

# SOP: Retention Schedule and Archiving Procedures

This SOP details the **retention schedule and archiving procedures**, including guidelines for document classification, retention periods based on legal and organizational requirements, secure storage methods, digital and physical archiving practices, regular review and disposal protocols, access controls, and compliance monitoring.

**Objective:** Ensure efficient management, preservation, and retrieval of records while reducing risk and supporting regulatory compliance.

## 1. Scope

This procedure applies to all organizational records, both physical and digital, created, received, or maintained by the organization in the course of business operations.

## 2. Roles and Responsibilities

- **Records Manager:** Oversees implementation, ensures compliance, administers retention schedules.
- **Department Heads:** Ensure department adherence, notify Records Manager of special requirements.
- **Employees:** Classify, store, and submit documents as required.
- **IT Department:** Maintain digital archiving infrastructure and access controls.

## 3. Document Classification

- Classify all documents based on type (e.g., financial, HR, contracts, operational, legal).
- Assign classification level: Confidential, Internal Use, or Public.
- Label documents per classification guidelines before archiving.

## 4. Retention Schedule

| Document Type                | Retention Period          | Legal/Regulatory Reference   |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| Financial Records & Invoices | 7 years                   | Tax laws, local jurisdiction |
| Employee Records             | 5 years after termination | Labor laws                   |
| Contracts                    | 6 years after expiration  | Civil code                   |
| Meeting Minutes              | Permanently               | Corporate governance         |
| General Correspondence       | 2 years                   | Internal policy              |

## 5. Secure Storage and Archiving Practices

- **Physical Records:** Store in secure, access-controlled locations. Use fireproof cabinets for sensitive records.
- **Digital Records:** Store in encrypted document management systems with backups at secure offsite locations.
- Index all records for search and retrieval.
- Ensure audit trails are maintained for access and changes.

## 6. Review and Disposal Protocols

- Review archived records annually to identify those due for disposal.
- Document approval for destruction by authorized personnel.
- **Physical destruction:** Use certified shredding.
- **Digital destruction:** Use secure deletion and overwrite standards.
- Maintain disposal logs for compliance.

## 7. Access Controls

- Grant access only to authorized personnel based on role and classification level.
- Regularly review and update permissions.
- Require sign-in/sign-out logs for physical archives.

## 8. Compliance Monitoring

- Conduct periodic internal audits of archiving practices.
- Maintain and update procedures per changes in regulations.
- Provide training to staff regarding retention and archiving responsibilities.

**Document Owner:** Records Manager

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