
Record Retention Guidelines

Purpose:

To provide written guidelines for retention of church correspondence, documents, records, reports, contracts, minutes, and items of historical and legal significance.

Responsibilities:

Officers, directors, ministries, councils, committees, teams, staff, and members shall ensure that documents and records pertaining to church business are provided to the church office for filing and retention. The church office shall be responsible for filing and maintaining records. The church office shall also be responsible for retention and safeguarding of records and destruction of non-permanent records. Permanent records, including backup media for permanent type data in church computers, should be retained in fire-rated file storage systems.

Record Retention Schedule:

Retain for Two (2) Years

1. Correspondence with vendors.
2. Duplicate Deposit slips.

Retain for Four (4) Years

1. Bank statements, reconciliations.
2. Budgets and projections.
3. Financial reports, monthly, quarterly, interim.
4. Internal reports, memos, work orders, etc.
5. Inventory records.
6. Repair and maintenance records.
7. Sales tax return records.
8. Employment tax records.
9. Donor records.

Retain for Seven (7) Years

1. Contracts and agreements.
2. Damage reports.
3. Employee contracts.
4. Employee disability, unemployment claims, worker's compensation.
5. Employee employment applications.
6. Employee personnel files.
7. Notes – promissory.
8. Theft reports.
9. Withholding tax statements.
10. Purchase orders and invoices from vendors.
11. Leases

Retain Permanently

1. ACS end-of-year backup file media which contains these records:
 - a. Payroll.
 - b. Accounts Payable.
 - c. Year-end posting journals, ledgers, and check registers
2. Annual report of church activities (ACP).
3. Articles of Incorporation.
4. Audit reports of accountants.
5. Bylaws.
6. Charts of accounts.
7. Deeds.
8. Financial statements, annual.
9. Membership records - master
10. Minutes of Church Conferences.
11. Minutes of Deacon meetings.
12. Mortgages.
13. Property records, including costs, blueprints and plans, warranty, etc.
14. Tax exemption determination letter.
15. Insurance records – policies, claims, accident reports.
16. Tax returns and worksheets.
17. Checks – for important payments and purchases.

Note 1: Routine correspondence need only be retained for one year. Legal and important correspondence should be kept as long as the documents to which the correspondence relates.

Note 2: Financial Policies, Procedures and Guidelines #053, refers document retention to this guideline.

Note 3: Source Document – Association of International Certified Professional Accountants, Document Retention Policy (Not For Profit Section) and IRS Publication 4221 (Compliance Guide for 501 © (3) Charities).