Expert Tips: Don't Neglect the Security of Hardcopy Docs

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You've probably read many warnings about the need to pay attention to cybersecurity, especially if you're new to working at home—but remember, paper documents are as important as PDFs.

Here are tips from the pros on securing hardcopy at home:

- **Determine if the information is sensitive.** Depending on your industry and your employer's policies, documents may be assigned security levels, with Sensitive/ Confidential being the obvious examples. If this is the case, there are sure to be policies guiding the handling of such files. Dealing with this complex issue during the COVID-19 pandemic has been a challenge for research and defense firms.

- **Can it be copied?** This may seem like a silly question; the vast majority of all documents can be copied, of course. But if you work with architectural or design documents with odd sizes, copying may not be viable. And copying a notarized document, with its raised seal, may invalidate the notarization. Why does all this matter? Because paper documents that cannot be copied are that much more valuable—and must be treated accordingly.

- **Lock it up.** At the office, you may have a lockable space for sensitive paper documents. If you're working at home, you should have the same capability.

- **Shred what you can.** Work with your manager to decide what should be shredded; paper media containing Proprietary or Confidential data should always be destroyed by cross-cut shredding or other physical means of destruction. If you're working at home, you should have the same capability as you would in the office.

- **Communication is king.** If you live with roommates you don't know well, or if there are other circumstances that make you less than comfortable keeping sensitive paper files at home, tell your manager.