

© 2002, Victor O. Schinnerer & Company, Inc. The information presented here is for risk management guidance. It is not legal advice nor should it be construed to be a determination on issues of coverage for specific claims.

RETAIN RECORDS

Records should be retained at least until the applicable statute of repose in the state has passed. Some defense counsel suggests that the project records should be kept indefinitely.

Written

The burden of remembering and completing written records can be eased somewhat by providing pre-printed forms, where possible 'pick-lists' allow design professional's, as often as possible, to simply check off points or write in a few words.

Audio Tape/Cassettes

In some situations, it may be useful for a design professional to dictate site notes to audio tape, rather than attempt to take notes on many areas of a construction site. Later, those recordings can be transcribed or stored, but they will only be useful if labeled correctly and if accompanying written notes provide a summary of the tape's contents.

Visual (video, digital still photos on hard drive or CD, date-stamped)

Video tape is another useful way of capturing detailed information in a short time. Today, digital cameras offer another convenient means of information gathering and storage. Images can be stored on hard drives or systematically transferred to CD-ROM for permanent storage and instant retrieval. With the advent of Internet-connected project web-cams, conditions at the site can be remotely observed on a 'real-time' basis. Such general observations can be useful for determining weather conditions or other basic characteristics of the project's development. These cameras, however, cannot substitute for on-site observations. In addition, the decision to use web-cams must be made before construction begins, as well as how to store all captured images for future reference.