

SOP: Document Filing and Records Retention

1. Purpose

This SOP details **document filing and records retention** procedures, covering the organization, storage, and maintenance of physical and electronic records, classification and labeling of documents, retention periods compliant with legal and regulatory requirements, secure disposal of obsolete files, and methods to ensure accessibility and confidentiality of records. The goal is to enhance information management, ensure compliance, and streamline retrieval processes within the organization.

2. Scope

Applies to all departments and personnel responsible for managing, storing, retrieving, or disposing of organizational documents and records, both physical and electronic.

3. Responsibilities

- **Records Manager:** Oversee implementation and compliance with this SOP.
- **Department Heads:** Ensure departmental adherence to procedures.
- **Employees:** Follow processes for filing, retention, and secure disposal of records.
- **IT Staff:** Maintain electronic record systems security and accessibility.

4. Procedures

- Document Classification and Labeling**
 - Classify documents by type (e.g., financial, personnel, legal).
 - Label all records with clear identifiers (date, subject, owner, retention period).
- Filing and Organization**
 - Store documents in designated filing systems (alphabetical, chronological, by department).
 - For electronic records, use searchable folder structures and standardized naming conventions.
- Storage and Maintenance**
 - Maintain physical files in secure, locked cabinets/rooms with restricted access.
 - Store electronic records on secure servers with role-based access controls and backup protocols.
- Retention Periods**
 - Consult the [Records Retention Schedule](#) for required durations, based on regulatory/legal requirements.
 - Update retention schedules annually or as regulations change.
- Records Review**
 - Conduct scheduled audits (at least annually) to ensure proper filing and retention practices.
- Secure Disposal**
 - Shred paper documents or arrange for certified destruction services for obsolete files beyond retention periods.
 - Permanently delete electronic records ensuring non-recoverability; obtain deletion certificates if needed.
- Accessibility and Confidentiality**
 - Grant access to records on a need-to-know basis, aligned with job responsibilities.
 - Implement data protection measures to ensure compliance with privacy laws.

5. Records Retention Schedule (Example)

Document Type	Retention Period	Disposal Method
Financial Records	7 Years	Secure Shredding / Permanent Deletion
Employee Personnel Files	7 Years after separation	Secure Shredding / Permanent Deletion
Contracts & Agreements	7 Years after expiration	Secure Shredding / Permanent Deletion
Compliance/Legal Documents	As mandated by law	Certified Destruction / Deletion

6. Revision History

Version	Date	Summary of Changes	Approved By
1.0	2024-06-07	Initial template release.	[Approver Name]