

## Document Retention Guide

At the beginning of each year, we recommend you peruse your paper files and records to keep them up to date, organized and simplified. Below are comments and suggestions for managing your documents as well as a table outlining our recommendations for the various papers you encounter.

In addition, the shift towards electronic communication continues to permeate throughout this digital age. A shredder and scanner may come in handy, as you could easily scan your information and shred documents with sensitive information, resulting in a reduction of your paper pile.

However, moving to electronic storage of your files brings to the forefront different considerations. For example, your data needs to be backed up. Simply maintaining your records on a computer exposes your records to being completely lost under a hard drive failure. To remedy this situation, consider backing up the information with an external hard drive or a cloud storage service, such as Carbonite.

If you are interested in further conserving our planet's natural resources, please check out this website [www.catalogchoice.org](http://www.catalogchoice.org) to stop unwanted catalogs. Additionally, we suggest registering with the [Direct Marketing Association](http://www.directmarketing.org) to minimize the amount of paper that flows into your home. You can eliminate pre-approved credit card applications at [www.optoutprescreen.com](http://www.optoutprescreen.com). If you follow these suggestions, from our experience, you will experience a decrease in the amount of unwanted mail.

<u>Document</u>	<u>Retention Period</u>
<b>INVESTMENT</b>	
Annual Statements and 1099's	Keep with applicable tax return.
Individual Retirement Account Contribution Records	Permanently.
Investment Sale and Purchase Confirmation Records	Dispose of sale confirmation records when the transactions are correctly reflected on the monthly statement. Keep purchase confirmation records 3 years after investment is sold as evidence of cost.
Monthly Statements	Monthly statements for the year can be shredded when you receive your annual statement and verify that all purchases, sales, and dividend reinvestments are reflected on the annual statement.
Prospectuses, Privacy Notices, and Proxy Votes	Don't keep any of these unless you plan to act on them within two weeks of receipt.
Retirement Plan Statements	With company plans, once you verify that the contributions are correct, you only need to retain the year end statement. You should keep these year-end statements until you retire or until the company plan is transferred to another plan, such as an IRA.
Stock Options	Retain all stock option information until all shares of the particular grant are exercised and completely transferred into a brokerage account.
<b>INSURANCE</b>	
Health Insurance	Keep until policy expires, lapses or is replaced.
Life, Disability and Long-term Care Insurance	Retain all policy documents, the application information and the original projected benefit. Once you receive the annual statement for the current year, discard the prior year's annual statement.
Property & Casualty Insurance (Home, Auto, & Umbrella)	When your policies are renewed each year, discard the policy from the prior year that has expired. You only need to keep the policy that is currently in force.
<b>CASH FLOW</b>	
Automobile Loans	Retain all loan documents, the application information and the original projected amortization schedule until paid off. Monthly statements can be discarded when your payment is credited on the subsequent month's statement.
Bank Statements and Cancelled Checks	Keep one year unless needed for tax records.
Charitable Contributions	Keep with applicable tax return.
Credit Card Statements	If your credit card statements contain tax-related expenses, keep the statements for seven years in the event of an audit by the Internal Revenue Service. Otherwise, keep them for one year.



Employee Business Expense Records	Keep with applicable tax return.
Medical Expense Records	Keep with applicable tax return if deducted on tax return.
Pay Stubs	Keep your most recent two paystubs on file. When you receive a new paystub, throw away the oldest one. Shred your final paystubs after you receive your annual W-2 and verify that the information is accurate. Keep the last paycheck stub of the year.
Purchase Receipts	Discard after purchase appears on credit card statement if not needed for warranties, merchandise returns or taxes.
Student Loans	Retain all loan documents, the application information and the original projected amortization schedule until paid off. Keep annual interest statements with applicable tax return.
Utility Bills	Keep a minimal amount of bills (last 3 months)
<b>INCOME TAX</b>	
Income Tax Return and Supporting Records	The general rule is seven years. At the beginning of each year, discard your income tax returns and related information for the earliest year in a seven year sequence from the filing date of the return.
<b>REAL ESTATE</b>	
Mortgage Statements	Monthly statements for the year can be shredded when you receive your annual statement and verify that all payments are credited appropriately.
Real Estate Documents (copies of purchase related documents or copies of rental leases)	Keep until property has been disposed of and taxes have been paid. Then maintain in accordance with tax return schedule.
Receipts for Improvements	Keep until property has been disposed of and taxes have been paid. Then maintain in accordance with tax return schedule.
<b>MISCELLANEOUS</b>	
Medical Records	Permanently.
Military Papers	Permanently (may be required for possible veteran's benefits).
Passports	Until expiration.
Personal Certificates (Birth/Death, Marriage/Divorce, Religious Events)	Permanently.
Service Contracts and Warranties	Until you sell or discard the item. Discard warranties when only they are clearly expired.
Social Security Statements	Discard as you receive current records of payments into the Social Security System.
Vehicle Titles	Until you sell or dispose of the car. Keep in a safe deposit box or fireproof safe.
<b>ESTATE DOCUMENTS</b>	
Durable Powers of Attorney	These documents need to be refreshed more frequently than wills and trusts. Keep the <b>originals</b> in a fire proof safe or safety deposit box. Keep one original in your regular file for easy access in the event of an emergency.
Health Care Proxy	Provide a copy to your appointed agent and contingent agent. In addition, we recommend you provide a copy to all of your health care providers. The <b>original</b> health care proxy can be retained with your other estate documents in a fire proof safe or safety deposit box.
Will and Trusts	All <b>original</b> executed documents should be kept in either a fire proof safe or a safety deposit box. Copies of any documents can be kept in your general file system.



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