

# PAPER ORGANIZATION

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Paper organization isn't really an option, but a necessity. We are inundated with an average of 160 incoming messages every day. These messages come from our cell phones, faxes, regular phones, email, and regular mail. This makes it easy to understand how we can quickly end up with piles of paper all over the place. The key is to pull the information that is important off the paper, do what you need with that information and recycle or file the paper away. Here are some easy paper organizing tips.

## Incoming Mail

Many people do not like getting or opening their mail because it seems to just make the piles bigger that are already there. This may seem simple to some, but others cringe at the thought of doing the mail. To start your paper organization, incoming mail should be taken care of daily. It only takes about ten minutes at the most.

Sort your mail near the trash can or recycle bin, making two piles as you recycle the junk mail:

- shred (for credit card applications, etc.)
- keep

## Do the following in order:

- pull the bills out and open
  - put the junk mail directly into trash or recycle
  - tear off the return portion of the bill and place with its return envelope into the "to be paid" stack
  - place top portion either in the "file" pile (if necessary to keep) or shred
- other items like party invitations go in the "action" pile
  - example: call and make the RSVP immediately, write info in your phone and toss the invitation

The idea is to get rid of papers on a daily basis - because more are coming tomorrow! Now, shred the shred pile, file the file pile, put the bills to be paid where they go, and you're done with the mail.

## Incoming Paperwork

A roster of team or class members' is one of the papers that can't be tossed, but you still need to maintain paper organization. Almost everything else can go in your phone or it needs a signature to be returned, etc. Do your best to put any info you can into your phone in order to rid yourself of the paper. Place the rosters on a bulletin board or inside a cabinet door.

## Paper Pile Ups

Do you have a pile of papers on the kitchen table, the bedroom desk, and two or three more on kitchen counters? You'll have to conquer this mountain before you can begin to maintain paper organization. Put "paper clean up" on a date/time in your calendar when it's convenient. On that day – take all the papers you want to go through and put them in one pile on a table. Go through each one, making a decision on it. Put them in categories like above: trash, shred, pay, file, and action. Don't let papers pile up, keep up with your emails, and open your mail daily.

When you conquer these few things, paper organization is at your fingertips!