

CHECKLIST FOR GOING PAPERLESS

Hardware/Software: Investing in the right hardware and software is essential to going paperless.

1. You will need a good scanner. Decide on whether you need a small desktop scanner or large high-speed scanner that can handle big jobs. Consider: number of staff/lawyers, existing equipment, and volume of documents.
2. Make sure you have a PDF creation program with optical character recognition (OCR) to make your PDF text-searchable.

Scanning: Incorporate the scanning process into your everyday workflow.

3. Decide what to scan. Do you want to scan every single piece of paper that passes through your office? Or do you want to scan just case files? All case files? Or only closed files?
4. Decide who should scan. Do you want to designate one person in the office to scan and distribute the documents to the appropriate people? Or do you want everyone to do their own scanning? Set up standard procedures that outline how you want things done, such as where to save and how to name files. Provide training to ensure compliance.
5. Decide when to scan. Determine at what point and when to start scanning. It's best to scan contemporaneously as paper comes in.
6. After scanning, decide what happens to the paper document. Save it, send it back to the client, shred (or recycle) it?
7. The PLF File Retention and Destruction Guidelines has more information about retaining original and paper documents (e.g., wills, deeds, negotiable instruments, etc.). See *File Retention and Destruction Guidelines*, available on the PLF website, www.osbplf.org. Click on Services tab > CLEs & Resources > Practice Aids > Office Systems and Procedures > File Retention and Destruction Guidelines.
8. Keep a copy of digital client files for at least 10 years.

Storing & Backing Up: Store and back up scanned files properly to prevent data loss.

9. Make sure all computers are networked to a server so files can be saved in a single location.
10. Determine if you will need extra storage on your computer or any additional storage devices.
11. Back up data at scheduled intervals. Ensure that backup is geo-redundant.
12. Use appropriate software to do automatic and regular backups.
13. Have both onsite and offsite backups. Consider using cloud backup providers for off-premise backup. See *Online Data Storage Providers*, available on the PLF website, www.osbplf.org. Click on Services tab > CLEs & Resources > Practice Aids > Paperless Office and Cloud Computing > Online Data Storage Providers.
14. Protect data on computers by installing security updates for your operating system and computer programs and using anti-virus/malware programs.

Managing: Scanned files need to be properly indexed, organized, and managed in a way that makes them searchable and accessible.

16. If doing it yourself:
 - a. Create an electronic file folder structure that mirrors the physical file.
 - b. Organize file structure by client name, matter, and document types (e.g., correspondence, pleadings, discovery, research and notes, trial preparation, etc.)
 - c. Have a naming convention to ensure consistency, predictability, and searchability.
 - d. Consider buying search software to search the entire computer (including emails and attachments), if needed.
17. If using a document management system (DMS):

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- a. Ensure sufficient storage space on your physical server or the cloud, if using cloud-based DMS.
- b. Have the proper setup. Work with the vendor to set up your DMS to fit your office's needs.
- c. Think about migrating previous data over to your DMS. Having all your data in one place makes it easy to manage and search, but may come at an additional cost.

NOTE: You can still print and work with paper copies, but just know that your digital file is your real and complete file.

IMPORTANT NOTICES

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