

Guidelines for Storing Photographic Materials

General Guidelines

1. All photographic materials should be stored in enclosures that pass the Photo Activity Test (PAT).
2. Prints can be stored in mylar or paper enclosures. Mylar is preferred for frequently used materials or prints that will be interfiled with other paper-based materials. Contemporary prints (post 1930) can be stored in buffered paper enclosures. Color prints and historic black and white prints should be stored in unbuffered enclosures.
3. Black and white film-based negatives should be stored in buffered paper enclosures. Most are on acetate film, and the buffered paper enclosure will absorb some of the degradation products. Negatives should not be interfiled or boxed with other paper-based materials.
4. Glass plate negatives should be stored in unbuffered four-flap enclosures and stored upright.
5. Color negatives should be stored in unbuffered paper enclosures. Mylar enclosures will trap acetate film degradation products. Buffering may affect color dyes.

Unmounted Prints

Store **color and historic black and white prints 8" × 10" and under** in **mylar** fold-lack photo sleeves. They can be filed in document boxes with other paper-based materials provided they are properly supported to prevent warping.

Store **color and historic black and white prints larger than 8" × 10"** flat in **nonbuffered** folders in flat storage boxes. These folders can be interfiled with other paper-based materials in buffered folders.

Store **large archival collections of recent black and white or color prints** in standard **buffered** file folders. Interleave the prints with **unbuffered** paper if multiple prints are stored in a folder. Do not interfile other paper-based materials in same folder.

When **small prints (black and white or color) and related 35mm or 120mm negatives** are together in a collection, store them together in photo-archives envelopes designed to hold both types of material, 1 roll per envelope.

Mounted Prints

Store **color, cyanotype, and historic black and white prints smaller than 8.5" × 11"** in individual **unbuffered** photographic file folders. If the mounts are in reasonably stable condition, prints can be stored upright in document boxes with other paper-based materials provided they are properly supported to prevent warping.

Store **color, cyanotype, and historic black and white prints larger than 8.5" × 11"** in individual **unbuffered** photographic file folders placed into flat storage boxes. Oversize mounted prints generally should not be stored in the same folder as other paper-based materials.

Store **large archival collections of recent black and white or color prints** in standard **buffered** file folders. Interleave the prints with **unbuffered** paper. Do not interfile other paper-based materials in the same folder.

Negatives

Store **black and white film-based negatives 8" × 10" and under** (including X-rays) in individual straight-cut **buffered** negative envelopes. Before inserting negative, label exterior in pencil with identifying information. 35mm and 120mm negatives can be stored several strips (one roll) to an envelope. Place negatives into separate box. Do not interfile with other paper-based materials.

Store **color negatives** in individual **unbuffered** negative envelopes. Before inserting negative, label exterior in pencil with identifying information. 35 mm and 120mm negatives can be stored several strips (one roll) to an envelope. Place negatives into separate box. Do not interfile with other paper-based materials.

Store **black and white negatives over 8" × 10"** (including X-rays) in individual **buffered** storage folders placed into flat storage boxes. Do not interfile with other paper-based materials.

Store **glass plate negatives** in four-flap **unbuffered** negative enclosures and place upright into sturdy boxes.

Slides

Store slides that will be used with any frequency or that will be interfiled with other paper-based materials, in semi-rigid polypropylene pages that can be placed on a light table and examined with a magnifying loop. With adequate support, these slides can be stored upright in a document box in a folder separating them from other paper-based materials. Large collections can be supplied with a hanging rod and placed into special boxes.

Store large inactive collections in slide file boxes that fit into drop-front boxes. Slides can be arranged within boxes.