



Archdiocese of Seattle Scanning Policy

Version 1.0 [4/23/2021]

1. Purpose

Provides guidance for Archdiocesan staff and volunteers on the baseline requirements for scanning paper-based records. Ensures that files are accurate, accessible, and readable for as long as needed. This applies both to scanning/destroying and scanning/retaining original documents. This policy is based in part on [requirements by the Washington State Archives](#).

2. Justification for Scanning

Medium and large-scale digitization projects usually involve serious time and financial commitments, so offices must be sure there is a real need and a reasonable return on investment before initiating projects that go beyond creating convenience copies of a limited number of “hard copy” files. Offices/locations that wish to digitize documents simply to reduce physical storage should be aware of the costs of required software, hardware, metadata creation, training, vendor fees, and ongoing digital file storage beforehand. Archives staff are available for consultation in planning digitization projects.

Common reasons for digitizing analog materials include:

- **Enhanced access** - Materials are scanned for quick reference, sharing outside the office, or remote access for staff.
- **Preservation** - Digital backups of high value/archival documents are created in case the original is ever lost/damaged OR to minimize handling of fragile items.
- **Space saving** - Records of temporary value are scanned to comply with retention policies, and originals are shredded to save physical storage space.

3. Scanning & Shredding

- Shredding after scanning is permitted with records of temporary value provided the scanning specifications in the following section are followed.
- Permanent/archival records or records with long-term retention periods **can only be destroyed** after scanning with permission of Archives staff after they consult state requirements and/or legal counsel.

4. Specifications

The following table establishes the required scanning protocols for the Archdiocese of Seattle. This chart is meant to simplify the application of this policy by listing three common scanning scenarios and the corresponding specifications for each.

| Scenario | Original Format | Scanning Resolution (DPI) | Color Mode | File Format |
|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-------------|
| <i>Scanning and destroying original records</i> | Permission from Archives MUST be granted in order to destroy records with permanent or long-term retention after scanning. | | | |
| | Paper (Text only. No images) | 300 | Black and White (Bitonal) | PDF |
| | Paper (Text with images/graphics) | 300 | Grayscale (8- bit) | PDF |
| | Photographs, Grayscale | 300 | Grayscale (8- bit) | TIFF |
| | Photographs, Color | 300 | Color (24-bit RBG) | TIFF |
| <i>Scanning for Preservation</i> | Permanent records with preservation concerns are good candidates for scanning/retaining. Records (such as photographs) that you want to improve access to are also good candidates for scanning /retaining. | | | |

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| | Paper (Text only. No Images) | 300 | Black and White (Bitonal) | PDF |
| | Paper (Text with images/graphic) | 300 | Grayscale (8-bit) | PDF |
| | Photographs, Grayscale | 300 | Grayscale (8-bit) | TIFF |
| | Photographs, Color | 300 | Color (24-bit RBG) | TIFF |
| <i>Scanning for Convenience Copies (& retaining originals)</i> | Any records are candidates for scanning & retaining. | | | |
| | Paper (Text only. No images) | 75 dpi for web/ 300 for printing | Black and White (Bitonal) | PDF |
| | Paper (Text with images/graphics) | 75 for web/ 300 for printing | Grayscale | PDF |
| | Photographs, Grayscale | 150 | Grayscale (8- bit) | JPEG |
| | Photographs, Color | 150 | Color (24-bit RBG) | JPEG |

5. Expectations after Scanning

- **Quality Assurance**

The quality and accuracy of resulting digital files must be verified when scanning is complete. Are they readable? Are there any distortions? If scanning and destroying original records, you must verify legibility by viewing on screen and printing a sample of pages before destroying originals.

- **File Naming**

Scanned files are automatically given system generated names that are usually meaningless to end users and will impede searching for files. Resulting digital files (and directories) must be renamed using consistent, logical, predictable titles.

- Avoid vague or generic file names. File contents should be apparent from titles without having to open them. Concise and descriptive titles will help with users find the files that they need quickly.
- Formulate dates using the 4-digit year, the 2-digit month, and the 2-digit day formula for effective sorting (i.e., 2021-02-24).
- For advice on other file naming conventions, contact Archives staff.

- **Storage**

Resulting scanned images must be included in regular backups, whether stored locally or in cloud storage. No records with Personally Identifiable Information (PII), Private Business Information (PBI), and Private Health Information (PHI) should be uploaded into any type of cloud storage without adequate security protocols in place. Free online storage is NOT appropriate for these categories of confidential information. Contact Archives staff if you are unclear about what falls into these categories of protected information.

Questions? Please contact Archives@seattlearch.org