

## Considerations of In House vs. Outsourced Shredding

Securing confidential information and protecting it from a security breach must be viewed as critically important for your company, regardless of its size or industry. More than just a moral obligation to “do the right thing,” protecting confidential information and destroying it once it is no longer needed keeps information secure – and maintains your company’s brand as trustworthy and reputable. Equally important, keeping confidential information secure is required by U.S. and Canadian law.

Given the need to protect and dispose of such information securely, you might be facing the decision of whether to implement an in house (using your internal resources) or outsourced document shredding solution. There are many considerations that impact this decision:

- **Cost.** At first glance, using in house resources might seem much less expensive because shredding equipment can be relatively affordable and you already have personnel that can be utilized. But, upon further examination, consider the fact that shredding equipment must be capable of shredding everything from CDs to hard plastics, in addition to shredding documents to such a size where they cannot possibly be recreated. The equipment must also be maintained and serviced to ensure it is in good working condition. Moreover, while your employees may already be company resources, the time and distraction it takes to use the shredder adds up to significant numbers, when considered in terms of weeks/months.
- **Operations.** In addition to the expense of the equipment and personnel labor, another variable is the hassle of preparing materials for shredding. From removing staples, rubber bands or paper clips to hand-feeding the shredder, the task of shredding can be onerous and annoying. Much like the copier that refuses to clear a paper jam, a malfunctioning shredder can waste important time and create frustration. This frustration or anxiety can carry over to other tasks the employee has and can create a less-efficient and less positive work environment.
- **Security.** The reason for having shredding equipment is to ensure confidential documents are disposed of securely. Yet, the in house shredding model creates several security loopholes. One consideration is how the confidential information is handled before it is shredded. Most offices simply have receptacles that contain items “to be shredded.” Unless such containers are locked, third-party cleaning services or maintenance people can simply steal documents after hours – and expose the contents to tremendous risk. Another problem arises when determining which internal personnel is cleared to handle such sensitive records – after all, confidential documents may include accounting statements, employee records, proprietary company data, etc. One disgruntled employee could share a vast amount of confidential documentation, jeopardizing customer, employee and company information.

These variables introduced by an in house shredding model might make you reconsider whether handling such an important task internally really leads to any cost-savings or benefits. A reputable outsourced document shredding provider will eliminate the burden and time of shredding by collecting all documents in secure consoles and destroying them on site. What’s more, you will receive a Certificate of Destruction, ensuring all documents were destroyed thoroughly and securely. Finally, such a service will also have highly trained and screened employees so you can be assured that documents are not exposed to any undue risks.