

Court and Clerk Records

Access and Maintenance:

Document Imaging and Microfilming Standards

Administrative Rule 6 – Court Records Media Storage Standards

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Purpose

Ind. Administrative Rule 6 sets the standards for documenting the conversion of paper court records to other media. These standards provide the means to guarantee the legibility and permanency of converted documents by incorporating international and national standards. The standards also ensure that judicial records meet evidentiary standards to protect public and private rights.

Reasons for Thinking about Alternative Media

There are numerous reasons why a court or clerk's office would be thinking about converting paper documents into alternative media. Some of the more common reasons are:

- Running out of space.
- Backup for disaster preparedness.
- Preservation of the original document.
- Allow multiple users to access documents simultaneously.

Microfilming

Microfilm is the best alternative medium to use for records that have long term or permanent retention periods.

Advantages:

- When stored under proper conditions, microfilm has a very long life. If stored correctly, microfilm has a longer life than paper.
- There are established international standards concerning the microfilm process.

Disadvantages:

- It is an analog medium that may be used only by one user at a time.
- Proper storage requires temperature and humidity-controlled storage.

Imaging/Scanning

Scanning is best to use:

- When multiple users are involved, and
- With records that have short retention periods.

Advantages:

- It allows multiple users to access the information at the same time because it is digital.
- Scanning is user-friendly.

Disadvantages:

- Scanning software and hardware become obsolete in a brief time.
- Although international standards are developing, there are fewer standards in place than with microfilm.
- A volatile business market exists in this area with many companies going out of business or with many companies changing directions or changing emphasis.

Disposal of Records

Court records that have been preserved in accordance with the standards set out in Administrative Rule 6 may be destroyed or otherwise disposed, but only after the court or clerk files a Destruction Certificate with the Office of Judicial Administration certifying

that the records have been microfilmed or scanned in accordance with the standards set out in Ind. Administrative Rule 6. Authorization for destruction of records is issued by the Office of Judicial Administration. There are two Destruction Certificate forms: one for microfilmed records and one for scanned or imaged records.