

Tips For Preserving Your Records At Home

Storage:

- Keep archival materials out of direct sunlight which can cause the paper to fade and deteriorate more quickly.
- Try to keep records in a cooler environment.
- Store documents in acid free boxes or acid free folders
- Photo's should be in acid free folders, sleeves, or boxes
- Keep away from water sources
- If framing a photo make sure to use an acid free mat and UV protected glass
- Store in a safe place away from Insects and Rodents
- Make sure that you do your research. When purchasing acid free storage products make sure you are buying from a reputable company and that the products are truly acid free.
- The fewer folds that you have in your documents the better it is for the document. Make sure that the containers or folders you are purchasing are the correct size to prevent unnecessary folds. Folds weaken the paper and can lead to tears or other damage in the future.
- It is always a good idea to have photos and documents scanned so that you have a digital version of your records.

Repairs:

- DO NOT store items secured with a rubber band. It will dry rot and damage your records.
- DO NOT store items secured with a staple or metal brad. These items will rust over time and damage your documents.
- DO NOT use scotch tape, masking tape, painters tape, or any other type of tape or adhesive other than an approved archival repair tape.
- Items like blue prints and photo's that "off gas" (Strong Odor) should be stored in an area where the odor can escape. If these documents are stored in a sealed container with other documents all of the documents may take on the smell of the "off gas."
- If a document in your collection had been repaired in the past with scotch tape, do not pull the tape off as it can lead to more severe damage. Either wait for the scotch tape to fall off itself or contact a reputable conservator.

Resources:

How to Preserve Family Papers and Photographs. National Archives

<https://www.archives.gov/preservation/family-archives/>

Personal Archiving. Library of Congress

<http://www.digitalpreservation.gov/personalarchiving/index.html>