

BTC

Business Technology

Curriculum

Alphabetic Indexing Rules

Learning Objectives:

- ☛ Define purpose of filing, and the importance of following filing rules
- ☛ Identify terms such as unit, indexing, alphabetizing, and case
- ☛ Index and alphabetize data according to established ARMA rules

Every business must develop and maintain an organized way to store written communication, such as reports, letters, memorandums, order forms, invoices, and other such information so that it is available for efficient retrieval or reference. This method of storing records is called **filing**. While there are a number of different methods for storing or filing information - alphabetic, subject, numeric, and geographic - the most common method is the alphabetic filing system.

Procedures for storing records alphabetically will vary among organizations and even among departments within an organization. Therefore, the filing procedures to be used in any one office needs to be determined, recorded, approved, and followed, without exception. Without written rules for storing records, procedures will vary with time, changes in personnel, etc. These changes could cause difficulty in future retrieval of records or even in the loss of records.

The Association of Records Managers and Administrators, Inc. (ARMA) is an organization designed to help professionals in records management perform their jobs easier and better. ARMA has published a list of *Alphabetic Filing Rules*, containing standard rules for storing records alphabetically. The 12 rules you will learn in this chapter follow the same principles as the ARMA rules.

Basic Filing Terms

Before learning the 12 filing rules, an understanding of filing terms is necessary.

Unit. Each part of a name is a **unit**. Names are alphabetized unit by unit. If there are two parts in a name, the name has two units. Listed below are some examples.

NAME	UNIT 1	UNIT 2	UNIT 3
Ann's Flowers	Ann's	Flowers	

Julie's Haircare	Julie's	Haircare	
Ted's Auto Parts	Ted's	Auto	Parts
Valor and Such	Valor	and	Such
Victoria's	Victoria's		

Indexing. **Indexing** is determining the order and format of the units in a name. Is a person's record filed by first or last name? Is a business record filed under *T* if the name begins with *The*? Is punctuation considered with alphabetizing a name? Indexing is deciding which name to file a record under and then arranging the units in that order.

Alphabetizing. When you arrange names in alphabetical order, you are **alphabetizing** them. The names Ann, Julie, and Ted are arranged in alphabetical order because A comes before J and J comes before T. The names Valor and Victoria are also arranged in alphabetical order. Since they both begin with a V, you consider the next or second letter in arranging for alphabetical order. If both the first and second letters are the same, consider the third letter, and so on until the letters are different and then arrange in alphabetical order using this letter.

- ❖ **Alphabetizing Unit by Unit.** The first step in alphabetizing is to alphabetize Unit by Unit. If the names in Unit 1 are exactly the same, then continue to alphabetize by Unit 2. If the first and second units are the same, the next step is to alphabetize Unit 3, and so on.
- ❖ **Nothing Comes Before Something.** In alphabetizing, it is important to remember that *nothing* comes before *something*. This means that Ann comes before Anne and Bill's Repair comes before Bill's Repair Service.
- ❖ **Case.** The **case** of a letter refers to whether the letter is written as a capital letter (A), called uppercase, or written as a small letter (a), called lowercase. In alphabetizing, uppercase and lowercase letters are considered the same. For example, McAdams and Mcadams are considered to be exactly the same when alphabetizing.