

Optometry Coding & Billing Alert

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

Question: Our optometry 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: Optometry offices that do not strive to properly dispose of every discarded document run a huge risk of exposing sensitive patient or office information to identity thieves. When you're considering different shredders, the materials you'll be shredding matter, as does the amount of shredding you'll have to do. 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 and credit cards.

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. Many security experts prefer cross-cutting shredders, which chop documents into confetti-size bits, as opposed to long strips.

Prices: Don't skimp on a good shredder. You can probably find one for about \$100 that can shred old credit cards as well as up to 5 sheets of paper at a time, and that won't wear out quickly. 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.

A single office might consider getting two shredders -- a medium-duty one in the front office for shredding a sheet or two at a time, and a heavy-duty one in the back for larger jobs such as shredding old records.

-- Advice for Reader Questions and You Be the Expert contributed by **David Gibson, OD, FAAO**, practicing optometrist in Lubbock, Texas; and **Charles Wimbish, OD**, president of Wimbish Consulting Group in Martinsville, Va.