

Microfilm Usage in the Law Office*

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RECORDS STORAGE is a critical problem within most law firms because closed case files and voluminous anti-trust records must be retained for later reference. Some documents such as corporate charters and minutes, deeds, wills and divorce records should be kept indefinitely. Federal and state regulations, also, are requiring law firms to retain more records and for longer periods.

Problems

The obvious problem facing law firms is an acute shortage of space for records storage. Off-premise storage near the law offices is usually expensive and always inconvenient.

Retrieval presents another dilemma with the traditional filing system. Hand searching through documents is tedious and results in low clerical productivity. And "misfiled" or "lost" records are not uncommon. Reproducing copies from originals is also slow and costly. An additional hazard is the threat of records destruction by fire or other disaster.

Solutions

With a simple microfilm system, space requirements for records can be reduced by 96%. This allows all records to be at the point-of-need, frees office space for essential law firm activity and eliminates expenditures for off-premise storage.

Records on microfilm are reduced to an optimal and uniform size which makes them ideal for simple machine processing. Filmed documents are always in place, never out of order. And they are economical to duplicate so the master copy can be kept in protective storage.

Filing is push-button simple and indexing is similar to the conventional paper filing system. With motorized retrieval you can quickly locate a record for easy viewing or obtain hard copies in seconds.

Referrals are faster. File integrity is assured. Records storage space is substantially reduced. And the law firm can more effectively satisfy the needs of clients and government.

The closed-case file is the most common application of a microfilm system in law firms. Normal procedure is to set up a folder each time a client requests assistance. A sequential case number is assigned to each folder. All records pertaining to the case are filed in the folder. An index card is used to act as a cross-reference from client to case number.

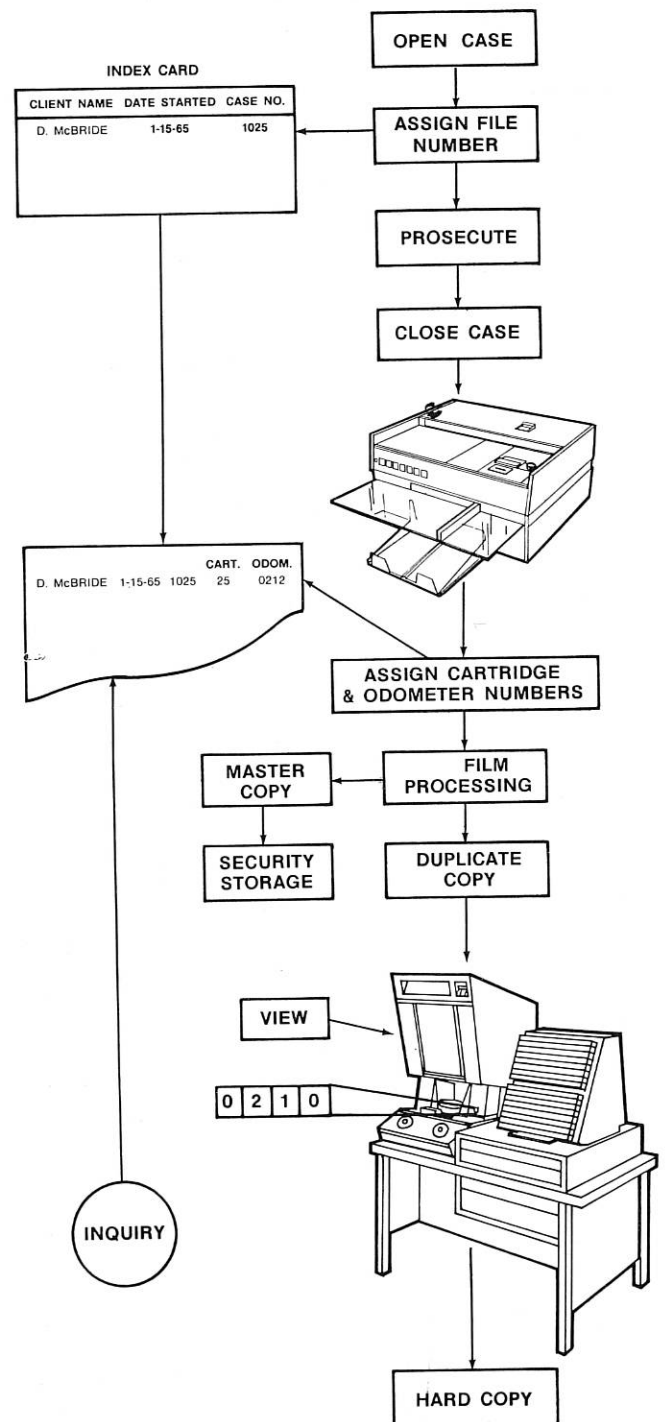
Each additional case for the client is maintained in a separate folder and the new case number is entered on the index card.

When the case is closed, all documents in the folder are filmed. The cartridge is indexed by case number cor-

responding to the camera's odometer reading. The appropriate cartridge number and odometer reading is posted on the index card. This provides the law firm with almost instant access to the precise record desired.

Film is economical to duplicate, enabling the law firm to store its master copy for protection against fire and other disaster while utilizing the duplicate copy for its active system.

For retrieval, check the index card for client name, place the appropriate cartridge in the reader-printer and dial in the odometer reading which corresponds to the odometer reading indexed on the cartridge. The document can be viewed on the screen or hard copies obtained in seconds.



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