.

**Do you offer proof that you actually perform employee background checks?**

All shredding companies will say they perform employee background checks. But why take their word for it? Ask for proof that an independent auditor has reviewed both the background checks and drug tests of all shredding company employees that will come in contact with confidential information.

Absolute Shredding provides each potential customer, written documentation of background checks and drug tests, of every single member of our organization.

**Do you bale shredded paper in your own plant?**

Few shredding companies bale their own paper. After they shred your confidential information they have no choice but to hand it off to an uncertified recycling company…some of whom actually sell your shredded paper to the highest bidder as packing material.

Absolute Shredding controls your confidential information throughout the entire process by baling your shredded paper right in our own plant.

**Do you offer an “On Time or We Shred For Free” service guarantee?**

**CUSTOMER SERVICE**

You can’t afford to hire a shredding company that misses your pickup day. Because that means your security containers may be overflowing, putting your confidential information at risk. Insist that your shredding company offers an “On Time or We Shred For Free” service guarantee.

Absolute Shredding offers an “On-Time or We Shred For Free” Service Guarantee. If we miss your on-going service appointment, we’ll shred your confidential information for free.

**Do you offer “On-Call Shredding”?**

On-call shredding means that you just call whenever you need service. There are no regularly scheduled pickups and no monthly fees. That’s why most shredding companies refuse to offer this service. But if you’re not sure you’ll generate enough paper for a monthly pickup, why choose a shredding company that does not offer an on-call service option?

Absolute Shredding offers both on-call and regularly scheduled shredding services.

**What kind of insurance protection do you provide?**

Shredding companies provide general liability insurance to protect their customers in the unlikely event that confidential documents fall into the wrong hands. However, most limit this protection to $1,000,000. Make sure your shredding company provides at least $2,000,000 in general liability insurance.

Absolute Shredding exceeds industry standards with general liability insurance coverage of $3,000,000!

**Can you guarantee that you will never raise your prices?**

**COST**

Most shredding companies will quote you a low, low entry price just to get your business and then slam you with price increases year after year.

Absolute Shredding has a Lifetime Price Freeze Guarantee. Simply stated the low per-bin price you’re paying today will never increase, for any reason, for as long you remain our customer.

**Are there any hidden charges?**

Some shredding companies will quote you a low, low price and then slam you with hidden fees like fuel surcharges, security fees and pick up fees. Other shredding companies charge by the minute to shred your documents. So you’re actually paying them to go slow. Get an exact quote in writing and always ask if there are any additional charges.

 Absolute Shredding provides our services for a low fee, with no hidden charges.

**Do you offer a Free Annual Bulk Shred to your on-going service customers?**

All on-going shredding service customers need to shred outdated, stored documents on an annual basis. Yet few shredding companies give any bulk shred discount to these valued customers.

Absolute Shredding rewards our on-going service customers with a Free Annual Bulk Shred of at least 20 standard banker boxes.

**Will you guarantee that your on-going service will save us at least 40% over the cost of operating our office shredder?**

It’s easy for a shredding company to claim that their on-going service will save you money over the cost of operating your office shredder, but few will ever guarantee your savings.

Absolute Shredding guarantees that you will save at least 40% with our on-going service. If after 30 days you don’t feel we’ve met your expectations for savings, just call to           cancel the service and we won’t charge you a thing.

## **INFORMATION DESTRUCTION LAWS**

With identity theft and information fraud at an all-time high, the federal government has enacted over 40 information destruction laws to protect consumers. Here’s a synopsis of the three most significant pieces of consumer information protection legislation:

**FACTA**

The Fair and Accurate Credit Transaction Act (FACTA) requires that any individual or business that maintains personal consumer information must take reasonable care to protect against unauthorized access to this information, and they must also destroy personal consumer information before it is discarded. Violation of FACTA, which went into effect in 2005, can mean fines and penalties of up to $2,500 for each consumer record compromised.

**HIPAA**

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) sets national standards for the protection of personal health information. HIPAA, which went into effect in 1996, requires all healthcare providers, including any organization that transmits personal health information, to maintain the confidentiality of this information and to destroy the information before it is discarded.

**GLB**

The Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act requires that all financial institutions protect the confidential information of their clients. Banks, credit unions, mortgage companies, investment and financial services firms and insurance underwriters are among those affected. Fines for violating GLB can be severe. American United Mortgage Company was fined $50.000 for violating GLB (learn more).

**Security Breaches Nation Wide**

Think a security breach can’t happen to your organization? Think again! Since they began tracking security breaches in Jan. 2005, PrivacyRights.Org reports that as of this writing, over 510 million confidential files, in every imaginable industry, have been compromised.

## **INFORMATION DESTRUCTION OPTIONS**

From On-Site Shredding To Recycling…What You Need To Know About Your Information Destruction OptionsThere are many information disposal options from which you may choose. You can hire a shredding service, purchase an office shredder or simply recycle. The cost of each option varies, as does the level of security.Shedding ServicesShredding companies offer three types of shredding services, on-site and off-site. These services are similar in some respects because your documents and other confidential materials are placed in locked bins and then picked up at your location by a uniformed shredding company driver. Bins are usually provided free of charge and service is scheduled at regular intervals (usually weekly, bi-monthly or monthly).

**On-Site Shredding**

Level of Security - On-site shredding is a process that offers a high level of information security.

The Process - As the name implies, on-site shredding means that all confidential materials are shredded on-site, at your location. With on-site shredding a mobile shredding truck will arrive at your location and shred all your confidential information on-site. You can also watch the process from the beginning to end, giving you peace of mind that your confidential information was completely destroyed.

Cost- Prices range from $65.00 to $80.00 for on-going service.

Conclusion - If your organization requires that you view the shredding process, choose a company that offers on-site shredding.

**Plant-Based Shredding**

Level of Security – Plant-based shredding is a process that offers a high level of information security at a lower cost.

The Process – A uniformed driver removes the confidential materials from your locked bin and places them in a larger locked container. From there they are secured in a locked shredding company truck and brought back to a plant-based facility to be shredded. Once at the facility, the driver brings all the locked security containers into the plant, and the materials are shredded by certified workers, under video surveillance. Many plant-based shredding companies will also allow you to accompany the material and witness the actual shredding.

Cost- Prices are usually lower than on-site shredding. They range from $45.00 to $60.00 for on-going service.

Conclusion - If you want a shredding process that is both economical and highly secure choose a plant-based shredding company that allows you to witness the shredding process.

**Off-Site Shredding**

Level of Security – Off-site shredding is a process that does not guarantee any security.

The Process – A uniformed driver removes the confidential materials from your locked bin and places them in a larger locked container. From there they are placed in a locked shredding company truck and brought back to an unsecure, remote location (such as a parking lot) to be shredded. Off-site shredding is not as secure as plant-based shredding, because NO ONE, not the client, not a shredding company supervisor, and not the security cameras will witness the driver actually shredding the documents during the off-site process.

Cost- Prices are usually the same as plant-based shredding. They range from $45.00 to $60.00 for on-going service.

Conclusion - If a shredding company offers to shred your confidential documents “off site” ask where the actual shredding will take place. If they tell you they shred at a location that is anything but a highly-secure plant facility (with supervisors, video surveillance and alarms) then you should choose another shredding company.

**Do It Yourself Shredding (The Office Shredder)**

Level of Security – Office shredders offer limited information security.

The Process - Employees get rid of your confidential documents by “feeding the shredder.” Unfortunately, in many organizations the person chosen to perform this task is an entry-level employee making near minimum wage. They are also the most likely candidates to mishandle confidential information and that can put your organization at risk.

Cost - It sounds like a cost effective method, but when you consider that the average office shredder only shreds eight pages of paper at once, office shredding can easily take hours of employee time each and every week. Factor in wages and benefits, the initial cost of the shredder, plus upkeep of the equipment (blades have to be professionally sharpened) as well as depreciation of the shredder, do it yourself shredding can cost nearly twice as much as a shredding service.

Conclusion - Do it yourself shredding is better than not shredding at all, but it can cost up to twice as much as a shredding service and still leave your organization vulnerable to audits and lawsuits.

**Recycling**

Level of Security - None. When a company gives away paper for recycling they relinquish all rights to the information. If confidential information was not properly shredded and it falls into the wrong hands, your organization will be held liable.

The Process - Recycling your confidential documents is a dangerous practice. Here’s why. Most recycling companies hire minimum wage workers who have not undergone criminal background checks or random drug testing. These workers sort your documents, often in unsupervised areas. Then the sorted paper is stored for days, weeks or even months, until there is enough to sell. Your confidential documents, still intact, are then baled and sold to the highest bidder, where they may be stored again for even longer periods, until they are finally used to make new products.

Cost - None. Many recycling firms will pay for your recycled paper.

Conclusion - Never give your confidential documents directly to a recycling company. If you’re concerned about the environment, use a shredding company that not only recycles but also controls your confidential information throughout the entire process by baling your shredded paper in their own plant.

##  **DON'T LET THE OFFICE SHREDDER PUT YOUR ORGANIZATION AT RISK**

5 Reasons Why You Should Dump Your Office Shredder And Hire A Shredding Service

**Office Shredders Are Not Secure**

When employees handle their own document shredding even the most security-conscientious can leave stacks of confidential documents on their desks or next to the shredder, because they’re too busy to shred them in a timely manner. While others will simply toss them in the recycling bin when no one’s watching, just to avoid the hassle. These practices violate every safeguard regulation by exposing vital information that can be accessed by a number of high-risk groups including, disgruntled employees, minimum wage employees, deliverymen business associates and visitors.

**Office Shredders Can Cost Twice As Much As A Shredding Service**

Small businesses that operate an office shredder spend, on average, 15 minutes of staff time each and every day, shredding confidential documents. When you consider the average hourly wage, plus benefits and factor in depreciation and maintenance costs on the shredder, it costs over $95 per month to operate an office shredder. That's nearly twice as much as our regularly scheduled, on-site shredding pickup service.

**Office Shredders Can Leave You Vulnerable In Audits And Lawsuits**

Irregular shredding practices. That's the charge an auditor or lawyer can make when they discover your organization uses an office shredder. Why? Because in-house shredding programs don't adhere to a regular shredding schedule and they don't provide adequate documentation of what's been shredded, when it's been shredded or by whom. So when a question arises as to when and why a particular piece of information was shredded, organizations without documentation are susceptible to severe fines.

**Office Shredders Are A Safety Hazard**

In the last five years there have been more than 50 reports of injuries from office shredders, including lacerations and lost fingers. And while these cases are isolated, office shredders have sharp blades that can injure someone if they're not careful. Additionally, office shredders produce paper, plastic and metal dust fragments when left unchecked can get into the air ducts and create a fire hazard.

**Office Shredders Make A Big Mess**

Even though "shredder mess" is not a risk factor, it's still something that you'll have to deal with if you use an office shredder. Fragments of paper will fall onto the floor while dust builds up on the shredder, the shredder table and the floor.

## **6 SHREDDING MYTHS**

1. **Only large companies have confidential documents to shred.**

Fact: All companies regardless of size have confidential documents that they are required, by law, to shred.

1. **It costs less to use an office shredder than it does to hire a shredding company**.

Fact: Small businesses that operate an office shredder spend, on average, 15 minutes of staff time each and every day, shredding confidential documents. When you consider the average hourly wage, plus benefits and factor in depreciation and maintenance costs on the shredder, it costs over $95 per month to operate an office shredder. That's nearly twice as much as our regularly scheduled, on-site shredding pickup service.

1. **Using an office shredder is just as secure as using a shredding service.**

Fact: Office shredders produce strips of shredded paper that can easily be reassembled by “dumpster divers”. However the biggest risks associated with office shredders lies in how they are used. Many companies leave stacks of paper near their office shredder to be shredded later, while others use unskilled, low-paid workers that are more likely than others to steal confidential information.

1. **An information security breach can’t happen to us.**

Fact: Information security breaches have occurred in almost every conceivable industry. According to the non-profit watchdog group, PrivacyRights.org, since they began tracking data breaches in January, 2005 there have been, on average, 68 million confidential records compromised per year.

1. **The government never enforces fines for mishandling confidential information**

Fact: Actually, the federal government and the state Attorneys General’s office do enforce fines for mishandling confidential information that could cost a business thousands or even millions of dollars. However the real issue is not whether your organization can afford to pay the fines, but whether it can survive the loss of business that comes from bad PR associated with a data breach of confidential customer information.

6. **Recycling confidential documents is just as secure as shredding**

Fact: Recycling without first shredding is simply not secure. Most recycling companies don’t shred your confidential documents. They first hand sort the paper (pure white paper is worth more money) and then they bale and ship everything overseas. That means your confidential information can be compromised at any point in their process.