

Optometry Coding & Billing Alert

Reader Question: Do You Need a Shredder Strong Enough for CDs?

Question: Our medical office is researching document shredders before purchasing one. What are some of the features we should look for in our shredder, and how much should the office be willing to spend on a shredder?

Florida Subscriber

Answer: Medical offices that do not strive to properly dispose of every discarded document run a huge risk of exposing sensitive patient or practice information to identity thieves.

You should shred all physical documents that the office no longer needs. But as for what type of shredder your office should buy, it depends on your shredding needs, according to a recent Money magazine article.

When you're considering different shredders, the materials you'll be shredding matter, as does the amount of shredding you'll have to do. -Some machines can handle paper clips and staples. Others can destroy credit cards and CDs,- Money reports.

If you'll need the office shredder to destroy more than just paper files, make sure the shredder you purchase is powerful enough to get rid of CDs, office credit cards, etc.

You should also see how many sheets you can put into the shredder at a time, and decide if the shredder has enough capacity for the office's needs.

Other features you may want to consider when shredder shopping:

- Cross-cutting (chops documents into confetti-size bits, as opposed to long strips)
- Automatic stop/start (makes one-handed shredding easier)
- Reverse mode (clears paper jams more easily)
- Low noise levels during operation
- A paper bin with a window, so you can easily see how full the shredder bin is.

Prices: Money advises shredder shoppers to invest in a cross-cutting shredder because -strip-cut shreds are much easier to put back together.- For cross-cutting shredders, the market bottoms out at about \$40, according to Money.

However, a medical office can spend upward of \$400 on a shredder if it chooses.

Also: The size of your practice will determine the number of shredders you need. For example, if you have a large practice with multiple sites, you want at least one shredder per site, possibly two, depending on the size of the office.