

Business Record Retention

A key issue facing any business is which records need to be retained and for how long. The following list provides general guidance about the length of time various types of records should be retained, either on premises or in off-site storage.

TYPE OF RECORDS	RETENTION PERIOD	TYPE OF RECORDS	RETENTION PERIOD
A		EXPENSE REPORTS:	
Accident Reports (Settled)	7 years	Departmental	7 years
Articles of Incorporation	Permanently	Employee	7 years
B		F	
Bank Reconciliations	3 years	Fidelity Bonds	7 years AT
Bank Statements	7 years	FINANCIAL REPORTS:	
Bills of Lading	3 years	Audited/Annual	Permanently
Bonds (Records of Issuance)	Permanently	Interim	3 years
Budgets	3 years	Fire Damage Reports	6 years
C		Franchise Agreements	Permanently
CAPITAL STOCK:		Freight Draft, Bills and Claims	5 years
Applications for Authorization and Issuance	Permanently	G	
Certificates (Canceled)	Permanently	Garnishments	3 years
Ledger	Permanently	I	
Transfer Records	Permanently	Insurance Policies	Permanently
Cash and Charge Sales Slips	7 years	Inventory Records	7 years AD
Check Register	10 years	Invoices (Issued or Received)	7 years
Commission Reports	6 years	Invoices - Fixed Assets	7 years AD
CONTRACTS:		L	
Corporate	7 years AT	LABOR RECORDS:	
Employee	7 years AT	Applications (Employees)	3 years
Vendor	7 years	Contracts	7 years AT
CORRESPONDENCE:		Daily Time Reports	5 years
Accounting	7 years	Disability Claims	7 years AT
Credit and Collection	7 years	Earnings Records	7 years
General	3 years	Employee Service Records	7 years
Personnel	7 years AT	Pay Checks	7 years
Cost Accounting Records	7 years	Personnel Files	7 years AT
Cost Basis Supporting Records	Permanently	Salary and Wage Rate Changes	7 years AT
D		Salary Receipts	7 years AT
Deeds	Permanently	Time Cards, Tickets and Clock Records	5 years
Delivery Receipts	5 years	Unemployment Claims	7 years AT
Dividend Register	Permanently	Withholding Exemption Certificates	7 years AT
Depreciation Schedules	Permanently	Workers' Compensation Reports	7 years
E		Leases	7 years AT
Equipment Leases (After Expiration)	7 years		
Equipment Repair Records	3 years		

AT - After termination

AD - After disposal

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TYPE OF RECORDS	RETENTION PERIOD
LEDGERS AND JOURNALS:	
Accounts Payable/Receivable Ledger	7 years
Cash/General Journal	7 years
Customer Ledger	7 years
General Ledger	Permanently
Journal Entries - Year End	Permanently
Payroll Journal	10 years
Plant Ledger	Permanently
Purchases/Sales Journal	7 years
Royalty Journal	7 years
Stock Ledger	Permanently
Licenses	1 year AT
M	
MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR RECORDS:	
Buildings	7 years
Machinery	7 years
Manufactured Stock Records	7 years
Minute Books	Permanently
Mortgages	7 years AT
N	
Notes (Canceled)	7 years
Note Register	Permanently
O	
Options	7 years AT
P	
Patient Records	Permanently
Pension Records	Permanently
Petty Cash Records	3 years
Plant Acquisition Records	Permanently
PROPERTY RECORDS:	
Account Ledgers	Permanently
Appraisals	Permanently
Damage Reports	Permanently
Deeds and Titles	Permanently
Depreciation	Permanently
Plans and Specifications	Permanently
Purchases, Sales	Permanently
Taxes	Permanently
Purchase Orders and Invoices Copies	7 years

TYPE OF RECORDS	RETENTION PERIOD
PAYROLL FORMS:	
W-2, W-3, W-4, 1099-MISC	Permanently
Form 940, 941, 942, 943	Permanently
Social Security Quarterly Reports	Permanently
R	
Receiving Reports	1 year
Remittance Statements	3 years
S	
Sales Invoices	7 years
Salesmen Commission Reports	7 years
Securities (Brokerage Slips)	7 years AD
Shipping Tickets	3 years
Stockholder Records (list of minutes, proxies, reports to stockholders)	Permanently
Surety Bonds	7 years AT
T	
Tax Records (including worksheets, bills and statements, and agent's reports)	7 years CF
TAX RETURNS (COPIES):	
Income	Permanently
Payroll	Permanently
Personal Property	Permanently
Payroll	Permanently
Personal Property	Permanently
Sales and Use	Permanently
Social Security	Permanently
Title Papers	Permanently
Trademark Records	Permanently
Travel Records (Employee)	3 years
U	
Uncollectible Account Records	7 years
Union (Labor) Contracts	Permanently
V	
Vouchers (Copies and Register)	7 years
W	
Wage and Rate Records	7 years
Warrants	Permanently
Withholding and Exemption Certificates	7 years AT

AT - After termination

AD - After disposal

CF - Records supporting carryforward items should be retained 7 years after the year in which the carryforward item is utilized on a tax return

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