

# Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

## Document Retention and Archiving Requirements

This SOP defines the **document retention and archiving requirements**, including the classification of documents, retention periods, storage methods, access controls, and disposal procedures. The objective is to ensure that all organizational records are systematically preserved, accessible when needed, and securely destroyed in compliance with regulatory standards and company policies.

### 1. Scope

This SOP applies to all employees and contractors responsible for creating, managing, and disposing of organizational documents and records, regardless of format (paper or electronic).

### 2. Responsibilities

- **Records Manager:** Oversees document retention processes and ensures compliance.
- **Department Heads:** Ensure adherence to retention and archiving procedures within their departments.
- **All Staff:** Responsible for classifying, storing, and properly disposing of documents they handle.

### 3. Document Classification

| Document Type       | Description                                    | Retention Period          |
|---------------------|--|---------------------------|
| Financial Records   | Invoices, receipts, ledgers, budgets           | 7 years                   |
| HR Records          | Employee files, contracts, performance reviews | 7 years after termination |
| Legal Documents     | Contracts, agreements, compliance files        | 10 years                  |
| Operational Records | Policies, procedures, project documents        | 3 years                   |
| Correspondence      | Official emails, letters                       | 3 years                   |

*\*Refer to local laws and industry regulations for specific retention periods where applicable.*

### 4. Storage and Archiving Methods

- Documents must be stored in secure, access-controlled physical or digital storage systems.
- Electronic records must be backed up regularly and stored in approved systems.
- Physical documents should be kept in locked cabinets or secure archive rooms.

### 5. Access Controls

- Access to documents must be restricted based on job roles and responsibilities.
- Access logs should be maintained for sensitive or confidential information.
- Any unauthorized access or suspected breach must be reported to the Records Manager immediately.

### 6. Disposal and Destruction Procedures

- Documents that have reached the end of their retention period should be approved for destruction by the Records Manager.
- Confidential or sensitive documents must be shredded or securely erased.
- Records of disposed documents should be maintained, including date of disposal and method used.

### 7. Compliance and Review

- This SOP will be reviewed at least annually or whenever there are significant changes in regulations or business processes.
- Non-compliance may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

## 8. References

- Company Policy Manual
- Applicable industry regulations and legal requirements