



Record-Keeping Refresh: What to Keep and What to Shred

Whether you receive documents electronically or prefer good old-fashioned paper statements, decluttering your records helps you stay organized and keep your financial life in order. Review our list of the critical documents you should retain or shred.

When disposing of records, be sure to shred any and all documents that contain personal and/or financial information, such as your Social Security number and account numbers. This will help to prevent identity theft.

Document	Keep or Shred?
Monthly Bills	Shred once payments clear on the bank statement. Proof of purchase for larger items should be maintained for insurance reasons.
Pay Stubs	If year-to-date information is reflected on the most recent pay stub, the individual statements from throughout the year are not needed. Save the most recent pay stub only until the checkbook has been balanced. Note that three to six months of history may be requested by some mortgage companies if you are planning to apply for a mortgage.
Credit Card Receipts	Keep until statement is received and reviewed. Maintain for seven years if business related.
Canceled Checks	Keep until statement is received and reviewed. Maintain for seven years if business related.
ATM Receipts	Shred once the checkbook has been balanced.
Credit Card Statements	Maintain three months of statements.
Utility Bills	Keep bills for three months unless you are writing them off for tax purposes.
Bank Statements	Maintain three months of bank statements if you're planning to apply for a mortgage. Otherwise, shred the statement once the checkbook has been balanced. Should you require them, banks will furnish copies of past statements upon request.
Charitable Contributions	Maintain receipts and acknowledgment letters with applicable tax returns.
401(k) Statements	Shred quarterly statements once the annual summary arrives. Maintain annual summaries until the account is closed.
Insurance Records	Keep Home/Auto/Umbrella insurance records for five years or until the asset is sold, whichever is less.
Medical	Premium insurance statements, doctor's bills, prescriptions, and hospital bills should be maintained for five years from the date of service.

Satisfied Loans	Maintain for seven years.
Tax Returns & Supporting Documents	The general rule is seven years. The IRS has three years to audit a tax return with the following exceptions: underreported income greater than 25 percent has a six-year statute of limitation; fraud has no time limit.
Investment Documents	Capital gains and 1099 forms should be maintained for seven years with the corresponding tax return. Confirmations of trades in non-retirement accounts should be maintained indefinitely or until the asset is sold in order to determine the cost basis and related capital gain on the sale of the asset. Then they should be included with the tax return support for the year of the sale. (Keep in mind, many of these records are now available online.) Prospectus can be shred or discarded immediately (after reading, of course).
Home Repairs	Maintain as long as you own the property, but no less than 10 years because of warranty and workmanship guarantees.
Warranties	Keep as long as you own the product; shred once the product has been discarded.
Auto Records	Maintain as long as you own the car.
Non-Deductible IRA Contributions	Maintain indefinitely or until the money is withdrawn from the IRA.
Mortgage	Maintain as long as the mortgage is open. Once paid off, maintain until the house is sold.
Home Purchases	Purchase price of home and documentation of capital improvements, such as a deck or a roof repair. Maintain until the home is sold.
Permanent Documentation	There are also some types of documents you should never discard. Some examples include: birth certificates, adoption paperwork, education records, professional license records, military records, marriage licenses, divorce decrees, and death certificates.

Information sourced directly from WealthManagement.com, "To Shred or Not To Shred: How Long to Hold On to 22 Personal Documents"

All documents are shredded at the discretion of the individual.

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