

File Retention Schedule

Your business records are essential in the event of an IRS audit. These retention periods are intended as a general guideline. Each business should establish a retention schedule that takes into account state and federal regulations and industry standards appropriate to their business. If you have questions about what records you should keep, you should consult with your CPA.

Accident reports/claims - settled cases	7 years	Internal reports (miscellaneous)	3 years
Accounts payable/receivable ledgers	4 years	Inventories of products, materials, and supplies	7 years
Audit reports/year end financial statements	Permanently	Invoices & bills to customers/from vendors	7 years
Bank statements and reconciliations	7 years	Ira/keogh plan contributions, rollovers, transfers & distributions	Permanently
Bills from vendors	7 years	Minute books of directors, stockholders, bylaws and charter	Permanently
Capital stock and bond records; ledgers, transfer registers, stubs showing issues, record of interest coupons, options, etc.	Permanently	Note receivable ledgers/schedules	7 years
Cash books	Permanently	Option records (expired)	7 years
Chart of accounts	Permanently	Patents	Permanently
Checks (cancelled but see exception below)	7 years	Payroll records and summaries, including summaries and tax returns and payments to pensioners	7 years
Checks cancelled for important payments, i.e., taxes, purchases of property, special contracts, etc.; checks should be filed with the papers pertaining to the underlying transaction)	Permanently	Pension/profit sharing records	Permanently
Contracts, mortgages, notes and leases - current	Permanently	Personnel files - terminated employees	7 years
Contracts, mortgages, notes and leases - expired	7 years	Petty cash vouchers	3 years
Copyrights	Permanently	Physical inventory tags	3 years
Correspondence (routine) with customers or vendors	1-4 years	Plant cost ledgers	7 years
Correspondence - legal or tax matters	Permanently	Property appraisals/records	Permanently
Deeds, mortgage and bills of sale	Permanently	Property records including costs, depreciation reserves, end-of year trial balances, depreciation schedules, blueprints and plans	Permanently
Deposit slips	3 years	Purchase orders (except purchasing department copy)	1 year
Depreciation schedules	7 years	Purchase orders (purchasing department copy)	7 years
Employee applications	3 years	Receiving sheets	1 year
Employee personnel records after termination	7 years	Requisitions	1 year
Expense analyses and expense distribution schedules	7 years	Retirement plan records	Permanently
Expense reports	7 years	Safety records	6 years
Financial statements (end-of-year, other months optional)	Permanently	Sales records	7 years
General and private ledgers (and end-of-year trial balances)	Permanently	Savings bond registration records	3 years
Insurance policies - current	Permanently	Scrap and salvage records - inventories, sales, etc.	7 years
Insurance policies - expired	4 years	Stock and bond certificates (cancelled)	Permanently
Insurance records, accident reports, claims	Permanently	Subsidiary ledgers	7 years
Interim financial statements	4 years	Tax returns and relating documents	Permanently
Internal audit reports (in some situations, longer retention periods may be desirable)	3 years	Time cards and daily reports	7 years
		Trademark registrations	Permanently
		Vouchers for payments to vendors, employees, etc. (includes allowances and reimbursement of employees,	7 years
		W2/W3 forms	7 years
		Withholding tax statements	7 years