

How to Buy a Shredder

While one of the most common factors people look at is the Sheet Capacity (how many sheets of paper can be fed through at once), it is by no means the only factor, or even the most important. Some important factors to consider are:

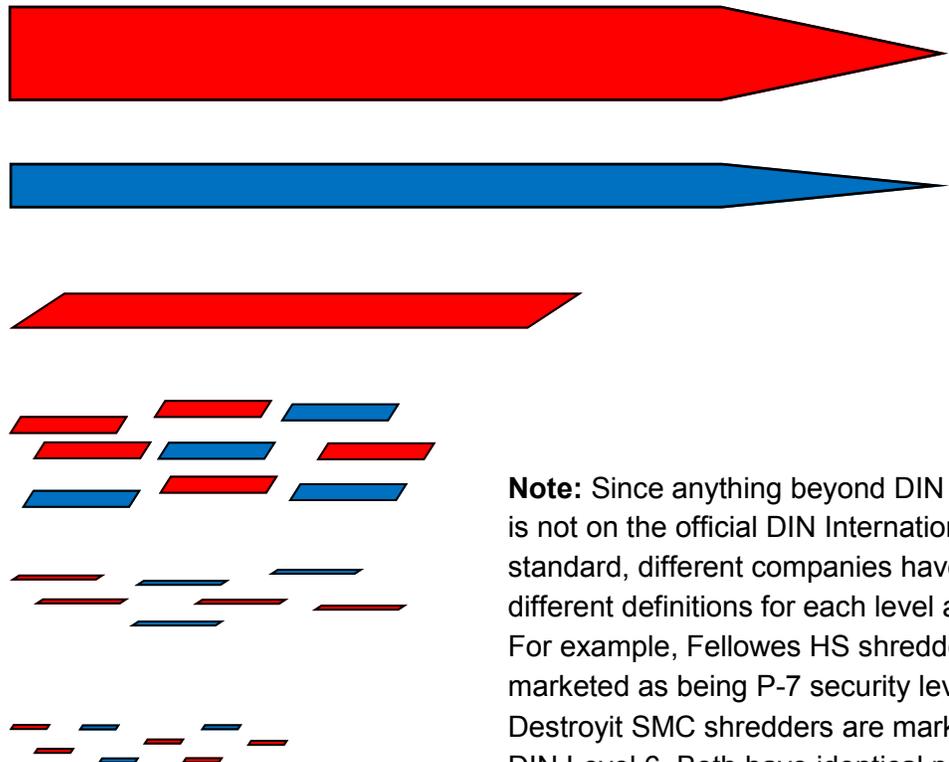
- ◆ Shred particle Security Level (DIN Level)
- ◆ Quality of Cutting Shaft
- ◆ Motor strength
- ◆ Recommended Volume (amount of paper that can be shredded before motor overheats and stops).

Let's take a look at some of these in more detail:

DIN Security Levels

The acronym DIN refers to the Deutsches Institut für Normung eV, or in English, German Institute for Standardization. The different levels refer to the maximum size of the shred particle. Although this is a European standard, it is also widely used in North America. Below are the **maximum** measurements for each of the different levels, with actual size particle levels (when printed on letter size paper at 100% magnification).

Level 1—Strip Cut Strip Width: $\leq 1/2"$ (12mm) Strip Length: infinite
Level 2—Strip Cut Strip Width: $\leq 1/4"$ (6mm) Strip Length: infinite
Level 3—Cross Cut Particle Width: $\leq 3/32"$ (2mm) Particle Length: $\leq 3"$ (80mm)
Level 4—Cross Cut Particle Width: $\leq 3/32"$ (2mm) Particle Length: $\leq 5/8"$ (15mm)
Level 5—Super Micro Cut Particle Width: $\leq 1/32"$ (0.8mm) Particle Length: $\leq 1/2"$ (13mm)
Level 6—Super Micro Cut Particle Width: $\leq 1/32"$ (1mm) Particle Length: $\leq 7/32"$ (5mm) Note: NOT DIN Listed



Note: Since anything beyond DIN Level 5 is not on the official DIN International standard, different companies have different definitions for each level above 5. For example, Fellowes HS shredders are marketed as being P-7 security level, and Destroyit SMC shredders are marketed as DIN Level 6. Both have identical particle sizes of $1/32" \times 3/16"$. Actual size: 

It's all about the fine print!

Quality of the Cutting Shaft

When it comes to the blades that cut the paper, the quality of the steel is critical. Low quality shredders use softer, poorer quality steel that dulls easily, leading to frequent jams and motor overheating. Companies that make good quality shredders will usually stand behind their product and offer lifetime warranties on their cutting shafts. This is separate from the overall device warranty (typically 1 year) that covers the motor, electronics, sensors, waste bin, etc.

The exception to the lifetime warranty rule of thumb is on the High Security (HS) or Super Micro Cut (SMC) cutting shafts (DIN Level 5 or 6). These warranties are typically 1 year, due to the increased number of blades and the high friction associated with cutting particles so small. These cutting shafts will also have lower Sheet Capacities than shredders of the same size with DIN Level 3 or 4. This does not mean that the steel is poor quality. On the contrary, only high quality, hardened steel can be used in HS or SMC cutting shafts.

When it comes to the quality of the cutting shafts, the old rule of thumb applies: "You get what you pay for."

Motor Strength / Recommended Volume

The strength of the shredder motor determines how long the shredder can run before overheating and shutting down to cool. This is typically shown on shredder specification sheets as Run Time/Cool Down Time (in minutes). The better the motor, the longer it can run before needing to stop to cool down. This is common on personal use or deskside shredders.

Central office shredders (designed for use by multiple people) have bigger motors designed to run for longer periods of time as well as allow for more sheets to be shred at once. Higher quality shredders will run continuously, while lower quality shredders will need to stop after a certain period of time.

Pricing

Shredder prices are determined by many factors. The 3 factors most affecting price are security level, bin/ sheet capacity, and the quality of the cutting shafts. This is why you can find strip cut shredders that simply sit on top of your own waste bin for \$25-\$35, high security central office shredders for \$9000-\$11,000, *and everything in between.*

For more information on shredding options and help determining which shredder is right for you please call Romina at 1 (888) 445-3434, or email sales@crispoffice.com



CrisP Office Solutions