



Document Retention Guidelines

Records should be preserved for only as long as they serve a useful purpose or until all legal requirements are met. The retention periods should generally correspond with the longest statute of limitations prevailing in each state for breach of contract, breach of fiduciary duty, and professional liability claims.

The following retention schedule should help you in deciding what records need to be kept and which ones may be destroyed. Before destroying any business records, it is advisable to seek legal counsel.

RECORD TYPE	RETENTION PERIOD
Accident Reports/Claims (settled cases)	7 years
Accounts Payable:	
Ledgers and schedules	7 years
Original Invoices	10 years (3 in office, 7 in storage)
Bank Statements (cancelled checks)	10 years (3 in office, 7 in storage)
Month-end check registers (computer)	7 years
Accounts Receivable:	
Ledgers and schedules	8 years
Original invoices - signed copies (whites)	10 years (3 in office, 7 in storage)
Computer records	7 years
Audit Reports	Permanently
Bank Statements	3 years
Capital Stock and Bond Records:	
Ledgers, transfer registers, stubs showing issues, record of interest coupons, options, etc.	Permanently
Charts of Accounts	Permanently

Checks (Cancelled):	
Cancelled checks for important payments, special contracts, purchase of assets, payment of taxes, etc.	Permanently
<i>*Filed with the paper(s) pertaining to the underlying transaction</i>	
Checks (Cancelled) – except those noted above	7 years
Contracts and Leases (Expired)	7 years
Contracts and Leases (Currently in effect)	Permanently
Correspondence:	
General and schedules	2 years
Legal and important matters	Permanently
Routine with customers/vendors	2 years
Corporate Documents:	Corporate documents of the plan: Permanently Individual participation: 7 years after termination
Pension Plan	
Profit Sharing Plan	
Deeds, Mortgages and Bills of Sale	Permanently
Depreciation Schedules	Permanently
Employee Personal Records (after termination)	7 years
Employment Applications	3 years
Financial Statements:	
Year-end	Permanently
Other months	Optional
General Ledgers:	
Year-end Trial Balances	Permanently
Insurance Policies, Records, etc.	Permanently
Internal Audit Reports (miscellaneous)	3 years
Inventory Records	7 years
Invoices to Customers or from Vendors	7 years
IRA and Keogh Plans:	

Plan contributions, rollovers, transfers and distribution	Permanently
Minute Books:	
Directors, stockholders, bylaws and charter	Permanently
Payroll Records:	
Time Cards and daily reports	7 years
Tax Returns (Q, Y, W-2's, etc.)	7 years
Bank Statements (cancelled checks)	10 years (3 in office, 7 in storage)
Petty Cash Vouchers	3 years
Property Records:	
Costs, depreciation reserves, year-end trial balances, depreciation schedules, blueprints, and plans	Permanently
Purchase Orders	3 years
Receiving Sheets	1 year
Safety Records	6 years
Sales Records	7 years
Stock and Bond Certificates (cancelled)	7 years
Subsidiary Ledgers	7 years
Tax Returns:	Permanently
Revenue agents' reports	Permanently
Documents relating to determination of income tax liability	Permanently
Trademark Registrations, Patents and Copyrights	Permanently
Vouchers:	
Voucher registers and schedules	7 years
Payments to vendors, employees, etc.	7 years
<i>*(includes allowances and reimbursements of employees, officers, etc. for travel and entertainment expenses)</i>	