

Westat's Media Sanitization and Disposal policy

Purpose

This document describes the procedures used to ensure that digital media such as hard disk drives, floppy disks, CDs and tapes are disposed of in a safe and secure manner.

Tape Media Disposal

All tape media scheduled for destruction is brought to the RE Data Center, logged and recorded into our media destruction tracking system. The media is degaussed by trained operators on a Proton 8000 magnetic media degausser. This equipment generates a strong magnetic field that surrounds the media and erases all data from the tape. The processed media is stored in a secure room until pick-up by an offsite media destruction vendor. The media destruction vendor is contracted by Westat to collect stored media on a monthly basis. A transmittal letter containing an itemized listing of the tape identifiers and the tape media is delivered to the vendor's onsite representative who accepts delivery of the materials and transports the tapes to their company location where they are shredded. After the materials are destroyed the vendor sends Westat a confirmation letter certifying final destruction.

Hard Disk Media Disposal

Westat uses the GDisk software utility to destroy the contents of hard disk drives. GDisk reinitializes the master boot record which makes it impossible to read any information on the hard disk drive. The utility is then used to remove the existing partition and format the hard disk drive three times in accordance with DOD standards for hard disk media content destruction.

All Other Digital Media

Digital media are handled separately from paper documents and should not be put in the shredding drop-off containers. Media to be destroyed should be delivered to PC Technical Services (RA 1000F) where it is stored in a padlocked plastic container. The contents are destroyed following the same procedures for tape media described above, except that no transmittal letter is prepared due to the volume of media processed. The following types of recordable media can be sent to PC Technical Services for destruction:

- 5.25" diskettes
- 3.5" diskettes
- CDs
- DVDs
- Zip and Jazz disks
- VHS and audio cassettes