

Records and Documents Retention Guidelines

Business Documents	Retention Period
Annual audited financial statements	Indefinitely
Annual plans and budgets	2 years
Bank statements and cancelled checks	<p>From one year to permanently</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go through your checks each year and keep those related to your taxes, business expenses, home improvements and mortgage payments. • Shred those that have no long-term importance.
Charitable contribution records	7 years
Contracts and related correspondence and documents	6 years after expiration or termination
Corporate records (articles of incorporation, bylaws, rules)	Indefinitely
Correspondence – general	1 year
Correspondence – legal and other important matters	Indefinitely
Financing documents, credit agreements, loan agreements, etc.	10 years after satisfaction or termination
General ledgers	10 years
Group insurance plans	Active employees (until plan is amended or terminated); retirees (indefinitely or until 6 years after death of last eligible participant)
Insurance claims files (property/liability)	10 years after claim is closed
Insurance policies and certificates	Indefinitely
Legal memoranda	5 years after close of matter
Litigation files	Indefinitely
Monthly financial statements	7 years
Paid vouchers	7 years
Pension documents and supporting employee data	Indefinitely
Regulatory filings and documents	Indefinitely
Tax returns	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Keep records for 3 years if situations (4), (5) and (6) below do not apply to you. 2. Keep records for 3 years from the date you filed your original return or 2 years from the date you paid the tax, whichever is later, if you file a claim for credit or refund after you file your return.

Business Documents (continued)	Retention Period
Tax returns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Keep records for 7 years if you file a claim for a loss from worthless securities or bad debt deduction. 4. Keep records for 6 years if you do not report income that you should report, and it is more than 25% of the gross income shown on your return. 5. Keep records indefinitely if you do not file a return. 6. Keep records indefinitely if you file a fraudulent return. 7. Keep employment tax records for at least 4 years after the date that the tax becomes due or is paid, whichever is later.
Wage assignments, attachments, garnishments	4 years after payment or settlement

General Employee Documents	Retention Period
Employee earnings records	Indefinitely
Employee handbooks	Indefinitely
Job descriptions	3 years after superseded
Main Employee File (Not Exhaustive)	Retention Period
Hiring documentation: Job applications, resume, help-wanted ads, signed policy handbook acknowledgements, copy of dental/hygiene/assistant license, etc.	4 years from termination date (or the duration of any claim or litigations involving hiring practices)
Payroll and wage records	4 years after termination
Continuing education certificates	3 complete license renewal periods (Note: employee is responsible for maintaining his/her own certificates)
Performance evaluations	4 years after termination
Discipline documentation	4 years after termination
Wage increase documentation	4 years after termination
Termination/separation from employment documentation	4 years after termination

Confidential Employee File (Not Exhaustive)	Retention Period
Background checks, drug test results, driving records, letters of reference, interview notes, employment testing results	5 years
Employee health benefits records Documentation of benefits elections, beneficiary designations, eligibility determinations, COBRA notices and summary plan descriptions and earnings.	Active employees: until the plan is amended or terminated Retirees: records required to determine benefits, including 401(k) and similar plans indefinitely or until 6 years after death of last eligible participant
Pension documents and supporting employee data	Indefinitely
Employee exposure and health records	Duration of employment plus 30 years
PDL, FMLA, personal leaves of absence <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Policies and benefits• Dates and hours used• Dispute records relating to leave	3 years
Related documentation from EDD	
Wage assignments, attachments, garnishments, litigation documents	4 years after payment or settlement
Workers' compensation claims	Workers' compensation claims: 30 years after date of injury/illness
Investigation records	Records relating to issues 2 years after resolution of dispute involving external agencies or parties, wage-hour investigation by DOL, EEOC charge, arbitrations, court actions, etc, OSHA and employee safety records: 5 years after termination
Separate Folders	Retention Period
Non-hired applicants: job applications, resumes, interview notes, help-wanted ads, employment testing results	3 years for applicants (or the duration of any claim or litigations involving hiring practices)
Employee eligibility (I-9 forms)	The later of: 3 years from hire date or 1 year after termination, whichever is later

Patient Documents	Retention Period
EOBs (Explanation of Benefits)	7 years
Patient payment records	3 years after full payment
Patient records Includes any item related to treatment of a patient or to payment for that treatment such as claim forms and EOBs	Active patients — Indefinitely Inactive patients (Patients not seen in 2 years) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adult patients — 10 years from the date patient was last seen. Minor patients — 7 years from the patient's last treatment or 1 year past the patient's 18th birthday (age 19), whichever is longer. Closed practice — 7 years (mandatory)
Compliance Documents	Retention period
Continuing education certificates	Minimum of 3 renewal periods (6 years)
Receipt showing the electronic transmission of fingerprints to the Department of Justice or a receipt evidencing that the licensee's fingerprints were taken	3 years from renewal date
Sterilizer monitoring results	12 months
Hazardous waste treatment/disposal/recycling records	5 years
Medical waste treatment/disposal records	3 years
HIPAA-related policies, procedures, training documentation, incident logs, breach reports, risk analysis, risk management plan and other required documents	6 years from last date of effectiveness or incident occurrence
Controlled substances purchase records/ inventory log/ dispensing log	3 years
Employee Cal/OSHA training records	3 years

Compliance Documents (continued)	Retention period
<p>Injury and Illness Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Records of regular inspections• Training records	<p>3 years</p> <p>Employers with less than 10 employees need only maintain inspection records until the hazard is corrected and may maintain a log of instructions in lieu of separate training records</p>
<p>Exposure Control Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Training records• Sharps Injury Log• Housekeeping schedule	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3 years• 5 years• No mandated retention period; recommend 1 year
Current sexual harassment training certificate	<p>2 years</p> <p>Employers with five or more employees must provide sexual harassment prevention training to all employees in California six months of their hire or promotion date, and thereafter every two years.</p>