

## **RECORDS MANAGEMENT POLICY #10.0 - AUGUST 2005**

### **GUIDELINES FOR STORING AUDIO TAPES**

Analog audio tape is found throughout the Court System, especially in Cassette form. There are basic requirements to handle and store this material so that it lasts at least for a retention period of 6 years or more.

#### **HANDLING:**

Keep and retain the plastic box for storing.

Clean hands before handling the tape.

After the tape is used, replace tape in the box immediately without rewinding.

Do not touch the playing surface of the tape for any reason.

Do not put fingers or anything else into the tape slots.

Handle by the outer shell of the cassette only.

#### **STORAGE:**

All Cassettes should be stored in their box standing upright, not on their side or flat. This prevents warping and degradation of the cassette mechanism.

Obviously, keep all storage areas clean.

Cassette boxes should be water repellent.

All tape should be stored in a dark room and must be kept away from sources of Ultra Violet (UV) light. This includes sunlight and unshielded florescent lamps. All tape must be kept away from potential sources of demagnetization. This includes, computers, computer monitors, televisions, speakers, cell phones, vacuum cleaners, electric motors or any potential source of magnetism.

Environmental conditions greatly affect the life of a tape recording. Heat is the great enemy of all magnetic tape, but especially cassettes. According to ANSI IT9.13 (1996), storage areas should be climate controlled at a constant 65 to 70° F and 45 to 50% relative humidity (RH). The environmental conditions should not vary by more  $\pm 10^{\circ}$  F or  $\pm 10\%$  RH over a 24 hour period.

The ANSI standards are appropriate for material that is for medium term storage (minimum of 10 years). For materials having a permanent value the storage areas should be climate controlled at a constant 46 to 50° F and 20 to 30% RH. The environmental conditions should not vary by more  $\pm 5^\circ$  F or  $\pm 5\%$  RH over a 24 hour period. NOTE: no magnetic tape should be stored below 46° as this will cause the lubrication and the tape backing to separate.

The shelving on which the tapes are stored should be able to withstand about 20 pounds per shelf foot. Because of the design of the packaging, the cassettes will tend to concentrate their weight at the centerline of the shelf, which if not properly supported, can cause a collapse.

On the shelf, tapes should be stored upright and next to one another. Tapes should not be stacked upon each other or in front of one another.

A note on rewinding a tape, cassette tapes wear each time they are rewound and therefore their life expectancy is shortened. After use, leave them where you finished and let the next user rewind or fast forward.