

WHAT TO KEEP AND WHAT TO THROW AWAY OR SHRED

Forever

- Birth Certificates
- Marriage Certificates
- Divorce Certificates
- Death Certificates
- Military Documents
- Tax Returns: The [IRS can audit](#) your returns from 3 years ago; 6 years if you grossly under reported; indefinitely if you filed a fraudulent return or did not file. So you could pitch your returns after 7 years... however, if they claim you didn't file, and you pitched it... well, now you know why I put tax returns on the indefinite list! For more details on how long to keep tax records, see [how long to keep tax returns](#).
- Immunization Record
- Employment Records ([Why](#))
- IRA Contributions ([Why](#))
- Social Security Card

Keep During Ownership

- Car Titles and Service Records
- Receipts, Manuals, and Warranty Information for Appliances
- Receipts for Major Purchases like Jewelry, Furniture, and Computers

Ownership Plus 7 Years

Even after you sell investments or real estate, you'll still need to keep the gain or loss documentation for tax purposes.

- Stocks, Bonds, and Investment Records
- Savings Certificates
- Home Improvement Documentation
- Real Estate Records

7 Years

Many of the following will contain information that supports tax returns. Therefore it's best to keep the following for seven years:

- Canceled Checks
- Credit Card Statements
- Old Bank Statements
- Retirement Plan Contributions
- Supporting Documentation for Tax Returns

Until Specified Date

- Annual Retirement Statements: Until retirement and funds are exhausted.
- Insurance Policies – Until property is sold, policy expires, and all claims are settled.
- Wills: Until replaced by a new one.

Throw Away

- Receipts not used for Warranties, Taxes, or Insurance
- Paycheck Stubs: Once you get your W-2, you can toss them
- Phone Bills not needed for taxes
- ATM Receipts
- Grocery Receipts