

Photographer's Offline Archive Checklist

Step-by-Step Summary

- Prepare two identical hard drives per archive set — label them Archive##A and Archive##B.
- Use a reliable SATA/USB dock or enclosure to connect drives.
- Copy finished photo projects to Archive##A, then mirror to Archive##B.
- Verify data integrity on both drives (spot-check or checksum).
- Maintain a simple text or spreadsheet index listing which jobs are stored on which archive disks.
- Label drives clearly with archive ID and contents.
- Store Archive##A locally in anti-static foam inserts or drawers.
- Store Archive##B off-site — in a fireproof safe or Pelican case.
- Update and rotate drives monthly or after major shoots.
- Test random files quarterly and replace drives every 3–5 years.
- Avoid RAID-0 for archiving and don't rely on a live NAS for long-term storage.

Optional Tools & Notes

- Maintain consistency: job folder naming like YYYYMMDD_Client_Project.
- Keep index both digitally and printed; store printed copy with off-site drives.
- Use checksum tools (shasum, md5) for quick integrity verification.
- Consider embedding metadata into DNG files for easier future searchability.
- Each new archive pair adds scalable capacity at minimal cost.

3-2-1 Rule Reminder: 3 copies of your data, 2 different types of media, 1 kept off-site or offline.