There are certain environmental considerations for any area which will be used to store Vital Records. The following are best practices to ensure that your records will be in relatively good condition when you need them. Few offices will be able to follow all of these suggestions. The goal is to do the best you can and try to get as close as possible to the optimum temperature and humidity levels.

If a dust and air filtration unit is available in your records storage area, it should be able to remove approximately 90% of the airborne particles (dust, chemicals, outside pollutants, etc.) that may work their way into the area.

Paper:

- Storage facility should be maintained at 60 - 70 degrees Fahrenheit (F) with a Relative humidity (Rh) of 50 - 55%.
- Extended exposures to humidity below 30% will cause drying and brittleness of paper; extended exposure to humidity higher than 75% will cause mold spores to develop.
- Temperature and humidity should not fluctuate over 5% during a 24 hour period.

Magnetic Media (magnetic tape, floppy and optical disks):

- Storage facility should be maintained at a temperature of 65 degrees F with a Rh of 30 - 40%.
- Temperature and humidity should not fluctuate more than 5% within a 24 hour period.
- Magnetic Media is extremely sensitive to heat, water, steam, magnetic fields, and sunlight - try to limit exposure to these conditions. Optical disks should be stored at a temperature 55 - 65 degrees F with a Rh of 20 - 40%.

Microfilm, Negatives, Photographs:

- Air should be filtered to remove dust from storage areas.
- Microfilm storage area should be maintained at a temperature not exceeding 65 degrees F with a Rh of 20 - 30%.
- Photographic storage area should be maintained at a temperature of 70 degrees F with a Rh of 45 - 50%.
- Temperature and humidity should not fluctuate over 5% during a 24 hour period.
- Security copies of microfilm should be stored in acid free containers.

For further information, please contact Records Management Services at 916-278-6312.