

Standards for microfilm service bureau certification

South Carolina Department
of Archives and History
Archives and Records
Management Division

Introduction

We have designed this certification program to encourage both private facilities serving government offices and government facilities serving other governments to meet standards when they produce long-term and archival microfilm.

We evaluate a facility and issue a certificate if the facility's film meets the requirements set out in this leaflet. We award certificates solely on the basis of quality and require each facility to renew its certificate annually on 30 April.

The laws and regulations that govern microfilming in South Carolina are set out in the Public Records Act (Sections 30-1-120 and 30-1-130 of the sections 12-200 through 12-203 of the CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, as amended, and the Uniform Photographic Copies of Business and Public Records as Evidence Act (Section 19-6-610 of the CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, as amended).

To attain certification, a facility must comply with the standards and procedures this publication outlines or refers to. It must:

- Insert informational and technical targets.
- Use accepted splicing methods.
- Deposit a silver master copy of all permanent records it films with the Department.
- Produce film that meets standards for density and resolution.
- Produce film that passes the methylene blue test and submit test

strips to the Department.

- Maintain records that document procedures.
- Follow the Department's procedures for the timely transfer of security microfilm of records of long-term value into protected and controlled storage.
- Comply with all standards and procedures outlined or referenced in this publication.

Filming requirements

Type of film You must use silver halide safety base film must when you film records with a retention requirement of more than ten years.

Informational targets Each roll of film must contain standard informational targets—preferably typed. These targets facilitate the use of the film and support its legal admissibility in a court of law. The records custodian can decide how the targets are worded, what their sequence will be on film, and what targets might be needed in addition to those listed below. If the microfilm service bureau will be producing the targets instead of the records custodian, the service bureau should get the agency or local government having the records filmed to approve those targets. All rolls should carry the targets described below.

Start

This target signals the beginning of the roll. It should carry the word **START**, **HEAD**, or **BEGIN** in letters that are large, clearly printed, and legible to the naked eye.

Roll number

This target gives the reduction ratio and shows the roll number in numerals that can be read without magnification—at least 2 mm (0.08") high.

Title page

This target identifies the record series being filmed. A record series consists of records grouped together physically because they relate to a particular function, result from the same activity, or have a particular form.

Declaration of intent and purpose

This target is placed at the beginning of the roll. It certifies that the records being filmed were created in the normal course of business. To complete it you will supply, among other things, the

record series title to identify the records being filmed and the name of the office where they were created. The records custodian will sign and date the form.

Certificate of authenticity

This target is placed at the end of the roll. It certifies that the records filmed are exact copies of the originals. The camera operator must sign and date this target.

End

This target indicates the end of the roll. It contains the words END or TAIL in large, clearly printed letters.

Technical targets Testing targets to evaluate compliance with resolution and density standards are required on each roll of film that contains public records with a retention period of more than ten years. The Archives' Public records information leaflet no. 4, *Targeting and certification of microfilm*, outlines the recommended sequence and use of these targets and describes other useful targets as well. Copies of all our technical leaflets are available from the SC Department of Archives and History, SC Archives & History Center, 8301 Parklane Road, Columbia, SC 29223-4905. (803) 896-6138.

Resolution

This target tests the quality of the film—the film's ability to reproduce fine details. Resolution can be measured only by using skillfully printed resolution charts, which are available from various micrographics suppliers. (For information on the proper placement of resolution charts, please refer to Public records information leaflet no. 4, *Targeting and certification of microfilm*. For information on resolution requirements, please refer to Public records information leaflet no. 6, *Quality testing of microfilm*).

Density

This target measures contrast to ensure clear, sharp images. It should be a sheet of paper that is free of lines and, if possible, the same size and color of the documents. Otherwise, it should be a 90 percent reflectance card. An instrument called a densitometer measures density. (For information on the proper placement of the density charts, please refer to Public records information leaflet no. 4, *Targeting and certification of microfilm*. For information on density requirements, please refer to Public records information leaflet no. 6, *Quality testing of microfilm*).

Quality control

Inspection To verify the integrity of the film, including the legibility of the reproduced documents, you must inspect each roll frame by frame. You must keep records of this inspection and make them available to Department on request. This procedure is especially important if the records are scheduled for destruction.

When you begin a new project, you should make it standard procedure to send the first roll as soon as you produce it to your customer for a frame by frame verification of content and a review of the format and index. You should also send it to our micrographics laboratory for an analysis of technical quality.

Retakes You should follow the procedures outlined in Public records information leaflet no. 20, *Editing and splicing of roll microfilm of long-term or archival value*—including the use of targets—whenever you correct filming errors.

Splicing Your methods for splicing should conform to AIIM MS 18-1984 “Standards for Micrographics—Splices for imaged Film—Dimensions and Operational Constraints.” Today, only heat splices and ultrasonic splices can be used on film containing records of long-term or permanent value. The procedures and requirements for splicing roll microfilm is outlined in Public records informational leaflet no. 20, *Editing and splicing roll microfilm of long-term or archival value*.

Methylene blue test To judge its archival quality, your film must be tested for residual chemicals. High concentrations of these chemicals on silver halide film will impair its permanence. The methylene blue test, which must be conducted within two weeks of processing, determines the amount of residual chemicals on the film. A ten square centimeter of clear unexposed (processed) film is used as a test sample. The maximum concentration allowable is 1.4 milligrams per square centimeter of film. For more information on methylene blue testing, please refer to Public records information leaflet no. 6, *Quality testing of microfilm*.

Written procedures When you apply for certification, you must give the Department one copy of the written forms and procedures you are using to document your filming, processing, duplication, evaluation, and storage practices.

Applying for certification

In applying for certification, you will agree to follow the standards and procedures set out in this leaflet for the filming of public records with a retention of more than ten years. Applications for certification are available from the Department. Complete the application and send it along with a test sample—two rolls of microfilm you have processed within the last fourteen days—to the SC Department of Archives and History, Micrographics Laboratory, SC Archives & History Center, 8301 Parklane Road, Columbia, SC 29223-4905. If your sample fails to meet requirements, we will give you technical help.

Charges There is no charge for certification, but we will bill you \$20.00 for the first methylene blue tests we conduct on the sample rolls, for any additional methylene blue tests that are necessary, and for tests we conduct after certification is awarded.

Issuing certificates We will issue a certificate after evaluations of your test rolls show they meet standards. The certification will expire each year on 30 April and must be renewed annually. Certification may be contingent on the submission of additional sample rolls and on-site inspections by representatives of the Department.

Suspending certification If you are unable to sustain the production of film that meets our standards and procedures, we may have to suspend or revoke certification.

For more information

This leaflet is one of a series of leaflets issued by the Archives and Records Management Division of the South Carolina Department of Archives and History. The Department of Archives and History has statutory responsibility for advising government offices on micrographics. The Department also issues publications and provides advice and help on records management and archival administration. For more information, please contact:

SC Department of Archives and History
Archives and Records Management Division
SC Archives & History Center
8301 Parklane Road, Columbia SC 29223-4905
Phone (803) 896-6118
Fax (803) 896-6138

**Public information
leaflets from
the Archives***

- no. 1 *Legal requirements for microfilming public records* (1992)
- no. 2 *On choosing records for microfilming* (1998 rev.)
- no. 3 *Service bureau or in-house microfilming* (1992)
- no. 4 *Targeting and certification of microfilm* (1996 rev.)
- no. 5 *Choosing a microfilm camera* (1992)
- no. 6 *Quality testing of microfilm* (1998 rev.)
- no. 7 *Microfilm and microforms* (1992)
- no. 8 *Choosing a micrographics service bureau* (1998 rev.)
- no. 9 *Choosing microfilm readers and reader/printers* (1992)
- no. 10 *Computer assisted retrieval systems* (1992)
- no. 11 *Microfilm storage* (1992)
- no. 12 *Preservation microfilming* (1992)
- no. 13 *Optical Disk: policy statement and recommended practices* (1995 rev.)
- no. 14 *Storing records in the State Records Center* (1993)
- no. 15 *The deposit of security microfilm* (1993)
- no. 16 *Disaster preparedness and recovery in state and local government records offices* (1993)
- no. 17 *How to conduct a records inventory* (1993)
- no. 18 *How to establish records retention schedules* (1993)
- no. 19 *Photographic media* (to be announced)
- no. 20 *Editing and splicing roll microfilm of long-term or archival value* (1994)
- no. 21 *Managing E-Mail* (1998)
- no. 22 *Standards for microfilm service bureau certification* (1998 rev.)
- no. 23 *Sample e-mail policies* (1998)
- no. 24 *Storage and handling guidelines for maintenance of electronic records of long-term or enduring value* (1998)

*Many of these leaflets are available electronically through our WEB page at www.state.sc.us/scdah