

SOP Template: Requirements for Documentation and Record Retention

This SOP specifies the **requirements for documentation and record retention**, detailing the types of documents to be maintained, retention periods, storage methods, and procedures for secure disposal. It ensures compliance with regulatory standards, supports operational continuity, and facilitates accurate record-keeping and auditing processes within the organization.

1. Purpose

To establish standardized procedures for the creation, maintenance, retention, and secure disposal of documentation and records within the organization.

2. Scope

This SOP applies to all employees and contractors responsible for creating, handling, or maintaining organizational records and documentation.

3. Definitions

- **Record:** Any information created, received, and maintained as evidence or information by the organization.
- **Retention Period:** The duration for which a record must be kept before disposal.
- **Disposal:** Secure destruction or removal of records after the end of the retention period.

4. Responsibilities

- **Document Owners:** Ensure that documents are accurate, maintained, and disposed of according to policy.
- **Records Management Officer:** Oversee record retention schedules and compliance.
- **Employees:** Comply with documentation and retention procedures outlined in this SOP.

5. Procedure

5.1 Types of Documents and Records

Document Type	Description	Retention Period
Contracts & Agreements	Legal binding contracts with clients, vendors, etc.	7 years after expiry or termination
Financial Records	Invoices, receipts, ledgers, payroll records	7 years
Personnel Records	Employee files, performance reviews, training records	5 years after separation
Operational Records	Standard operating procedures, logs, maintenance records	5 years
Project Documentation	Project plans, reports, correspondence	3 years after project completion

5.2 Document Creation and Approval

- All documents must be created using approved templates and must be reviewed and authorized by the designated owner or supervisor.
- Document version control must be maintained.

5.3 Storage Methods

- Records must be stored in secure, access-controlled locations, either physically (locked cabinets) or electronically (password-protected databases).

- Backups must be performed regularly for electronic records.

5.4 Review and Audit

- Records must be periodically reviewed to ensure accuracy, completeness, and compliance with retention schedules.
- Internal or external audits may be performed to verify compliance.

5.5 Secure Disposal

- Physical documents must be shredded or incinerated.
- Electronic records must be permanently deleted from all storage systems, including backups.
- A record of disposed documents must be maintained, including the date and method of disposal.

6. Compliance

Adherence to this SOP is mandatory. Non-compliance may result in disciplinary action and/or legal penalties.

7. References

- Relevant national and international regulations (e.g., GDPR, HIPAA, SOX).
- Organization's Records Management Policy.

8. Revision History

Date	Revision No.	Description	Approved By
2024-06-01	1.0	Initial draft	Records Management Officer