

Disposal of data carriers at Swisscom

Swisscom attaches enormous importance to data protection. While absolute security can never be achieved, Swisscom makes every effort to prevent unauthorised access by complying with the highest possible standards. Swisscom has also defined strict standards governing the disposal of data carriers.

Which types of backup data carriers are used?

- Until 2011 data were backed up on hard disk and on so-called data tapes such as the type that landed in the hands of the NZZ editorial team.
- Since 2011 Swisscom has been backing up its IT systems exclusively on hard disks.

How are the data carriers disposed of?

- When data carriers need to be replaced on account of their age they are destroyed completely. This disposal procedure is strictly supervised:
 - The disposal procedure follows the dual-control principle. The procedure is defined and documented, from the removal of the data carriers until their disposal.
 - If defective tapes from backup robots need to be disposed of, they are removed following the dual control principle. Any unauthorised removal of the tapes automatically triggers an alarm.
 - The data carriers are stored temporarily in a multiple-security-level room until further disposal.
 - Since 2012 the hard disks are already degaussed at this point so that the content is fully deleted. Until 2011 there was no such deletion of data in the case of data tapes.
 - The data carriers are transported in a convoy with two escort vehicles before being physically destroyed (shredded).
 - The actual destruction is carried out by an external company. Two Swisscom employees supervise this procedure on site.
- The strict procedure is subject to regular internal and external audits and optimised on an ongoing basis.
- In 2012 the procedure was further reinforced: all hard disks are now inventoried so that they can be tracked up to their disposal.