

Considerations Of Shredding On-Site

Security

- Instant destruction if shredder is desk-side or departmental
- Industrial shredders onsite can manage all of a facilities paper facilitating internal control and minimizing risks
- Shredding paper at the point of generation offers the advantage of knowing that paper wastes/information is destroyed as it is disposed.
- There will be locations where departmental shredding is the most cost effective and secure means of managing confidential documents.

Cost

A cost/benefit will determine whether cost is an advantage or disadvantage, depending upon the cost of the document destruction options available to you, an analysis may show that even the cost of a large industrial shredder (up to more than \$40,000) may provide on-site management of confidential paper that your facility can cost justify. Space limitations and other staffing considerations may also be a limiting factor. Deskside or medium-sized shredders may be cost-justified after a facility assessment is completed.

Shredder Features, Space Limitations and Operations

Cost is determined by capacity to shred (pounds/tons per hour), features (size of shredding-- 1/8, 1/4, 5/8 in shreds, cross cut, confetti, zig-zag, etc). Some shredders come with an enclosed cabinet to capture shredded materials, others rest atop a waste container and shred directly into a trash container.

Large industrial machines can be connected to a conveyor that moves shredded materials directly into a baler or compactor. When sufficient materials have been shredded, the baler or compactor can automatically compact. Some balers are "self tying," meaning that the baling wires are automatically affixed, others require manual wire tying on the bales.

Space and labor considerations

Labor to shred the paper may be considerable but again, a cost/benefit will help determine optimal solution. Also, shredded paper can be more than twenty times the volume of non-shredded paper. This means that additional space is needed to stage shredded paper until it is collected. It also takes additional labor resources to transport the same quantities of shredded paper versus non-shredded paper.

Fire hazard

Shredded paper is far more combustible than stacks of non-shredded material. This can be an issue for some fire marshals, or in patient areas, where fire code and storage of potentially combustible materials presents a risk.

Occupational safety and health

The presence of an electrical device with blades and shredding capabilities in the workplace presents a number of issues, including the need for preventive maintenance, employee education on proper use of the device, and the potential for accidents.

Shredding large volumes of paper can release a significant amount of particulates (dust) to the air , thereby diminishing indoor air quality, making the workplace more dusty, an in turn creating the need for more frequent dusting and cleaning and more frequent changes of HVAC air filtration systems. The particulate problem can be compounded in areas where there is a lot of electrical equipment such as computers, printers, copiers and other items which have an electromagnetic field associated with them as the particulates can linger suspended in the air in these areas, and pose potential increase in occupational discomforts for staff.

Noise

In general the larger the shredder and greater the shredding capacity, the more that noise is a consideration. Large shredders in the trash area may also require staff to wear hearing protection then requiring the need for an OSHA Hearing Loss Prevention Program.