

Document Retention Schedule - Businesses

Certain **business** records are required to be kept for certain time periods. These periods are based on guidelines from the IRS, government regulations, appropriate laws and third-party requirements.

This schedule is a recommendation not advice on specific circumstances. Contact your legal counsel if you are uncertain about keeping or destroying certain documents.

The Document Retention Schedule pertains to both paper and electronic formats.

General Financial Records	Retention Period
Accounts receivable/payable ledgers and schedules	7 years
Auditor reports	Permanently
Bank deposit slips and reconciliations	4 years
Bank statements	Permanently
Charts of accounts	Permanently
Checks (cancelled, see exception below)	7 years
Checks (cancelled for important payments, i.e., taxes, purchases of property, special contracts, etc.) (File checks with the papers pertaining to transaction.)	Permanently
Contracts and leases	7 years*
Deeds, mortgages, and bills of sale	Permanently
Depreciation schedules	Permanently
Employee applications	3 years
Employee payroll records (W-2, W-4, annual earnings, etc.)	Permanently
Expense/reimbursement reports (authorization)	7 years
Financial statements - annual	Permanently
General and private ledgers	Permanently
General, cash receipts and disbursement and purchase journals	Permanently
Internal audit reports (some situations may be longer)	3 years
Internal reports (work orders, sales reports, notes, memos etc.)	4 years
Inventory list of products, materials and supplies	7 years
Investments: security and asset acquisition records	Permanently
Invoices to customers and from vendors	7 years
Payroll and earnings records and summaries (includes payments to current and former employees)	7 years
Payroll journals	3 years
Petty cash vouchers	3 years
Property appraisals by outside appraisers	Permanently
Property records: including costs, depreciation reserves and schedules, end-of-year trial balances, blueprints, and plans	Permanently
Requisitions	1 year
Sales, scrap and salvage records (inventories, etc.)	7 years
Subsidiary ledgers	7 years
Time cards and daily reports	7 years
Voucher payments (vendor, employees, etc.), registers and schedules	7 years

Business Records	Retention Period
Articles of incorporation & bylaws	Permanently
Correspondence (general, customers and vendors)	3 years
Correspondence (legal and important matters only)	Permanently
Capital stock and bond records: ledgers, transfer registers, stubs showing issues, record of interest, coupons, options, etc.	Permanently
Copyrights & trademark agreements	Permanently
Minute books of directors and stockholders, including by-laws and charter, incorporation and initial property transfers from incorporators	Permanently
Mortgage and note agreements and schedules	7 years*
Patents	Permanently
Personnel files	4 years*
Stock and bond certificates (cancelled), option agreements	7 years
Insurance and Tax Records	Retention Period
Accident reports and claims (settled cases)	7 years
Insurance policies	3 years*
Insurance records, current accident reports, claims, policies, etc.	Permanently
Payroll tax returns	4 years
Sales and use tax returns	4 years
Tax returns and cancelled checks (federal, state and local)	Permanently
Tax worksheets, revenue agents' reports, and other documents relating to determination of income tax liability	Permanently
Other Records	Retention Period
Actuarial reports	Permanently
Budgets	7 years
Pension records (service, eligibility, pensions paid, etc.)	6 years
Pension and profit sharing plan financial statements	Permanently
IRS approval letter	Permanently
Profit sharing plan and trust agreements	Permanently

* Retention period begins after termination, expiration, disposal, etc. of item