**What is a Document Retention Policy?**

A document retention policy (DRP) provides for the systematic review, retention, and destruction of documents received or created in the course of business. A DRP will identify documents that need to be maintained, contain guidelines for how long certain

**Why Do You Need a Document Retention Policy?**

* **Efficiency**A consistently enforced DRP means that you should be able to quickly and efficiently locate important documents when you need them.
* **Protection in Litigation**A DRP that is consistently followed may aid significantly in any litigation that might arise.
* **Compliance with Federal, State and Local Regulations**  
  Many documents must be kept for a specific time periods pursuant to federal, state or local laws. These laws include tax, employee benefit, occupational safety and wage and hour provisions, among others.

Federal and state laws have many different requirements regarding document retention, and it is important that you evaluate the provisions that are applicable to your business and retain the documents for the required period.

Remember that every non-profit organization is different, and you need to develop a DRP that is tailored to your organization. The DRP should answer the question: What documents need to be kept and for how long? Your DRP need not be overly detailed. Remember, the simpler the policy the more likely it will be followed. Your DRP may just list the types of documents used in your business along with the length of time each category of documents will be kept.

**The following steps should be taken to create a DRP:**

1. Identify documents, both physical and electronic, that your Council produces
2. Decide how long documents should be kept
3. Decide how and where documents should be kept
4. Determine how documents should be destroyed
5. Follow the DRP

**Document Retention Policy Statement**

To facilitate efficient and effective operation of [INSERT COUNCIL NAME], we are implementing the following Document Retention Policy. All business records should be kept no longer than the period necessary for the proper conduct of this Council. Except as designated below, or as specifically exempted by the Corporate Secretary, no documents shall be retained longer than five (5) years.

This policy shall cover all business records of [INSERT COUNCIL NAME], including written, printed and recorded matter and electronic forms of records, including e-mail messages.

**Document Retention Schedule**

The following types of documents will be retained for the following periods of time. At least one copy of each document will be retained according to the following schedule.

**Corporate Governance Documents**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Document** | **Retention** | **Format** | **Maintained By** |
| Articles of Incorporation | Permanent | Physical and Digital\* | Corporate Secretary |
| Bylaws | Permanent | Digital\* | Corporate Secretary |
| Board Policies | Permanent | Digital | Corporate Secretary |
| Resolutions | Permanent | Digital | Corporate Secretary |
| Board Meeting Minutes | Permanent | Digital | Corporate Secretary |
| IRS Form 1023 (Application for tax-exempt and/or charitable status | Permanent | Physical and Digital | Corporate Secretary |
| Tax or Employee Identification Number Designation | Permanent | Physical and Digital | Corporate Secretary |
| Sales Tax Exemption documents | Permanent | Physical and Digital | Corporate Secretary |
| Annual Corporate Filings | Permanent | Physical and/or Digital | Corporate Secretary |
| Trademark, Copyright, Service Mark Registration, Patents | Permanent | Physical and/or Digital | Corporate Secretary |

**Financial Records**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Document** | **Retention** | **Format** | **Maintained By** |
| Chart of Accounts and General Ledger | Permanent | Digital | Corporate Secretary in concert with Treasurer |
| Fiscal Policies and Procedures (Board Policy) | Permanent | Digital | Corporate Secretary in concert with Treasurer |
| Financial Statements (Year End) | Permanent | Digital | Corporate Secretary |
| Audit Reports | Permanent | Physical and/or Digital\* | Corporate Secretary |
| Bank Statements | 7 Years | Digital | Treasurer |
| Bank Deposit Documentation | 7 Years | Digital | Treasurer |
| Business Expenses Documents | 7 Years | Digital | Treasurer |
| Cancelled Checks\*\* | 7 Years | Digital | Treasurer |
| Check Registers/Books | 7 Years | Digital | Treasurer |
| Credit Card Receipts | 3 Years | Digital | Treasurer |
| Credit Card Sales | 5-7 Years *per Merchant Agreement* | Digital | Treasurer |
| Invoices | 7 Years | Digital | Treasurer |
| Investment Records (deposits, earnings, withdrawals) | 7 Years | Digital | Treasurer |
| Property/Asset Inventories | 7 Years | Digital | Treasurer |
| Petty Cash Receipts/documents | 3 Years | Digital | Treasurer |

**Tax Records**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Document** | **Retention** | **Format** | **Maintained By** |
| Annual Tax Filing for the Organization (IRS 990) | Permanent | Digital\* – depending on format submitted | Corporate Secretary in concert with Treasurer |
| Payroll Registers | Permanent | Digital | Treasurer |
| Filing of Fees Paid to Professionals (IRS 1099) | 7 Years | Digital | Treasurer |
| Payroll Tax Withholdings | 7 Years | Digital | Treasurer |
| Earning Records | 7 Years | Digital | Treasurer |
| Payroll Tax Returns | 7 Years | Digital | Treasurer |
| W-2 Statements | 7 Years | Digital | Treasurer |

**Personnel Records**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Document** | **Retention** | **Format** | **Maintained By** |
| Employer Offer Letters | Permanent | Physical and/or Digital\* | Corporate Secretary |
| Confirmation of Employment Letters | Permanent | Physical and/or Digital | Corporate Secretary |
| Benefits Descriptions per Employee | Permanent | Physical and/or Digital | Corporate Secretary |
| Pension Records | Permanent | Physical and/or Digital | Corporate Secretary in concert with Treasurer |
| Employee Application and Resumes | 7 Years After Termination | Digital | Corporate Secretary |
| Promotions, Demotions, Letter of Reprimand, Termination | 7 Years After Termination | Digital | Corporate Secretary |
| Job Descriptions, Performance Goals | 7 Years After Termination | Digital | Corporate Secretary |
| Workers’ Compensation Records | 5 Years | Physical and/or Digital | Corporate Secretary in concert with Treasurer |
| Salary Rangers per Job Description | 5 Years | Digital | Corporate Secretary |
| I-9 Forms | 5 Years After Termination | Physical and/or Digital | Corporate Secretary |
| Time Reports | 3 Years After Termination | Digital | Corporate Secretary |

**Insurance Records**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Document** | **Retention** | **Format** | **Maintained By** |
| Property Insurance Policy | Permanent | Physical and/or Digital | Corporate Secretary |
| Directors & Officers Insurance Policy | Permanent | Physical and/or Digital | Corporate Secretary |
| Workers’ Compensation Insurance Policy | Permanent | Physical and/or Digital | Corporate Secretary |
| General Liability Insurance Policy | Permanent | Physical and/or Digital | Corporate Secretary |
| Insurance Claims Applications | Permanent | Physical and/or Digital | Corporate Secretary |
| Insurance Disbursements / Denials | Permanent | Physical and/or Digital | Corporate Secretary |

**Contracts Records**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Document** | **Retention** | **Format** | **Maintained By** |
| All Insurance Contracts | Permanent | Physical and/or Digital | Corporate Secretary |
| Employee Contracts | Permanent | Physical and/or Digital | Corporate Secretary |
| Legal Correspondence | Permanent | Physical and/or Digital | Corporate Secretary |
| Loan / Mortgage Contracts | Permanent | Physical and/or Digital | Corporate Secretary in concert with Treasurer |
| Leases / Deeds | Permanent | Physical and/or Digital | Corporate Secretary in concert with Treasurer |
| Vendor Contracts | 7 Years | Physical and/or Digital | Corporate Secretary in concert with Treasurer |
| Warranties | 7 Years | Physical and/or Digital | Corporate Secretary |

**Management Plans and Procedures**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Document** | **Retention** | **Format** | **Maintained By** |
| Strategic Plans | 7 Years | Digital | Corporate Secretary |
| Staffing, Programs, Marketing, Finance, Fundraising and Evaluation Plans | 7 Years | Digital | Corporate Secretary |
| Vendor Contracts | 7 Years | Physical and/or Digital | Corporate Secretary in concert with Treasurer |
| Disaster Recovery Plan | 7 Years | Physical and/or Digital | Corporate Secretary |

**Email and Other Computer-Based Correspondence**

Regarding correspondence/information that is developed and/or maintained by employees on the company’s computers, whether it is work-related or personal information.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Document** | **Retention** | **Format** | **Maintained By** |
| Employee correspondence, e.g., emails | 7 Years | Digital | Corporate Secretary |

**Password Protected Files**

Access to online accounts, e.g., banking and investments, website hosting and maintenance, email, social media, should be updated on a regular basis and in accordance with assigned security and access privileges. Master password file will be maintained by the corporate secretary.

**Document Protection**

Documents (hardcopy, online or other media) will be stored in a protected environment for the duration of the Document Retention Schedule. Computer backup media will be included.

Cloud-based storage will meet industry standards for data security.

**Document Destruction**

Hardcopy of documents will be destroyed by shredding (may define micro shredding) or by fire after they have been retained until the end of the Document Retention Schedule. Copies of computer backups will be destroyed by fire or other proven means to destroy such media after they have been retained until the end of the Document Retention Schedule.

The organization shall maintain a log of documents/media destroyed.

**Provision of Documentation for Investigations or Litigation**

Documents requested and subpoenaed by legally authorized personnel will be provided within five (5) business days. The Board President, Corporate Secretary will authorize provisions. No documents will be concealed, altered or destroyed with the intent to obstruct the investigation or litigation.

**Policy Review Recommendation: Annually**