

Files Management Workbook

NEW YORK STATE ARCHIVES

Files Management
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Files Management

New York State Archives

Introduction

- Files management
 - Systematic control of active files
- Active files
 - Used frequently
- Types of active files
 - Case files
 - Subject files
 - Uniform files

Benefits of a Filing System

- Records filed accurately
- Files found quickly
- Records easier to use and trust
- Saves money and space
- Efficient, cost-effective public service

Developing a Filing System

1. Inventory records
2. Develop file structure
3. Determine file arrangement
4. Plan use of space
5. Document the file system
6. Maintain the file system

1. Inventory Records

- List files in cabinets and on PCs
- Document how records are used
 - And who are the primary users
 - Gather data consistently

2. Develop a File Structure (1)

- Collect information from
 - Annual reports
 - Organizational charts
 - Records inventory
 - Policies and procedures
 - Existing records systems
 - Interviews with staff and your own knowledge

2. Develop a File Structure (2)

- Identify main functions
- Develop structure
 - Function or subject
 - Activity/transaction
 - Sub-activity/transaction
 - Records series
- Create minimal number of levels

3. Determine File Arrangement

- Core element of filing system
- Determine arrangement by how records are requested
- Changing arrangement should improve retrieval
- Types of arrangement
 - Alphabetical
 - Subject
 - Numerical
 - Chronological

Alphabetical Arrangement (1)

- Simple
 - Anderson, Brown, Connor
- Geographical
 - Onondaga, Oswego, Otsego
- Hierarchical
 - Land Use--Planning--1998

Alphabetical Arrangement (2)

- Advantages
 - Most familiar to people
 - Self-indexing
- Disadvantages
 - Prone to misfiles
 - Harder to maintain confidentiality
 - Filing rules more complicated
 - Subject filing requires subject scheme

Exercise #1

Subject Arrangement (1)

- Keep topic headings short
- Use hierarchical systems for larger files
- Employ up to three levels
- Don't subdivide topics unless necessary
- Include cross-references
- Maintain up-to-date outline

Exercise # 1: How Easy is Alphabetical Filing?

Everyone knows the alphabet and how to put items in alphabetical order. But try to get these unruly eighteen items in alphabetical order, following whatever filing rules make sense to you. Then we will discuss any difficulties you had and what rules you devised for the exercise.

	Original Sequence	Practice Sequence # 1	Practice Sequence # 2
1	O'Clock Timepieces		
2	O. P. Quincy & Associates		
3	Oh No! Productions		
4	O'Don, Mariah		
5	O-P-Q Filing Services		
6	O's & Toes Daycare Center		
7	O Donnell, Zachary		
8	1 Way Cleaners		
9	O & S Service Station		
10	County of Oswego		
11	O'Donnell, David		
12	Odonnell, Douglass		
13	O's Tire Service		
14	Ossen Davis		
15	O. & S. Title Search		
16	0123 Gopher Eradication		
17	O' The Town Dance Hall		
18	O. Patrick Peters Entertainment		

Subject Arrangement (2)

- Advantages
 - Necessary for complex subject files
 - Easily expanded
 - Topical or hierarchical to fit needs
- Disadvantages
 - Must develop classification system
 - Must use classification outline to file

Salina Master File Plan

- Three subject levels
 - Primary: Main file code (5 major choices)
 - Secondary: Sub-heading
 - Tertiary: Series title
- Office retention schedule
 - Notes retention in office
 - Notes record copy

Numerical Arrangement (1)

- Simple (123, 124, 125)
- Duplex (100-001, 100-002, 276-046)
- Middle Digit (69**2**346, 98**1**648)
- Terminal Digit (6923**4**6, 9816**4**8)
- Alphanumeric (A-100, A-103, B-206)

TOWN OF SALINA
ACTIVE RECORDS
Standardized File Classification System

The Uniform Filing System works best when standards are maintained in every Town Department. The following suggestions are provided to assist in maintaining these standards.

Folder Arrangement

Arrange folders starting from the front of the drawer in the exact sequence of the Master File Plan outline.

Prepare a minimum number of folders. Add more folders only as records accumulate and more folders are needed.

Folder Additions

Use the new file folder form when adding new files into the drawer and database.
(See attached)

Unnecessary Categories

Use only the file codes established on the Master File Plan

ADM-Administration
LAN-Land Use
CRT-Courts
PUB-Public Services
FIC-Fiscal

Folder Capacity

Use the scoring on the folder to enlarge its capacity if necessary.

When more than one folder is required, use the same folder heading but number the folder (such as 1 of 2)

Drawer Capacity

Allow approximately four inches of empty working space in each drawer.

Pay close attention to retention schedules, sending inactive files to the Inactive Storage Areas, and consistent periodic purging should alleviate the need to purchase additional file cabinets and save departments money.

Folder Labels

The label should show the full file code, heading, series title, beginning/ending dates, and drawer location.

The following are guidelines to help maintain uniformity of file labels:

1. Use a computer generated file code label. This label is a white AVERY label (8160), size is 1" x 2 5/8 and landscaped. The computer font is Arial 75 pt. and centered.
2. Use a computer generated File Folder Label (Avery 6466). Place the heading on the first line in Arial font, bold 10pt. The file series title should be placed under the heading in Arial font 8pt. Begin typing two spaces from the left edge and one space from the top of the label.

Ex. HIGHWAY

Equipment Inventory

3. Use a computer generated File Folder Year Code and drawer Location Number. This label is a white AVERY label (8160), size 1" x 2 5/8 and landscaped. The font is Arial 25 pts. and centered.

Ex. 97/98

Ex. 5

4. Omit unnecessary punctuation.
5. Abbreviate to conserve space.
6. For subject files, the series title should be consistent with similar files. The main subject should be placed on the file label first, followed by a description, a location, or an address.

Ex. Zone Change, 103-105 Windham Ave

7. For case files, the series title should be the last name, first name, and date of birth.

Ex. Smith, John 6/22/62

8. For the project files, the series title should be the tax map number followed by the location.

Ex. 017-02-12.0 112 Green Acres Drive

Drawer Labels

The outside drawer label should show the year(s) of coverage (if applicable) and the file code of the first and last folder placed in the drawer.

Classifying Documents

This is the process of deciding where a document should be filed within the system. That is, choosing the correct file classification and file code for such.

Scan the document to determine its major subject.

- Look for key words. If the subject cannot be easily located, consider why the record was created.
- Refer to previous records on file to be sure of the file code selection.
- Read the contents. The subject line of the correspondence may be misleading.
- If all else fails, ask the author or somebody familiar with the files for more information.
- Be consistent.
- Write the file code in the upper right hand corner of the file copy. This coding does not decrease the value of a document. If you wish, enter the code on the back of the document.

Filing Hints

Set standards that work for your office. Here are some suggestions:

- After the document has been properly marked with the filing code, file it. .
- Group like documents to be filed together to eliminate going from file drawer to file drawer.
- File records with the most current documents in front.
- The top of the documents should all lay in the same direction in the drawer as the reader faces them.
- Avoid paper clips, clamps, and binders
- Don't keep duplicate copies.

Retrievals

The proper tools and standards will make your system work and help you to locate documents as quickly as possible. Always make it a practice to:

- Obtain sufficient information to identify the document, such as the subject name, agency, and date.
- Be familiar with the codes. It will augment the retrieval process and allow you to go directly to the file.
- When removing a folder always place the appropriate "File Out" card to make re-filing much easier and to track files.
- Always use the Active Records Master File Plan for proper file codes.
- If a current document cannot be located it may be among the yet to be filed documents.

TOWN OF SALINA

Active Records Master File Plan

<u>MAIN FILE CODE</u>	<u>FILE SUB-HEADING</u>	<u>FILE SERIES TITLE</u>	<u>ACTIVE RETENTION</u>	<u>RECORD COPY</u>
ADM-Administration	Agreements	Property Leases	5	TC
ADM-Administration	Agreements	Engineer Contracts	5	TC
ADM-Administration	Agreements	Legal Contracts	5	TC
ADM-Administration	Agreements	Fiscal Contracts	5	TC
ADM-Administration	Agreements	Service Contracts	5	TC
ADM-Administration	Boards	Policies	5	TC
ADM-Administration	Committees	Advisory Issues	5	TC
ADM-Administration	Commemoration	Proclamations	5	TC
ADM-Administration	Commemoration	Cert. of Recognitions	5	TC
ADM-Administration	Publications	Information	5	TC
ADM-Administration	Department Adm.	Town Clerk	2	TC
ADM-Administration	Department Adm.	Assessment	2	AS
ADM-Administration	Department Adm.	Tax Collector	2	TX
ADM-Administration	Department Adm.	Comptroller	2	CP
ADM-Administration	Department Adm.	Justice	2	JS
ADM-Administration	Department Adm.	Planning & Dev.	2	PD
ADM-Administration	Department Adm.	Purchasing	2	PU
ADM-Administration	Department Adm.	Parks & Rec.	2	PR
ADM-Administration	Department Adm.	Highway	2	HW

ADM-Administration	Department Adm.	Civic Center	2	CC
ADM-Administration	Department Adm.	Historian	2	H
ADM-Administration	Franchises	Cable Television	5	TC
ADM-Administration	Facilities Mgmt.	Capital Improvements	5	TC
ADM-Administration	Facilities Mgmt.	Buildings & Parks	5	TC
ADM-Administration	Facilities Mgmt.	Maintenance Service	2	TC
ADM-Administration	Facilities Mgmt.	Official Plans & maps	5	TC
ADM-Administration	Fixed Assets	Property Inventory	5	CP
ADM-Administration	Fixed Assets	Purchase File	5	TC
ADM-Administration	Fixed Assets	Auction	2	PU
ADM-Administration	Legislation	Adoption	5	TC
ADM-Administration	Licenses	Liquor	2	TC
ADM-Administration	Licenses	Bingo & Gaming	2	TC
ADM-Administration	Other Governments	Schools	2	TC
ADM-Administration	Other Governments	Other Towns	2	TC-legal SP-general
ADM-Administration	Other Governments	County & City	2	SP
ADM-Administration	Other Governments	State & Federal	2	SP
ADM-Administration	Personnel	Rules & Regs.	5	TC
ADM-Administration	Personnel	Benefits	5	CP
ADM-Administration	Personnel	Training	5	TC
ADM-Administration	Personnel	Master Summary	P	CP
ADM-Administration	Personnel	Individual File	P	CP
ADM-	Personnel	Civil Service	5	SP

Administration				
ADM-Administration	Personnel	Job Descriptions	P	SP
ADM-Administration	Public Works	Contracts	5	TC
ADM-Administration	Public Works	Mgmt. of & Studies	5	TC
ADM-Administration	Public Works	Maps	2	TC
ADM-Administration	Public Works	Complaints	5	TC
ADM-Administration	Records & Info. Mgmt.	Disposition	5	TC
ADM-Administration	Records & Info. Mgmt.	Finding Aids	P	TC
ADM-Administration	Records & Info. Mgmt.	Inventory	5	TC
ADM-Administration	Records & Info. Mgmt.	Management Plan	P	TC
ADM-Administration	Records & Info. Mgmt.	Grants	5	TC
ADM-Administration	Records & Info. Mgmt.	Policies	P	TC
ADM-Administration	Records & Info. Mgmt.	Freedom Of Info.	2	TC
ADM-Administration	Risk Management	Insurance Policies	2	TC
ADM-Administration	Risk Management	Workers' Comp.	2	SP
ADM-Administration	Risk Management	Claims	5	TC
ADM-Administration	Risk Management	Litigation	5	TC
CRT-Courts	Criminal	Alpha Case Files	2	JS
CRT-Courts	Civil	Alpha Case Files	2	JS
CRT-Courts	Small Claims	Alpha Case Files	2	JS
CRT-Courts	V & T infractions	Alpha Case Files	2	JS
CRT-Courts	DWAI	Alpha Case Files	2	JS
FIC-Fiscal	Accounts Payable	Vouchers	1	CP
FIC-Fiscal	Audits	Reports	2	dept. originated
FIC-Fiscal	Banking	Investments	5	CP
FIC-Fiscal	Banking	Statements	5	dept. originated

FIC-Fiscal	Bonding	Resolution & Sales	10	TC
FIC-Fiscal	Budgets	Preliminary & Final	5	TC
FIC-Fiscal	Ledger	General	1	CP
FIC-Fiscal	Ledger	Subsidiary Ledger	1	CP
FIC-Fiscal	Ledger	Journal	1	CP
FIC-Fiscal	Payroll	Time Sheets	5	CP
FIC-Fiscal	Payroll	Periodic & Year End	5	CP
FIC-Fiscal	Payroll	W-2's & W-4's	5	CP
FIC-Fiscal	Purchasing	Requisitions	2	CP
FIC-Fiscal	Purchasing	Purchase Orders	2	CP
FIC-Fiscal	Purchasing	Bid Files	2	PU
LAN-Land Use	Buildings	Reports	2	TC
LAN-Land Use	Buildings	Permits (Tax No.)	5	PD
LAN-Land Use	Buildings	Cert. of Occupancy	5	PD
LAN-Land Use	Buildings	Plans (Tax No.)	5	PD
LAN-Land Use	Buildings	Master Summary Log	P	PD
LAN-Land Use	Buildings	Violations/Complaint	5	PD
LAN-Land Use	Census	Project file	P	TC
LAN-Land Use	Conservation	DEC,EPA, FEMA	5	TC
LAN-Land Use	Easements/Rights of Way	Abandonments	5	TC
LAN-Land Use	Easements/Rights of Way	Conveyances	5	TC
LAN-Land Use	Easements/Rights of Way	Easement	5	TC
LAN-Land Use	Easements/Rights of Way	Sale of Parcels	5	TC
LAN-Land Use	Easements/Rights of Way	Revocable Licenses	5	TC
LAN-Land Use	Permits	Ordinance	2	TC
LAN-Land Use	Planning	Board Minutes	P	TC
LAN-Land Use	Planning	Special Use Permits	5	PD
LAN-Land Use	Planning	Site Plan & Subdivision	5	PD
LAN-Land Use	Planning	Land Use Studies	5	TC
LAN-Land Use	Tax Assessment	Assessment Bd Minutes	2	AS
LAN-Land Use	Tax Assessment	Certificate of Final Equal.	2	AS
LAN-Land Use	Tax Assessment	Equalization Rate	2	AS

LAN-Land Use	Tax Assessment	Grievance File	1	TC
LAN-Land Use	Tax Assessment	Tax Rolls	6	TX
LAN-Land Use	Tax Assessment	Senior Exemption	2	AS
LAN-Land Use	Tax Assessment	Certiorari Matters	5	TC
LAN-Land Use	Tax Assessment	Fee in Lieu Agreements	5	TC
LAN-Land Use	Zoning	Board Minutes	P	TC
LAN-Land Use	Zoning	Zoning Code	P	TC
LAN-Land Use	Zoning	Variances	5	PD
LAN-Land Use	Zoning	Violations	5	PD
LAN-Land Use	Zoning	Zone Changes	5	TC
PUB-Public Services	Animal Control	Dog Enumeration	2	TC
PUB-Public Services	Animal Control	Wild Life Nuisance	2	TC
PUB-Public Services	Community Development	Affordable Housing	2	TC
PUB-Public Services	Community Development	Grants	5	TC
PUB-Public Services	Community Development	Developmental Ctr	5	TC
PUB-Public Services	Disaster Preparation	Hazardous Materials	5	TC
PUB-Public Services	Disaster Preparation	Emergency Plan	5	TC
PUB-Public Services	Elections	Polling Places	2	TC
PUB-Public Services	Elections	Voting Machines	2	TC
PUB-Public Services	Elections	General	2	TC
PUB-Public Services	Elections	Primary	2	TC
PUB-Public Services	Highway	Equipment Purchase	2	TC
PUB-Public Services	Highway	Project Files	2	HW
PUB-Public Services	Highway	Inventory	5	TC
PUB-Public Services	Highway	Speed Limits	2	TC
PUB-Public Services	Highway	Maintenance	5	HW

PUB-Public Services	Highway	Notice of Defects	5	TC
PUB-Public Services	Public Safety	Ambulance Service	5	TC
PUB-Public Services	Public Safety	Hydrant Districts	5	TC
PUB-Public Services	Public Safety	Fire Districts	5	TC
PUB-Public Services	Public Safety	County Police	5	TC
PUB-Public Services	Public Transportation	Airport	5	TC
PUB-Public Services	Public Transportation	Bus	5	TC
PUB-Public Services	Public Transportation	Railroad	5	TC
PUB-Public Services	Recreation	Parks Reports	2	PR
PUB-Public Services	Recreation	Youth Organizations	2	PR
PUB-Public Services	Recreation	Senior Organizations	2	PR
PUB-Public Services	Recreation	Equipment Purchase	2	TC
PUB-Public Services	Solid Waste Management	Landfill	2	TC
PUB-Public Services	Solid Waste Management	Collection	2	TC
PUB-Public Services	Solid Waste Management	Recycling	5	TC
PUB-Public Services	Solid Waste Management	Yard Waste	5	TC
PUB-Public Services	Solid Waste Management	Transfer Station	5	TC
PUB-Public Services	Solid Waste Management	Management Plan	5	TC
PUB-Public Services	Economic Development	Business	5	SP
PUB-Public Services	Economic Development	Tourism	5	SP
PUB-Public Services	Economic Development	Zoning	5	SP
PUB-Public Services	Utilities	Gas & Electric	5	SP
PUB-Public	Utilities	Telephone	5	SP

Services				
PUB-Public Services	Utilities	Water	5	SP

Numerical Arrangement (2)

- Advantages
 - Useful for larger record series
 - Can improve records disposition
 - Misfiles less common
 - Provides security
- Disadvantages
 - Requires an index for access
 - May bunch active files at one end

Chronological Arrangement

- Advantages
 - Rarely prone to misfiles
 - Filing is simple
- Disadvantages
 - Rarely provides easy method of retrieval
 - Sometimes used as a duplicate file

Develop Controlled Vocabulary

- Establishes consistent terms for concepts and objects to apply to your file structure
 - Restricts the use of similar-but-different terms
 - Emphasizes specificity
- Promotes organization and structured order
- Facilitates search and retrieval
 - Speeds searches
 - Reduces errors

Types of Filing Structures

Alphabetical Systems

Simple

This is the most common filing arrangement and the one users are usually most comfortable with. In such a system, simple unsubdivided titles are written in words. These words can be names of people (McGillicuddy, Martha; Valmont, Clarence) or subject headings (Landfill; Streets and Roads). Often, people develop such systems on the fly, adding files or subjects as they occur. As with any alphabetical system, these files are prone to misfiles because of the many rules that are necessary to maintain perfect alphabetical order.

Geographical

This is a subtype of alphabetical filing, where the subject headings are arranged geographically. Such a system can be subdivided (for instance, the primary level might be counties and the secondary level could be the towns and cities in each county). Geographical filing makes sense when dealing with documents that users access by geographical location, but this filing system has the disadvantage of requiring the user to be very familiar with the geography and its divisions upon which the file is based.

Hierarchical

Hierarchical systems are subdivided subject filing systems. In such systems, there are primary subject headings, which then have secondary and often tertiary subheadings below them. The third, or tertiary, level

can be a subject division (Landfill—Pollution—Litigation)

or a geographical notation (Landfill—Pollution—Onondaga County)

or an indication of file type (Landfill—Pollution—Correspondence)

or a notation of date (Landfill—Pollution—1998)

Numerical Systems

Simple

Sometimes called consecutive numeric, this system merely files numerically designated folders in straight numerical order. This is the most common type of numerical filing but usually has the disadvantage of bunching all the most current records at the end of the filing sequence.

Duplex

In such a system, a number divided into two or more parts is used for filing purposes. Sometimes, these systems serve as hierarchical subject systems, which are actually subject numerical systems. In a subject numerical system, a coded numerical system (working in the same way as the Dewey Decimal system) represents the subjects and levels of subjects in a file. Examples of duplex numbering systems:

100-200, 100-201, 100-202, etc.
33.8.92, 34.98.16, etc.
623 44 01, 623 44 02, 623 45 99, etc.
1994-001, 1994-002, 1995-001, 1995-002, and so on

Middle Digit

In such a system, a file number is divided (either physically as in a duplex system, or merely in the mind by the filer) into parts used as filing units, then records are filed first by the middle digits, then by the first and third groups of digits. This allows files numbered sequentially to be filed throughout the filing system, avoiding bunching all the most active files at the end of the filing sequence. The disadvantages are that this system works best with smaller numbers (those less than seven digits), it requires user training, and it is more difficult to pull records for disposition or movement to inactive storage.

In middle digit filing, these numbers:
990166, 879345, 629901, 874392

would be filed in this order:
990166, 874392, 879345, 629901

Terminal Digit

In such a system, a file number is divided (either physically as in a duplex system, or merely in the mind by the filer) into parts, and records are filed first by the terminal digits, then by the second and first groups of digits. Note that the numbers are read in small groups from the far right of the number to the left. This system has the same advantages and disadvantages as middle digit filing.

In terminal digit filing, these numbers:

990166, 879345, 629901, 874392

would be filed in this order:

629901, 879345, 990166, 874392

Alphanumeric

Really a type of duplex numeric system, this system uses a file number that is a combination of alphabetic and numeric characters.

Chronological Systems

Chronological systems file records by date (usually date of creation or date of the event being documented). These systems can be very broad (filing no lower a level than the year) or be more detailed (and file at the level of day of the year), but they have only limited utility. The advantage of these systems is that records are filed in the order they arrive in the office. The disadvantage of the system is that they usually require an index for users to retrieve information from records.

File Naming Conventions

- Use standard forms of names and avoid redundancy
- Develop standard ways of ordering elements
 - e.g., YYYYMMDD
- Establish standard ways to identify versions
 - e.g., Minutes v2 draft
- Be consistent with document and folder titles
- Keep conventions simple and easy to use

4. Space Planning

- Prepare floor plan
- Evaluate workflow
- Calculate space needed
- Prepare layout templates of equipment
- Note locations of individuals
- Verify plan with management and staff

Space Planning: Rules of Thumb

- Space for equipment
- Space for movement between areas
- One large area is preferable
- Calculate space needs for peak use
- Allow 20% extra space for growth
- Remember the people

Space Planning Rules of Thumb

One of the most important issues when designing a new filing system is to figure out how that filing system will work in the space that you have. These rules should help you with any space planning projects.

Workstations

Allow 60 to 100 square feet per workstation

This guideline allows for a desk, a chair, a single file cabinet, and free space within the station and allows for between 8 X 8 feet to 10 X 10 feet workstations. Choose the exact quantity of space based on the quantity of records needed at one time at the workstation and the absolute amount of space available.

Figure footprint of filing equipment

This number will vary based on the type of equipment you use. Keep in mind that, for filing cabinets, you need to allow for space to pull out and stand behind the drawers. For instance, a standard letter-size cabinet needs 6 square feet of floor space, and a legal-size cabinet needs 7 square feet.

Allow 32-48 inch aisles in front of cabinets

This guideline allows enough space to file and retrieve files. Allow at the upper end of the guideline if traffic is heavy and more people will need to get by.

Space for movement between areas

Design areas so that people can move through the office to other areas. Avoid cul-de-sacs whenever possible. These aisles should be about 48 inches wide to allow for easy movement.

One large area is preferable

When possible, try to set aside one large area for all the filing in an office. Avoid having many small areas scattered within a room or rooms, since these tend to impede movement and not to make the best use of space.

Calculate space needs for peak use

If you calculate your space needs only during normal use, you may end up designing an area that is inadequate to your needs during peak use. This can lead to too little space for movement, causing confusion and grief during peak use.

Allow 20% extra space for growth

When you begin to estimate the space you need, determine how many records you'll have after evaluating your files and converting your filing system. Sometimes, you may expect to retain all the same records in the filing area. However, if your files haven't been managed adequately and you think you have a good quantity of inactive records in the files, then assume you will be able to move about 1/3 of the current files to inactive storage.

After determining the quantity of records that will remain, always add 20% to that number to ensure you have adequate space for growth.

Remember the people

Any filing system is a human system, so always consider people's needs for comfort and consider how they work together.

Space Planning: Centralize or Decentralize Filing?

- Completely decentralized
- Departmentally centralized
- Organizationally centralized

Centralized Filing: Advantages

- Easy standardization of filing practices
- Better use of staff and filing space
- Reduction of duplicates
- Easy standardization of equipment
- Better security

Decentralized Filing: Advantages

- Files are nearby
- Greater security and confidentiality
- Less chance of misfiling
- Individual staff manage specific files

Space Planning: Filing Equipment

- Vertical filing cabinets
- Lateral filing cabinets
- Lateral shelving
- Compact mobile file storage
- Mechanized file storage



Lateral Filing Cabinet



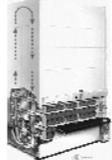
Lateral Shelving



Rotary Shelving



Compact File Storage



Mechanized File Storage

Common Filing Equipment

Demo of Rotary Shelving



Supplies: Folders and Labels

- Top-tab folders
- End-tab folders
- Hanging folders
- Color-coding supplies
- File guides
- Labels (for folders and drawers)

Folders: Color-Coding Systems (1)

- Used with lateral shelving and end-tab folders
- Colors assigned to letters or numbers
- Labels applied by hand or machine
- Levels of colors match up across range
- Labeling systems can print on label
- User learn to “read” the colors

Folders: Color Code Systems (2)

- Apply reasonable number of coded digits
- Standardize throughout organization
- Use one inch labels for bar effect
- Mechanize application of labels
- Use low-tech color-coding

Example of Color-Coding



Media Conversion (Reformatting)

- Convert to microfilm or scanned images
- Use microfilm to improve storage
- Employ imaging to improve retrieval
- Don't rely on imaging as only solution

File Use and Access

- Track file movement
 - Outcards
 - Barcoding
 - RFID
- Use a database for large systems
 - Track
 - Search
 - Report
 - Identify

Types of Filing Equipment and Supplies

To design the best filing system for your situation, learn about the different filing equipment and supplies available. Always make sure the filing supplies you choose are compatible with the equipment you will be using.

Filing Equipment

Vertical Filing Cabinets

This is the type of filing equipment that we are most familiar with. Almost every office has one of these cabinets, which have between two and five pull-drawers and are designed to store either letter-size or legal-size paper. In general, it is better to use letter-size cabinets and fold any legal-size papers to fit in the folders (especially if the quantity of legal-size papers is less than 15% of the total). But vertical filing cabinets make the most inefficient use of space, are more expensive than filing shelves, and have moving parts that may break down. These cabinets are most effective for small quantities of records, especially records overseen by one person in a small office.

Lateral Filing Cabinets

These cabinets are very similar to vertical filing cabinets, the only difference being that the drawers are wider than they are deep. These cabinets are usually short (two to four drawers high), but they can reach up to six or seven feet high, if the front of the drawers can fold out of the way to allow a user to see the files inside. These cabinets rarely provide better storage density than vertical filing cabinets. Usually, their only advantage is that they have drawers that are less deep, so that they do not require as much extra aisle space as vertical filing cabinets. These are also expensive and also have moving parts.

Lateral Shelving

This is a more modern active files storage system, consisting of shelving upon which files are stored sideways. To take true advantage of such a system, the folders have tabs on the end of the folder and color-coded labels must be used. This shelving is cheaper than filing cabinets, allows the users to file above their heads (providing better storage density), and speeds up retrieval since the files are always visible to the user (as in a library) rather than hidden in drawers. The main disadvantage of such systems is that all of them do not allow the filing equipment to be closed or locked. However, some such systems do have closing and locking doors or coverings, but these are a more expensive option.

Compact Mobile Shelving

Such filing equipment provides high-density storage because it provides only a single aisle for a run of filing equipment, so you waste little space for aisles. The system works by allowing users to crank shelving units to one side or the other, opening up an aisleway for access. They can also be electrically powered. The disadvantages of such systems are that they are very expensive and that they cannot be used for very active files since only one user can use the system at a time.

Mechanized Files

These files (sometimes called rotary files) come in many formats. Some are known by the brand name Lekriever. These systems store records in a rotating filing system and they rotate, upon command, to the section of the files that the user needs. Their disadvantages are that they are very expensive and allow only a single user at a time. They are appropriate for large files systems with slightly active files and little space.

Rotary Shelving

These units are similar to lateral shelving but are double sided shelving units contained within an outer frame. The shelving units rotate 360° within the frame and can be accessed by two people at the same time, depending on placement of the unit. You simply spin the unit until you reach the side you want; the shelving units are locked in position when you rotate fully to a shelf and are released by a foot pedal. The middle position is the end caps of the shelf and can be locked to provide extra security. They are known by the brand name Times-2 Speed Files. They are more space efficient than filing cabinets.

Records Carts

Though often forgotten, records carts are essential in large filing systems. These allow a clerk to easily transport a large quantity of records to and from filing areas. These also allow the clerk a convenient place to hold records while filing or retrieving records.

Step Stools

Sometimes when using shelf filing or even when using vertical filing cabinets, step stools that lock in place when someone puts weight on them can be essential tools. Use them whenever anyone doing filing is having trouble reaching the upper areas of the filing equipment.

Filing Supplies

Top-Tab Folders

Also called drawer folders, these are folders with their tabs on their top edges, allowing users to read them from above. These are the only folders appropriate for use in filing cabinets. They come in many different formats.

Full-Tab Folders	Also called a straight cut, this folder has a tab that covers its entire length, allowing more room for labeling information. Because this type allows you to place labels in any location on the tab, these are the most adaptable top-tab folder type. These are designed to hold 3/4 of an inch of records.
Half-Cut, Third-Cut, Fifth-Cut Folders	Folders with sets of tabs arrayed in halves, thirds, or fifths across the tab, allowing for a method of separating files within a filing system into visible groupings. Choose the tab size that suits the common length of folder titles in that particular system. These are also designed to hold 3/4 of an inch of records.
Heavy-Duty Folders	Folders made out of pressboard, with a cloth or vinyl gusset on the bottom of the folder, that are designed to hold up to two inches of files.
Expansion Pockets	Sometimes called accordion files, these folders are designed to hold large files together in one place and can expand to hold 4 inches of files or more.
Classification Folders	These folders have fixed subdivisions within them, allowing the contents of each file to be divided into different sections.

End-Tab Folders

Also called side-tab folders or shelf folders, these are folders with their tabs on their right edges, allowing users to read them from the side. These are the only folders appropriate for use in lateral shelving. Disadvantages of these folders are that, because of the side tab, they do not fit easily in standard records storage cartons and are difficult to read once they're stored in boxes. Below is a list of some other formats available for these folders.

Full End-Tab Folders	The most common type of end-tab folders, these have a tab the full height of the folder.
Notched End-Tab Folders	These are end-tab folders with full tabs except for a notch at the bottom of the tab. These folders are designed to be used in roll-out cabinets that have a lip on the rollout shelf. This is a good example of why you need to make sure that you choose your filing supplies to fit your filing equipment.
Four-Inch Bottom Tab	End-tab folders with a four-inch tab along the bottom half of the folder. This allows the upper part of the folder to be free

of obstruction, allowing easy viewing of any file guides

File Pocket	An end-tab folder, with or without a small expanding gusset, and with the back end of the folder closed. This allows for the filing of a larger quantity of material in one folder.
Classification Folders	Just as with top-tab folders, these end-tab folders have fixed subdivisions within them, allowing the contents of each file to be divided into different sections.

Hanging Folders

These folders are designed to hold a small number of file folders upright within them. These are available for use in filing cabinets and shelving. However, they are very expensive and can waste up to 25% of all the filing space in a system, so they are only recommended for small filing systems of a drawer or two maintained as the personal, very active files of a single individual.

Color-Coding Supplies

These are any of the supplies available for color-coding systems and designed almost exclusively for use in end-tab filing systems. These supplies include the color-coded labels themselves, machines for applying the labels, software for producing the labels or tracking files within the system, and barcode wands for logging and tracking files. The use of tracking software and barcoding is recommended only for large filing systems.

File Guides

These are folder-shaped sheets of cardboard or vinyl designed to mark the major subdivisions in a file to improve filing and retrieval. For instance, file guides could mark the beginning of each letter of the alphabet in an alphabetic filing system.

Out-Guides or Out cards

These are folder-shaped sheets of cardboard or vinyl designed to mark the place of a folder that has been taken out of the file and to note the person who currently has that file. Their purpose is to make sure all files are easier to locate, whether they are resting in their normal filing sequence or lying on someone's desk.

Labels

These come in many sizes, colors, and shapes and should be used to mark each folder in a filing system and drawers in a vertical filing cabinet. Whenever possible, these should be machine-printed to improve legibility. You should also experiment with labels to determine which labels adhere best to the folders you are using. Although sometimes difficult to find, foil-backed labels have the best adherence properties.

Paper Filing Tips

- Train staff properly
- Follow office retention schedules
- Use as few folders as possible
- Establish file breaks
- File frequently
- Use uniform labels and folders

**Special Files: Confidential
and Vital Records**

- Restricted public access
- Require extra protection
 - at the building and room levels
 - at equipment level
 - with written procedures

e-Records Filing

- Manage centrally
- Manage electronically, as much as possible
- Simplify filing structure
 - And rely on search engine
- File by retention

**5. Document the File System:
The File Manual**

- Control records systematically
- Improve access
- Reduce misfiles
- Reduce bulk
- Train personnel
- Testify in court

File Manual Components (1)

- Responsibilities
- Steps in establishing a file
- Records to include in file
- Order of records
- File updating procedures

File Manual Components (2)

- Retention periods
- Purging rules
- Access restrictions
- Records storage
- Disposition

File Manual Checklist

Note: All sections of the manual should spell out personnel responsibilities

Table of Contents

Include a Table of Contents?

Steps in Establishing a File

Assigning File Name/Number

Records Required to Open the File Officially

Records Included in Each File

Require an Official File Order?

Indexing and Tracking

Access Restrictions (Confidentiality)

Signing Out Case Files

Returning Case Files

Updating Index to Case Files

Files Management

Filing Rules

Refiling Files

Updating or Adding to Files

Weeding Files

Identifying Close of Case

Reviewing Files

Inactive Storage

Packing Records for Inactive Storage

Transferring Records to Inactive Storage

Retrieving Files from Inactive Storage

Microfilming Procedures

Procedures for Records Destruction

Appendix

Description of File Index (kept on database)

Description of Barcoding Procedures

Case File Retention Sheet (listing retentions)

Appraisal Criteria (to identify archival files)

Sample Filing System Policies and Procedures
Explaining the Sample Procedures Manual

People sometimes believe that procedures manuals are a bureaucratic waste of time that serve no useful purpose, but such manuals can help you remember the rules you developed while embarking on a certain project and can be an easy way for you to communicate these rules to others.

The following procedures manual is meant as a sample only. Do not feel compelled to follow each of the decisions codified within this manual, but use these as guidelines to see what kind of information may be important for you to include in your own manual. You need to develop a manual to suit your particular needs and the range of your own records management program.

Also, keep in mind that you can use any numbering system you want for this manual—including none at all. You can include whatever parts of this sample manual seem useful to you and exclude the rest. You can develop your manual with any style that seems useful and usable to you. And you can make your manual as long or short as you see necessary, because you are making the decisions for your own program.

Explaining the Manual's Entries

The following procedures manual is merely a sample, but for you to know best what to do with it you need to understand the conventions that it follows. Below are explanations of the various fields that occur in each of the manual's entries, along with a brief description of the information these fields contain and a few notes on how you might use these fields.

Number: *The unique number for that section*

This sample manual uses a consistent numbering system. You may decide to do away with a numbering system altogether.

Title: *The topic for that section of the manual*

Titles help the user understand the information in the manual more quickly.

The titles of each section are italicized to make them easy to spot on the page.

Date: *Date that section was approved*

This manual doesn't include dates, but dates are important because they help you distinguish an obsolete entry from a current entry. Some manuals also feature a field that includes the first date any entry was approved. Although we did not include dates in this sample manual, we encourage you to include them in any manual you produce.

Purpose: *The purpose for this section or this policy*

Some manuals include the purpose as a separate field in each entry of the manual. This manual doesn't explicitly include such a field. Think of the purpose field as an explanation for why you needed this policy in the first place. You should use it to explain the necessity of any policy in the manual.

Exhibits: *Any attachments needed to clarify the policy, including sample forms, illustrations, and lists*

This manual assumes that all exhibits are filed in the appendices to the manual. Note that the manual mentions whenever there is such an attachment.

Procedure: The procedures to follow for that policy

Along with the title and date fields, this is one of the most important fields to include in any procedures manual. This field isn't specifically labeled in this manual, but the procedure consists of a description of the actual steps someone must follow for an established policy.

V Records Retrieval and Access

V.1 Active Filing Systems

V.1.1 Files Management Practices

To help ensure that records in town offices are well organized and records retrieval is quick and easy, town departments should follow some basic file management practices:

- a) Use the same size and type of folder consistently.
- b) Use guides or dividers to separate files into sections.
- c) Use hanging folders as guides only, filing other folders within them.
- d) Label file folders with printed labels.
- e) Maintain a (electronic and paper) file list of any subject files.
- f) Use color coding whenever possible.
- g) Purge files regularly (at least annually).
- h) File names for electronic files should be easily understandable for all potential users, not merely combinations of letters and numbers.
- i) File names for electronic files should mirror those for the paper files. This will ensure that users will be able to retrieve both paper and/or electronic files easily.

Electronic file folders and subfolders should be named and organized in a consistent and easily recognizable manner, on personal computers, a LAN, or in an Electronic Document Management System (EDMS).

V.1.2 Files Management Don'ts

- a) Don't file a piece of paper unless it is an integral part of the file; do not file envelopes and buck slips.
- b) Avoid using legal-size folders except for legal documents.
- c) Don't overfill folders; instead, break a file into more than one folder or use expanding (accordion) file folders or file wallets.
- d) Never transfer hanging folders to record storage cartons; replace them with standard file folders.

V.1.3 Purchase of Filing Equipment

Equipment is expensive and should not be purchased unless these tools will so help manage the information that they repay or justify their costs.

All purchase requisitions that include records storage equipment and supplies must be sent to the Town Clerk (as Records Management Officer) for review and written authorization prior to submittal to purchasing.

Records storage items include acid-free archival storage boxes, file cabinets, map cabinets, high-density mobile storage systems, micrographics equipment, microform reader/scanners, and shelving. Any questions regarding whether a particular item falls into this category should be directed to the Town Clerk (as Records Management Officer).

V.1.4 File Folders

The Town of Big Thunder will use only letter-size file folders for most files. All efforts will be made to use only letter-size paper as well. Legal-size folders and paper will be avoided where possible.

V.1.5 Rules for Alphabetical Filing

Last Name First: In the case of personal names, each part of a person's name is a separate unit. The units are alphabetized in this order: last name, first name or initial, and middle name or initial (if any).

Nothing Comes Before Something: When filing, town employees should follow the rule that nothing comes before something. For instance, a title having a single letter comes before a title having a word that begins with the same letter, and a name of one word comes before a name with the same word plus one or more other words. For example: "G" comes before "Green"; "Green" comes before "Greene"; "Green Stores" comes before "Greene" (since the space between "Green" and "Stores" is counted as a character).

Abbreviations: If abbreviations are used in titles, alphabetize them as written.

Hyphenated Names: Hyphenated names of people or businesses are alphabetized as one unit.

Numerals: When numerals appear in a title, they should be alphabetized before any letters.

Punctuation: Ignore apostrophes and other punctuation when alphabetizing.

V.1.6 Subject Files

Any department that maintains a subject file should develop a uniform filing system for the records series that organizes the records by subject.

To develop a subject filing system, first evaluate the current system and its subjects:

- a) Identify obsolete subjects.
- b) Identify redundant subjects.
- c) Identify missing subjects.

Then, working with the users of the current filing system, develop a preliminary subject filing structure that outlines

- a) main subjects
- b) related secondary subjects

Avoid subject headings such as "Forms," "Correspondence," and "Reports," which indicate the format of the information rather than its content.

After finalizing a preliminary filing structure, use it to convert the current system.

Coordinate any necessary changes to the filing structure during the conversion.

Finally, develop a complete description of the filing structure and instructions on how to use the filing system and make these available to all users.

V.1.7 File Plans

The Town of Big Thunder will develop and maintain file plans for large active filing systems (such as subject files and case files) that require especially detailed controls. These manuals (available in the Appendices VIII.3) may include

- a) responsibilities
- b) steps in establishing a file
- c) what records to include in a file

- d) file order of records
- e) updating files
- f) retention periods for various records
- g) purging rules
- h) access restrictions
- i) records storage
- j) disposition
- k) file list (of all files in the series)

V.1.8 Filing Structure for Local Area Network

For details of the Town of Big Thunder's filing structure for its Local Area Network, see the LAN itself.

At its highest level, the town's LAN will include public storage space. At the next level will be department storage space and workspace for individual departments. Files maintained on the LAN include

- a) general town records that are not restricted and are accessible to all town departments and units, including blank forms, and policies and procedures
- b) files that are permitted to be distributed to the general public
- c) files related to specific projects and the work of specific town teams
- d) records and information that have not been completed and are being developed by individual departments or units
- e) records and information that cannot be accessed by the public and therefore must be maintained by individual departments or units

At the next level down, the town's LAN includes personal workspace (files not stored on the hard drive of the individual employee's personal computer). Stored at this level are backup copies of files that are being developed by individual employees that they may wish other staff to consult.

Employees should maintain draft and working files that other staff members do not regularly need to consult on their own personal computers. This frees space on the Town's LAN for public or corporate files.

V.1.9 Production of Indices to Records

For some records (such as special project files) that require detailed indices to ensure that users can find all information they are searching for, the Town of Big Thunder may develop an index to these records.

The Town Clerk (as Records Management Officer) will work with individual departments to make sure that these indices contain the appropriate fields and design to provide the

access that users require. These indices will always be electronic indexes developed in database format.

6. Maintain a Filing System

- Policies and procedures in place
- Control of duplicates
- Control of versions
- No maverick filing spaces
- Adhere to retention schedules

Train Staff

- Part of maintaining filing system
- Explain new policies and procedures
- Outline staff responsibilities
- Provide training on
 - Using new equipment
 - Using new filing system

Exercise #2

Exercise # 2: Case Files in a County Clerk's Office

Situation

The Umbrage County Clerk's office maintains about 400 cubic feet of civil actions in active office space. These cases are filed by file number. Some of these records (such as divorces) are confidential, but most of them are public records. However, a new county clerk has taken office and she is concerned that none of these records should be left where they currently reside: in the open area between the county clerk's active "records room" for land records and the office's public service counter. The county clerk is concerned that these records are too open to the public, making it possible that files or some of their contents could disappear.

The previous county clerk noticed great problems with access and retrieval from these thousands of files, so he spearheaded a project to convert these records from top-tab files in filing cabinets to end-tab folders on open shelves. This change improved retrieval immensely, but some of the case files have grown faster than others. Some cases now fill three folders, and whenever a file grows too large to fit into its old space, the filing clerks move all the records in the filing system along to the right to allow for more space. Sometimes this process takes an entire day.

The county clerk has a secure room that could be converted into a file room, but this room has only 50% of the space currently used for storing these records. The office has not recently reviewed these files to see if any of them can be moved to inactive storage.

Activity

Given this situation, what is the county clerk's best course of action? Consider these issues: confidentiality, security, filing practices, and space needs. If you want, use the "File Survey for Paper Files" to take notes.

File Survey for Paper Files

Record Series Title:

Department:

Unit:

Quantity: ___ filing inches ___ number of files ___ cubic feet

Arrangement:

___ alphabetical, by name ___ numerical, by file number
___ chronological, by date ___ _____

Retrieval of Records (check as many as needed):

___ Alphabetical, by name ___ Numerical, by file number
___ Chronological, by date ___ Combination

Problems with Retrieval:

Storage Devices Used:

___ Pull-drawer vertical cabinets ___ Pull-drawer lateral cabinets
___ Shelf filing ___ Storage boxes

Storage Supplies Used:

___ Letter-size folders ___ Legal-size folders
___ Envelopes ___ Boxes
___ If other, describe: _____

Workspace:

Equipment close to users? Yes No Adequate storage space? Yes No

Is workspace cluttered? Yes No Floor space for equipment: _____ sq. ft.

Retention Requirements:

record: _____ years: _____ after what action: _____

Access Restrictions:**Does this record series have:**

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> File plan? | <input type="checkbox"/> Close-out procedures for retiring files? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Index to individual files? | <input type="checkbox"/> Media conversion plan? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> System for accessing inactive files? | <input type="checkbox"/> Case files retention sheet? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> File segments identified? | <input type="checkbox"/> Obsolete records weeded from files? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Centralized filing? | <input type="checkbox"/> Subdivided file folders? |

What other problems are users having with this series?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Frequent misfiles | <input type="checkbox"/> Folders overstuffed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Records filed irregularly | <input type="checkbox"/> Inactive records in files |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Many folded or paper-clipped records | <input type="checkbox"/> Lacking needed cross-referencing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Decentralized filing? | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |

Instructions for Completing the File Survey for Paper Files

The "File Survey for Paper Files" is a simple survey form designed to aid you in collecting information about active paper filing systems. Accurate and detailed objective information about a filing system is essential to completing a successful needs assessment.

Record Series Title

Fill in the title of the record series (or group of record series) you are evaluating. Sometimes, you can treat a number of record series as one interrelated system and use one form. In other cases, you may have to complete a separate survey form for each series.

Department/Unit

Indicate the department (and, if applicable, the unit within that department) that maintains these records.

Quantity

Indicate the quantity of records in these different ways:

Filing inches:

This is a standard way of measuring files in an active filing system, because it remains constant whether you use pull-drawer cabinets or open shelving for records storage and whether you use legal- or letter-size folders. Measure filing inches by measuring along the run of series of file folders. For example, a standard filing cabinet drawer holds 25 filing inches of records.

Number of files:

This is a useful number because it tells you how many individual files the office manages. You can use this number to help estimate the filing and retrieval time in the office.

Cubic feet:

This may be useful as a number in case you need to retire a good quantity of files to inactive storage. You can, sometimes, ignore this number and just use this rule of thumb: One cubic foot equals about 16.5 filing inches of letter-size files and 12.5 filing inches of legal-size files.

Arrangement

Indicate the current arrangement of the files. Provide more specific details, if applicable.

Retrieval of Records

Indicate any of the ways in which you retrieve these records and any problems staff have had with retrieval.

Storage Devices Used/Storage Supplies Used

Indicate any of the storage devices or supplies you currently use for these records in the active office areas.

Workspace

Answer these questions about the attributes of the current workspace where these records are stored and where the people filing and retrieving these records work.

Retention Requirements

Indicate the required retention periods for any of these record series or for different types of records within the series.

Access Restrictions

List any access restrictions, including any that are only local in nature, such as rules restricting access to only certain personnel.

Does this record series have...?

Check off any conveniences that are present. The list below helps define these items.

- *File plan.* Detailed set of instructions covering indexing, filing, retrieval, and retention of files.
- *Index to individual files.* List or database of the names of and pertinent information in files.
- *System for accessing inactive records.* Any method for retrieving individual inactive files.
- *File segments identified.* File guides showing major file segments (such as beginning of the C's)
- *Centralized filing.* Records filed in one central location, with dedicated filing staff.
- *Close-out procedures.* Procedures in place listing when and how to close out files.
- *Media conversion plan.* Plan in place to convert files to microfilm or electronic images.
- *Case file retention sheet.* Schedule listing retention of individual records within case files.
- *Obsolete records weeded from file.* System for discarding obsolete records from files.
- *Subdivided file folders.* File folders with internal divisions used to separate parts of the file.

What other problems are users having with this series?

Check any problems that are present in these files, and list any others you discover. The list below helps define these items. (Note that decentralized filing is not always a problem.)

- *Frequent misfiles.* Records are misfiled frequently enough for it to be a common problem.
- *Records filed irregularly.* Records are not filed on a regular schedule, leaving some unfiled.

- *Many folded or paper-clipped records.* Many folds and fasteners present, making files bulky.
- *Decentralized filing.* Records filed in many locations, usually close to each individual worker.
- *Folders overstuff.* Folders filled with records beyond their capacity to hold them.
- *Inactive records in files.* Active files still contain inactive records.
- *Lacking needed cross-referencing.* Although necessary, still no cross-references within files.

Integrating Old and New Systems

- Estimate conversion time
- Convert system file by file
- Install new filing equipment
- Develop preliminary file manual
- Train staff
- Evaluate system

Conclusions

- Implement or improve a file system carefully
- Employ consistency
- Implement controls

Thank you for coming!

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**Answers to Exercise # 1:
How Easy is Alphabetical Filing?**

	Original Sequence	Machine Alphabetization	Telephone Book Alphabetization
1	O'Clock Timepieces	0123 Gopher Eradication	Davis, Ossen [Assuming this was a personal name originally not in inverted order]
2	O. P. Quincy & Associates	1 Way Cleaners	O-P-Q Filing Services
3	Oh No! Productions	County of Oswego	O. P. Quincy & Associates
4	O'Don, Mariah	O & S Service Station	O. Patrick Peters Entertainment
5	O-P-Q Filing Services	O Donnell, Zachary	O & S Service Station
6	O's & Toes Daycare Center	O. & S. Title Search	O. & S. Title Search
7	O Donnell, Zachary	O. P. Quincy & Associates	O' The Town Dance Hall
8	1 Way Cleaners	O. Patrick Peters Entertainment	O'Clock Timepieces
9	O & S Service Station	O' The Town Dance Hall	O'Don, Mariah
10	County of Oswego	O'Clock Timepieces	O'Donnell, David
11	O'Donnell, David	O'Don, Mariah	Odonnell, Douglass
12	Odonnell, Douglass	O'Donnell, David	O Donnell, Zachary
13	O's Tire Service	O's & Toes Daycare Center	Oh No! Productions
14	Ossen Davis	O's Tire Service	1 Way Cleaners [Assuming the "1" is read as "One"]
15	O. & S. Title Search	Odonnell, Douglass	O's Tire Service
16	0123 Gopher Eradication	Oh No! Productions	O's & Toes Daycare Center
17	O' The Town Dance Hall	O-P-Q Filing Services	Oswego, County of
18	O. Patrick Peters Entertainment	Ossen Davis	0123 Gopher Eradication [Assuming the "0" is alphabetized as "Zero"]

Microsoft Word's Alphabetizing Rules

- Scrupulously follow the “nothing before something rule,” which means that if you have a space in a sequence of letters, alphabetize as if that space comes before any character. So “O Donnell, Zachary” comes before “O’Donnell, Adam.”
- When sorting by text, items beginning with punctuation marks or symbols (such as—!, #, \$, %, or &—are sorted first; items beginning with numbers are sorted next; and items beginning with letters are sorted last. Word treats dates as three-digit numbers.
- If two or more items begin with the same character, Word evaluates subsequent characters in each item to determine which item should come first.
- When sorting by field results, if an entire field (such as a last name) is the same for two items, Word next evaluates subsequent fields (such as a first name) according to the specified sort options.

Telephone Book Alphabetizing Rules

- Ignore hyphens (-), apostrophes (’), and ampersands (&).
- Initials precede full names (so “Mitchell, A.” & “Mitchell, Q.” come before “Mitchell, Aaron”).
- Spell out a few common abbreviations, such as St. (Saint) and Ft. (Fort).
- Spell out numbers (so “1-2-3 Go!” is alphabetized as if it reads “One Two Three Go”).
- Treat prefixes in names as part of the name, ignoring spaces, so:

Ohea, Janet	MacNeil, Xavier
O’Hea, John	Mac Neil, Yeti
	Macneil, Zora
Degrush, Philomena	McNeil, Adam
de Gry, Malvern	M’Neil, Olive

[Note, also, that each spelling of “Mac” is alphabetized as spelled, not as if spelled the same.]

- Relegate initial “The” in a corporate name to the end of the title: “Fifth National Bank of Oswegatchie, The.”
- Alphabetize government names by name first, followed by title (so “Oswego, County of,” not “Oswego County” and “Fulton, City of,” not “City of Fulton”).

When surnames can be spelled in more than one way, provide cross-references to the other possible spellings.