

Copy Machines

When purchasing office equipment for a workplace, knowing the devices needed is critical. Copiers, fax machines and scanners all provide vital functions for processing paperwork in an office setting, but may not be necessary depending on the needs of the workplace.

Copiers scan text or images from a piece of paper and reproduce it on a sheet of blank paper.

Fax machines scan a picture or writing on a piece of paper and digitally transmit the information to another fax machine, which prints a copy for the receiver.

Scanners read the information or images on a piece of paper and capture the information digitally, which can then be altered, stored or transmitted as necessary.

All three devices have similarities. All scan data from a hard copy and translate the data in one way or another, and all primarily use printed paper as their input source. Despite similarities, each machine differs from the others. Copiers make single copies or batches of copies, but all they do is reproduce the source material.

Fax machines generally do not produce a copy for the sender. The scanned information is intended for another user and is sent to him or her through a phone line. Fax machines offer a level of security when sending documents and are required for most legal documents.

A scanner produces no copies at all and does not transmit the information to another user; the scanner only captures the data and digitizes it.

While stand-alone versions of copiers, fax machines and scanners exist, there are many "all-in-one" options available, which also operate as printers. These multipurpose devices may be slightly more expensive but can offer the convenience of not having to purchase multiple devices and having to maintain each piece of equipment.

In general, maintaining the device is relatively simple if a few guidelines are followed. Utilize quality products to prevent paper debris, dust and shavings inside the machine. Load the paper properly to avoid paper jams. Only load dry paper into the machine. Keep dirt and debris away from ink cartridges. Clean dust and debris from the machine. Finally, when cleaning or performing any maintenance task, be sure to disconnect the power source.