


# Vital Records Protection: KEY ISSUES FOR THE GAMING INDUSTRY

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The physical security risk profile for casino operations is one area where no one wants to gamble. These days, casinos are spending record amounts to ensure the safety of their patrons and facilities. That being said, for the most part the gaming industry is just as exposed as any other industry in terms of risk of fire, flood or hurricane. Casino fires can start in any number of ways, on-site restaurant accidents, hotel mishaps, a bursting neon sign, arson, or like in the case of one of the most disastrous casino fires of all time, The MGM Grand fire in 1980 where an electrical ground fault in a wall socket in the first-floor deli that resulted when the uninsulated wires of a refrigeration unit were stretched and rubbed as the unit vibrated.

Gaming facilities are often much more prepared for these possible disasters than most other industries. Due to the large amount of valuable chips, cash, and other prizes always on hand, casinos often have sets of intricate and practically impenetrable fireproof safes and vaults on site. These vaults are equipped with highly specialized security and fire suppression systems, designed to eliminate the chance of theft and to stop a fire as early as possible in these sensitive areas. However, there is not enough room in these vaults for all that casinos must protect, nor is it feasible to store certain types of records in a complex custom built safe or vault. Nonetheless, there are certain Vital Records that must be protected from disaster.

Vital Records such as original gaming licenses, human resources information, back up computer disks, and other vital administrative information are just some of the things that casino operations of all size should be protecting from permanent loss. Proactively purchasing fireproof containers to protect these things is much easier and certainly less expensive than replacing what has been lost in a disaster.

The Mountain High Casino, in Black Hawk, Colorado has been using the 4-drawer FireKing fireproof filing cabinet to protect their vital records for nearly two years. Valerie Dutcher, the casino's System Support Manager is very familiar with what exactly is being protected and why.

“Until we purchased our FireKing cabinet, our important information was at risk. We store back up server tapes and user files for our entire casino system in the container. It is so important for us to be prepared for a disaster at all times, otherwise it would take so much time, effort, and money to replace what should

have been protected in the first place. We are lucky enough never to have had that happen here.” Nearly all casinos recognize the need for vital record protection, but not all choose to properly apply the elements needed to insure zero to minimum loss is experience on their own. Today, most states that allow gambling enforce stiff rules with heavy penalties to govern how casinos must operate. Some casino management only purchased fireproof containers after being forced to in order to comply with specific state regulations.

“After being audited three years ago, by the Oregon Gaming Commission, we were told to install a fireproof container to house certain material. A FireKing fireproof safe was exactly what we needed. Company wide software, back up computer disks, and some other sensitive files are now protected from fire. It’s a good thing that these gaming regulations are in place, otherwise we could lose many irreplaceable things if we experience a fire,” commented Michael Silver, Manager of Information Systems at Klamoya Casino in Chiloquin, Oregon.

The state of Nevada has some of the biggest and most popular casinos in the United States; they also have some of the toughest gaming regulation to go along with it. Gaming expert and Audit Supervisor for the Nevada Gaming Commission, Ted Townsend, gives the details of the laws regarding minimum internal control standards imposed on all casinos in the state of Nevada and that are similar nationwide.

“Section 5C of Nevada’s Gaming Control Board Regulations states that back up data files and programs can be stored in a secured manner in another building on the premises that is physically separated from the building where the system’s hardware and software is located. They may also be stored in the same building as long as they are secured in a fireproof safe or some other manner that will ensure the safety of the files and programs in the event of a fire or other disaster.”

These regulations are put in place to protect the casinos from major loss should a fire or other disaster occur. The casino industry is unique in that it is forced to comply with the rules set forth by the commission that governs them. Not all industries have such standards that are watching over them to make sure that everyone is protected from these possibilities. Most casino owners would agree that there are some regulations that seem too meticulous and unnecessary; however a regulation to protect a casino’s most important data, including Vital Records, is one that is welcome amongst casino management.

## Conclusion

The information that has been released after September 11 attacks included specific terrorist threats to the gaming industry. The threat isn't limited to a terrorist attack; it can be a simple case of a disgruntled destructive employee, a fire, flood or other natural disaster.

The key is for all casino operations to plan and develop a Vital Records Protection strategy with a strong element of vital records protection BEFORE something happens, because once in the throes of a disaster, it's far too late.