

Definitions & Terms

We get asked what does acid-free and archival safe really mean? You know they are important but what exactly is safe. We hear “Why can’t I store my photos in a regular plastic box?” Below is a brief reference.

- **Acid**- A chemical substance that has a pH of less than 7.0. Acids can react with photographs, paper memorabilia, metals and scrapbook products shortening their life span and causing corrosion, discoloration, brittleness or a variety of other problems. Acid-free indicates having a pH of 7.0 or higher.
- **Lignin**- The binding material in plants that gives them their strength and rigidity. Any paper that contains lignin, such as newsprint, will turn yellow quickly when exposed to light, heat and humidity. Lignin will degrade paper and photographs.
- **pH**- A measurement that indicates the degree of acidity or alkalinity of a water soluble material.
- **Plasticizers**- Material used in the production of plastics to make them more flexible and less brittle. They are considered unsuitable for being in contact with or even close to photographs and other materials used in scrap booking.
- **Polypropylene**- A clear, flexible, chemically-stable plastic used in the manufacturing of preservation products including but not limited to scrapbook page protectors.
- **Poly Vinyl Chloride (PVC)** - A plastic, generally referred to as “vinyl” may exude plasticizers or emit corrosive and acidic hydrogen-chloride gas. Page protectors, binders, storage boxes, photo enclosures, corners or ANY other product made from vinyl should NEVER be used with photographs or in scrapbooks.

For additional scrapbook terms and definitions, please stop by the store and pick up a copy, or email me and we will send you one. I hope this will help you better understand “Not all things are equal”, and we want to make sure your photographs, supplies, etc. are “safe”.