

## *RECORD RETENTION GUIDE*

The following list has been compiled in response to requests from Posts that have asked how long to retain certain files and records. Please keep in mind that this list does not have the effect of law, and a judicious amount of common sense should be used when applying it to your Post.

<u>Record Name</u>	<u>Retention Period</u>
Accounts payable invoices	3 years
Accounts payable ledger	Continuing record
Accounts receivable ledger	5 years
Annual financial reports	Permanent
Annuity & deferred payment plans	Continuing record
Audit reports, annual	10 years
Audit reports, periodic	2 years
Audit Work Papers	3 years
Balance sheets	Permanent
Bank deposit slips	3 years
Bank statements	3 years
Bills of Lading	2 years
Bonds - Fidelity	3 years after termination
Bonds - Surety	3 years after termination
Budgets	3 years
By-Laws	Until superseded
Cancelled checks	3 years
Cash receipt records	7 years
Certified Annual Financial Statements	Permanent
Community Activity Reports	3 years
Contracts	Permanent
Correspondence, executive	10 years
Correspondence, general	5 years
Depreciation schedules	Permanent
Election of Officer Reports	5 years
Employee records	4 years
Employee contracts	6 years after termination
Employee withholding records	4 years
Employee accident reports	30 years after settlement
Employee insurance records	11 years after termination
Employee termination	5 years
Entertainment, gift & gratuity records	3 years
Expense vouchers	3 years
Fidelity bonds	3 years after termination
Financial reports, periodic	2 years
Financial reports, annual	Permanent
Freight bills	3 years
Freight claims	2 years

<u>Record Name</u>	<u>Retention Period</u>
Garnishments	5 years
General ledger	Permanent
Income statements, annual	Permanent
Income statements, periodic	2 years
Incorporation Papers	Permanent
Inspection Reports	3 years
Insurance records, general	Policy expiration
Inventory records	Permanent
Labor Cost Records	3 years
Lease Records	3 years after termination
Membership Applications	Permanent *2
Membership Rosters	5 years
Minutes of Post Meetings	5 years *1
Payroll register	3 years
Periodic Financial Reports	2 years
Petty Cash Records	3 years
Postal records	1 year after end of fiscal year
Property records	Permanent
Quartermaster reports	5 years *3
Shipping & Receiving documents	2 years
Tax records	Permanent

- \*1 In some instances, it may be advisable to retain the minutes of Post meetings when those minutes contain policy decisions. Normally, however, those policy decisions would have been incorporated into the Post By-Laws, and the minutes would only be of minor historical significance.
- \*2 Membership applications should be retained as a permanent record to aid in establishing length of membership, original eligibility, and other items of historical value.
- \*3 Monthly Quartermaster reports usually prove to be "dead files" once the quarterly and annual audit reports are completed. However, it is recommended that they be retained for a period of five years, should a detailed reconstruction of the Post's financial situation be required by an auditor or IRS.

Obviously, the foregoing list is not all-encompassing, nor is it intended to be. A good rule of thumb in determining what files and records to keep is that if the file or record has no financial or historical significance, then it is probably time to dispose of it.