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## DOSA Management Standards: Electronic Files

### Storing Electronic Records Guidelines

*Electronic records are now subject to the same discovery requirements as paper records, and thus should be managed in a way that makes them easily retrievable.*

- Electronic filing systems should **mirror paper filing systems**, especially if they are hybrid (i.e. if a file includes electronic and paper records). This makes retrieval much easier.
- **Group ten (10) or more electronic records in a file directory folder.** If there are less than five (5) or ten (10) electronic records, they are easily accessible and not necessary to be included in a directory folder.
- Try to **limit directory folders** to classifications as given in the Diocesan File Plan. This ensures that, when retention triggers are attached to directories, no records are accidentally, or improperly destroyed.
- When organizing electronic files, try not to **nest more than three (3) directory folders** inside one another. It's incredibly frustrating to click multiple times and discover the same record is located elsewhere in the directory structure, or only one record is contained within the file directory you have drilled down.

### Sample File Directory Structure

```
StHolySmokeParish_Timbucktu_SHSPT
  FinancialRecordsF_AuditReports
    2022_Audit_SHSPT
    2023_Audit_SHSPT
    2024_Audit_SHSPT
  FnclRdcsF_Statements
    2022-05-02_Statement_SHSPT
    2022-06-02_Statement_SHSPT
    2022-07-02_Statement_SHSPT
  EventProgramFilesA
    2022_ParishAnniversaryFestival
```

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## DOSA Management Standards: Electronic Files

### File Naming Guidelines

*With the proliferation of electronic records, the biggest challenge is finding what we are looking for once we've created it. Clear, consistent, and concise naming protocols should be developed for your office, department or institutions, clearly written down, and part of new employee training.*

- Ensure all electronic records are labeled consistently answering the basic “**who**” (which office created it), “**what**” (classification listed in file plan), and “**when**” (date).
- Files can be named in a way to make them easily **sortable**. So, if your office or institution routinely retrieves records chronologically, put the date at the front of the name. If the office or institution retrieves records based on content, put that portion of the name at the front of the title.
- Use a standard format for dates and include the year first using all four (4) digits: **YYYY-MM-DD** or **YYYYMMDD**. This make sorting a retrieving more efficient.
- When creating file names, do not use spaces or periods (even though Microsoft allows you to). **Instead use underscores ( \_ ), or hyphens (-).**
- Use entity the “**Standard Diocesan Entity Names & Abbreviations**” list provided by the Archives & Records Management Office (A&RM) to consistently abbreviate entities.
- Use **standard abbreviations for files types** to shorten the title
  - AGD = Agenda
  - ANN = Announcement
  - COR = Correspondence
  - FOR = Form
  - LTR = Letter
  - MEM = Memo
  - MIN = Minutes
  - NSL = Newsletter
  - POL = Policy
  - PUB = Publication
  - RPT = Report
  - DRAFT = Draft version  
(can also be numbered)
  - FINAL = Final version
- **Develop** an additional **list of standard abbreviations** for your office or institution and then make it available to staff and the A&RM in an easily accessible location. This will help with both consistent naming and consistent retrieval.

### Sample File Naming Structures

2022\_AuditRpt-FINAL\_SHSPT  
CoronationProgram-FINAL\_2021-10  
2021-02-15\_FileRequest2SHSPT-Ltr\_A&RM

***Be consistent and take leadership to benefit yourself and others.***