

RECORD RETENTION GUIDELINES

While statutes of limitation on particular matters vary by law and state and should be verified with a local attorney, this general list of record-retention time periods is a good starting point.

Two years

Correspondence:

General Correspondence

Four years

Insurance:

Policies (all types, expired)

Purchases and sales:

Purchase orders

Requisitions

Sales contracts

Sales invoices

Receiving and shipping:

Export

Freight bills

Manifestos

Shipping and receiving reports

Waybills and bills of lading

Six years

Accounting:

Bank statements and deposit slips

Checks

Dividend checks (cancelled)

Expense reports

General ledgers and journals

Payroll (time cards)

Payroll (time reports and earnings records)

Subsidiary ledgers

Trial balances

Vouchers (for payments to vendors)

Corporate records:

Contracts and agreements

Correspondence:

License, traffic, and purchase

Production

Insurance:

Accident reports

Fire inspection

Personnel:

Contracts (expired)

Daily time reports

Disability and sick benefits

Personnel files (terminated)

Withholding-tax statements

Eight years

Corporate records:

Mortgage, notes, and leases (expired)

Insurance:

Claims (after settlement)

Group disability reports

Safety reports

Indefinite

Accounting:

Financial Statements

Corporate records:

Bylaws and minute book

Capital stock and bond records

Checks (taxes, property)

Copyright and trademark registrations

Deeds and easements

IRS audit reports

Labor contracts

Patents

Proxies

Retirement and pension records

Tax returns and working papers

Correspondence:

Legal and tax