

Case Study

Client: Government Agency

Project Name: Protection of Files



› Background

The client, a State Government Law Enforcement Agency (LEA), collaborates with and assists other government departments, and agencies to gather evidence and pursue prosecutions.

The LEA stores paper files with Grace with the majority of these files needing to be retained indefinitely.

In May 2019, the LEA identified cartons that had been sent to Grace contained slight mould due to previous storage practices. An investigation of the file dates and types identified potentially 4,500 cartons of files with mould.

› The Challenge

The LEA faced onerous challenges in trying to determine which files contained mould and how best to digitise them. The following were identified as the major challenges:

- › All files were of a highly sensitive nature and require indefinite retention
- › There was the potential risk of loss of information along with the spread of mould to other files if the files were not digitised
- › Identifying which and how many files within the 4,500 cartons were infected
- › When located, the files would need to be treated prior to the digitisation
- › The cost of treating the files prior to digitisation was going to be expensive
- › Due to the sensitivity of the files only LEA staff and security vetted Grace staff were permitted to assess the files.



› The Solution

Grace worked with LEA to retrieve 4,500 cartons and to identify and assess whether additional mould contamination existed within each carton.

Grace supplied the LEA with security vetted staff to assist in assessing the files.

The assessment revealed that 450 cartons needed to be quarantined for mould treatment and digitisation. The LEA had an external provider undertake a detailed Hygienist Report on a sample of the quarantined files.

The LEA, and Grace's Risk and Compliance team investigated and assessed the situation. The Grace team proposed that the files be digitised without prior treatment which meant that:

- › All staff required full PPE during this project to protect themselves. The PPE included:
 - Suits
 - Gloves
 - Masks
- › The digitisation project needed to be carried out in a secure, self-contained and isolated room with separate air-conditioning to ensure no mould could spread if it became airborne.
- › The digitisation project also needed to meet LEA's requirements of minimum baseline clearance and additional vetted staff from the LEA.
- › An isolated room and network was required. Grace has previously carried out projects of similar nature (but without mould) within the Seven Hills Imaging facility.

› Highlights

Grace established safety procedures, a secure project room and sourced appropriate security cleared staff. The LEA was satisfied that there was no risk to the staff undertaking the project and the security of the information was managed well.

The project was subject to an insurance claim and Grace responded promptly to the insurer's queries.

› The Outcome

The utility of the Grace team to safely and securely set up and provide this unique process enabled the LEA to have its records restored and available for as long as needed. The cost when compared to decontamination the imaging was about half the estimated cost. Also being able to avoid irradiation of the mouldy files which may have damaged the records was a much better outcome for the LEA.



