

File Cleaning

I've been cleaning out files. Now I don't think I'm as busy as most lawyers still. After going through them I'm amazed that a single tree still exists in the State of Maine.

Being the frugal sort, I've always wrote in pencil on the file tabs. So far I've recovered over 400 file folders. a dozen duotang folders a dozen folder jackets about 10 partially used yellow pad 2 pencils and over 100 paper clips. So for all that I'm sent for the next ten years.

I'll just need copy paper toner and envelopes.

Am I the only one who does this?

No, I prefer a bonfire while I relax and smoke a cigar.

Duke Drouillard, Nebraska

I prefer to store everything digitally so as not to have to deal with this problem (among others).

Scott I. Barer, California

In 2007 I went "paperless" in that I moved to a litigation practice where my every day, use all the time files are digital, scans of paper documents, emails, etc. But in litigation one cannot avoid paper. So my engagement agreements provide that upon conclusion of a matter, the client can get all of the digital files from me at no charge, and the client *must* retrieve the hard copy files at client's cost within a specified time period after written or email notice from me, after which if not retrieved, I will have the paper files shredded at my expense. This has allowed me to reduce files in storage over time, saving me \$\$ in monthly storage fees to the point that what I now have can be kept on

two 6 shelf metal racks in my garage. I was lucky to find a local small business shredding company which gives me a discount if I bring in at least 5 boxes at a time for shredding, around \$4 to \$6 a box. (Usual charge there is \$10 a box)

Michael L. Boli, California

Back in the 1990's Xerox. Tried to do a paperless litigation. I think it was an age discrimination case. Using the Xerox Star a Modified Kurzweil scanner and some custom Star software. Not sure how much it helped all the hardcopy was scanned and then ICRed into searchable files. We tried to sell it to law firms. It was too expensive and the big law firms that could thought the workstations too noisy and had a vested interest in not being time efficient.

John Davidson, Pennsylvania

I've been entirely paperless within my office since 2005, when I opened my own practice. I learned the hard lessons from figuring out how to work remotely from my office starting back in 1995. I now keep no paper files, and every document, for every client, on every file is accessible from wherever I happen to open my laptop that day.

Rex C. Anderson, Arizona

I'm now scanning as I finish - and I use my city's garbage burning steam plant to destroy files at \$6/ton. Cheaper than shredding by a long shot.

Reta McKannan, Alabama

Here's what I do:

- After a successful 341 meeting, return all original bank statements, etc.

- At discharge, go back through file and offer client anything that I don't need to retain (redacted tax returns, copies of bank statements, etc.)

- Mark case closure date on file label

We are required to keep wet signatures for 5 years after case closure by local rule.

- Every 3-6 months, I go through my "old file" filing cabinet and grab the ones that have reached 5 years.

- Shred the sensitive stuff (thank you Costco shredder)

- Recycle the old file folder

I have started to immediately recycle the attorney copy of filed documents, unless they are needed for court. I love that my court has been e-filing only since 05. I just have a hard time letting go of the paper.

Congrats on finding all of those notepads!

Corrine Bielejeski, California