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Top Ten Tips for Environmentally Responsible Records Management

1. Designate a records custodian at new matter inception 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 concluded.
2. Whenever possible, print research and draft documents double-sided on recycled paper. Printing double-sided will also reduce the amount of space needed to file documents.
3. Switch from legal-sized to letter-sized for paper and file folders. Twenty-five percent more files will fit into a 1.2 cubic foot document storage box if the files are letter-sized.
4. Print draft documents in “draft” mode. This will significantly reduce the amount of toner used.
5. Manage and distribute documents electronically to save paper and reduce storage. Scan hard copy documents and store in electronic format. Do not print out e-mail messages for the physical file.
6. 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.
7. Ensure that only the official file is stored off-site. Working files should be reviewed to determine if there are materials that need to be incorporated into the official file. Duplicate files should not be retained once a matter has concluded.
8. Purchase records supplies that are made from recycled materials. Use paper that contains at least thirty percent post-consumer recycled content.
9. When you are not in your office, turn out the lights. Choose lighting options that can accommodate compact fluorescent bulbs.
10. Participate in the ABA-EPA Law Office Climate Challenge. Information can be found at www.abanet.org/environ/climatechallenge/overview.shtml

For more information on records management best practices, visit www.inoutsource.com or call 888.845.7015