

## Tips for Scanning Success

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As Nuclear Plants develop plans for the digital conversion of their critical records stored on Microfilm and Microfiche, a common question asked is *“What type of film or fiche do you have?”* This article breaks down the various types of Microforms and what records are commonly stored on each type.

**Roll film** This medium consists of pictures of documents stored on photographic film that have been reduced in size. Filmed in continuous rolls of lengths of 100, 215 or 1000 feet, images on roll film most commonly have data frame sizes of 16mm or 35mm. A roll of film can equal 2400 letter sized pages. 16mm roll film usually contains archival or office documents while 35mm roll film may be large engineering plans, construction drawings and newspapers.

**Microfiche** There are many formats, but most are a 4”x5” containing an array of images, sometimes as many as 400. Fiche Jackets consist of strips of 16mm or 35mm film that is cut and placed in clear jackets to produce microfiche. This technique enables grouping of images on a fiche by subject or document. Step & Repeat microfiche are the same size but are direct exposures to photographic film that makes a microfiche (these usually are setup on a grid). Other types of microfiche include ultra fiche, (a compact version which stores analog data at a high density), Combo- fiche, (where the fiche jacket holds both 16mm and 35mm images) which is useful for holding documentation and drawings on the same Jacket. COM or *Computer Output Microfilm* contains very small images that were produced from old computer data. Typical use for COM Fiche is corporate or government environments containing parts lists, reports, payroll data or policies.

**Aperture Cards** Another name for this type of Microform is Hollerith Cards or IBM Punch Cards. They consist of a 35mm piece of microfilm imbedded/glued to a hole in the card. Aperture Cards have indexing information (Hollerith) punch coded on it. Aperture cards usually contain one drawing per card.

Other common questions that may be asked about an organizations Microforms collection are, *Is the film positive or negative or is it a dup?* There are three basic types of film:

**Silver Halide** – consists of silver emulsion on a polyester base and is very light sensitive. This is considered archival quality film. The two types of Silver Halide are- Polarity Reversing (positive image) and Direct Duplicate (negative image).

**Vesicular**- images are formed by tiny bubbles inside the film body; the images can be reversed and handled in daylight. The film color is blue/green on the reel.

**Diazo** – This is the lower cost alternative to silver Halide but it does have a shorter shelf life and is subject to degradation from everyday light sources.

### **How Vendors can help ...**

Micrographics scanning and software development companies will happily provide a pre-conversion consultation, scan samples of your film, conduct a web-based or on-site equipment demonstration based on your agency’s needs. Trade shows such as **NIRMA** are a great venue for hands-on experience with a variety of microfilm and records keeping technology. nextScan will proudly demonstrate the FlexScan Multi-format Microfilm, Microfiche and aperture card scanner at NIRMA 2016.

nextScan, [www.nextscan.com](http://www.nextscan.com), is a top manufacturer of high performance production Microfilm Scanners and Workflow Software. nextScan, along with its sister company ST Imaging, [www.stimaging.com](http://www.stimaging.com), provide award winning technology and cost effective solutions for customers around the world.