

BEST PRACTICES

Records Management: Out with the Old

You can reap many benefits from exchanging old records management habits for new ones — compliance with records retention requirements, controlled growth of space and costs associated with file storage and greater responsibility to the environment. Here are some ideas for making records policies and procedures more environmentally responsible.

REDUCE PRINTING AND PAPER

- 1 Print draft documents in “draft” mode to significantly reduce the amount of toner used.
- 2 Whenever possible, print research and draft documents double-sided on recycled paper to save on paper and reduce the amount of space needed to file and store documents.
- 3 Switch from legal-sized to letter-sized paper and smaller corresponding file folders, which will allow you to fit 25 percent more files into a standard banker’s box.
- 4 Manage and distribute more documents electronically to save paper and reduce storage. Scan hard copy documents and store in electronic format. Do not print e-mail messages for the physical file.

SUPPLY AND ENERGY CONSUMPTION

- 5 When you are not in the office, turn out the lights. Choose lighting options that can accommodate compact fluorescent bulbs.
- 6 Purchase records supplies that are made from recycled materials. Use paper that contains at least 30 percent post-consumer recycled content.
- 7 When transitioning inactive files to off-site storage, remove documents from binders and hold them together with rubber bands. Recycle or donate used binders to schools and other nonprofit organizations.

EFFECTIVE RECORDS PRACTICES

- 8 When a new matter opens, designate a records custodian who will be responsible for maintaining a single, up-to-date, official file. This will eliminate the need for attorneys to retain separate working or duplicate copies of the file once the representation has ended.
- 9 Ensure that only the official file is stored off-site. Working files should be reviewed to determine if they contain materials that should be incorporated into the official file. Duplicate files should not be retained once a matter has concluded.

CHALLENGE THE FIRM

- 10 Finally, consider enrolling your firm in the ABA-EPA Law Office Climate Challenge. (See “Are You Up for a Challenge?” on page 3 for more information). **ILTA**



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