

Develop Africa Document Retention and Destruction Policy

Document Destruction

The Document Retention and Destruction Policy identifies the record retention responsibilities of staff, volunteers, members of the board of directors, and outsiders for maintaining and documenting the storage and destruction of the organization's documents and records.

This Policy covers all records and documents, regardless of physical form (including electronic documents), and contains guidelines for how long certain documents should be kept and how records should be destroyed.

Develop Africa's staff, volunteers, members of the board of directors, committee members, and outsiders (independent contractors via agreements with them) are required to honor the following rules:

- 1) Paper or electronic documents indicated under the terms for retention in the following section will be transferred and maintained by (fill in the blank based on the organization's practices);
- 2) All other paper documents will be destroyed after three years;
- 3) All other electronic documents will be deleted from all individual computers, databases, networks, and backup storage after one year;
- 4) No paper or electronic documents will be destroyed or deleted if pertinent to any ongoing or anticipated government investigation or proceeding or private litigation (check with legal counsel or the human resources department for any current or foreseen litigation if employees have not been notified); and
- 5) No paper or electronic documents will be destroyed or deleted as required to comply with government auditing standards (Single Audit Act).

Record Retention

Type of Document	Minimum Requirement
Accounts payable ledgers and schedules	7 years
Audit reports	Permanently
Bank reconciliations	2 years
Bank statements	3 years

Type of Document	Minimum Requirement
Checks (for important payments and purchases)	Permanently
Contracts, mortgages, notes, and leases (expired)	7 years
Contracts (still in effect)	Contract period
Correspondence (general)	2 years
Correspondence (legal and important matters)	Permanently
Correspondence (with customers and vendors)	2 years
Deeds, mortgages, and bills of sale	Permanently
Depreciation schedules	Permanently
Duplicate deposit slips	2 years
Employment applications	3 years
Expense analyses/expense distribution schedules	7 years
Year-end financial statements	Permanently
Insurance records, current accident reports, claims, policies, and so on (active and expired)	Permanently
Internal audit reports	3 years
Inventory records for products, materials, and supplies	3 years
Invoices (to customers, from vendors)	7 years
Minute books, bylaws, and charter	Permanently
Patents and related papers	Permanently
Payroll records and summaries	7 years
Personnel files (terminated employees)	7 years
Retirement and pension records	Permanently
Tax returns and worksheets	Permanently
Timesheets	7 years
Trademark registrations and copyrights	Permanently
Withholding tax statements	7 years