

Establishing a “Shred-All” Policy

Keeping your company’s information secure must be a top priority. With the associated risks of not doing so, your company could be prone to financial loss or reputational damage. In addition to implementing proactive online information technology policies, companies need to consider the importance of securing its hard-copy or paper documents. Not only does proper document security reduce the risk of a security breach, but it is also the law.

Yet, creating and implementing an information security policy that keeps pace with ever-changing scams and evolving legislation can be daunting. In an effort to simplify and improve security policies, some companies are instituting a “shred-all” document policy.

Simply put, adopting a “shred-all” policy means that a company decides that all of their business documents will be securely destroyed, as soon as they are no longer needed. Employees no longer have to decide which documents contain confidential or sensitive information and which do not. They simply dispose of all documents into locked consoles and know that their information will be securely shredded and recycled.

With this in mind, let’s examine the pros and cons of a shred-all policy:

Benefits:

- **More comprehensive.** Leaving the decision of what constitutes a secure document up to employees introduces a subjective element – and potential risk. If an employee makes a poor judgment, a confidential document could wind up in the garbage or recycling bin, where it could become compromised.
- **Improved compliance.** Legislation such as the Sarbanes-Oxley Act, USA Patriot Act or Canada’s PIPEDA all mandate certain requirements in regards to information privacy and carry expensive penalties for non-compliance. By implementing a secure shred-all policy, companies can quickly move toward fully-compliant policies.
- **Better protection internally.** While company-specific documents may not be deemed overtly confidential in terms of the company’s privacy policy, they still may contain proprietary information, trade secrets, customer lists, etc. A shred-all policy eliminates this risk entirely by destroying all printed documents.
- **Environmentally friendly.** By selecting a high-quality shredding provider that recycles all of the shredded materials, 100% of all discarded materials will be recycled as opposed to some materials getting thrown away as garbage. This environmentally responsible position can be promoted as a point of differentiation.

Cons:

- **Cost.** By generating more materials that need shredding, there will be a corresponding increase in the cost of shredding services. This increase in price needs to be factored into the budget, although when one considers the potential costs of a security breach, the relative increase in shredding costs could be easily justified.
- **Execution.** Implementing a shred-all policy requires a certain amount of preparation and planning. From the placement of secure consoles and collecting the documents to training employees on how the policy works, a shred-all policy must be implemented strategically.

With these considerations in mind, it may be that a shred-all policy makes sense as a way for your company to better secure its paper documents.

Call your Shred-it Sales Rep if you have any questions, or if you would like assistance with implementing a shred-all policy.

