

How to Store Parish Records

Active records will normally be stored in the Parish office. For the safe-keeping of non-current records and particular original material, refer to Canon 2.6.

Safe storage using archival quality material is crucial to the preservation of everything from paper to photographs or textiles. Distorted images, faded colors, lost text and crumbled pages will occur without safe storage.

In choosing a storage space, avoid excessive or fluctuation heat and humidity. A cool, dark, dry storage area is recommended. A relative humidity of approximately 50% is important with a temperature of 20C is desirable for most collections. It is important that Scotch tape, paper clips and staples not to be used and in fact, removed from items in collections. Also, refrain from using plastic wraps to secure items. A good air circulation is essential.

Good shelving is important, preferably made of steel with a baked enamel finish. Shelves should adjust to accommodate different sized boxes. The bottom shelf should be at least four inches from the floor to allow good air circulation and to prevent possible water damage. If wooden shelving must be used it should be coated with three coats of polyurethanes varnish (not containing formaldehyde) and allowed to dry for several weeks. An alternative to varnish would be to line the shelves with 5 mil polyester film held in place by double coated 3M tape #415. Standard metal filing cabinets with a baked enamel finish are acceptable.

An important part of proper paper preservation is the selection of the proper storage containers. All storage boxes and folders should be acid-free with an 8.5 pH were possible. Boxes and folders should be comfortably filled, never stuffed. Each item must be supported; metal clips and staples removed and only "like-sized" items should be stored together.

Volumes on shelves should be kept vertical and not allowed to slant but be supported by proper book ends. Volumes with broken or missing covers can be wrapped in paper or book jackets and stored flat. Large or oversized books should also be stored flat on shelves.

Unbound oversized material such as posters, blueprints, drawings, photographs and maps should be placed in file folders and placed flat. An alternative is to roll material around the outside of a pH neutral tube using tissue paper on the items to serve an interleaving function. The rolled item should be tightly wrapped in strong paper to protect the contents from light and dirt, then stored flat.