

SOP: Record Retention, Archiving, and Disposal Schedules

This SOP details the procedures for **record retention, archiving, and disposal schedules**, outlining the timelines for retaining various types of documents, methods for secure archiving, and protocols for the safe and compliant disposal of records. The goal is to ensure organizational compliance, efficient record management, and the protection of sensitive information throughout its lifecycle.

1. Purpose

To establish clear protocols for record retention, archiving, and disposal to uphold legal, regulatory, and organizational requirements while safeguarding sensitive information.

2. Scope

This SOP applies to all company departments and covers all physical and electronic records created, received, or maintained by the organization.

3. Responsibilities

- **Records Manager:** Oversees implementation, training, compliance, and review of record keeping activities.
- **Department Heads:** Ensure adherence to retention and disposal schedules within their departments.
- **All Employees:** Comply with procedures and report discrepancies or breaches.

4. Record Retention Schedules

Document Type	Retention Period	Responsible Department
Financial Records (e.g., invoices, ledgers)	7 years	Finance
Personnel Files	Employment term + 6 years	HR
Contracts and Agreements	Contract term + 7 years	Legal
Quality & Compliance Records	5 years	Quality Assurance
Health & Safety Records	5 years	Health & Safety
Email Correspondence (business-critical)	2 years	All Departments

**Refer to local laws/regulations for records not specified above.*

5. Archiving Procedures

- Records exceeding active use, but still within the retention period, must be archived securely (physically and/or digitally).
- Physical records must be stored in locked, access-controlled facilities. Digital records must be archived using secure, backed-up systems with controlled access.
- Maintain an updated archive inventory, including access logs, for audit purposes.

6. Disposal Procedures

- Ensure records surpassing their retention period are identified for disposal.
- Sensitive/confidential records must be destroyed securely:
 - **Physical:** Shredding, pulping, or incineration.
 - **Digital:** Permanent deletion using secure wipe methods/software.
- Maintain a disposal log specifying document type, disposal date, and method.
- Document disposal must be authorized by the Records Manager.

7. Compliance and Monitoring

- Conduct annual audits of record management practices.
- Regularly update schedules to reflect new laws/regulations.
- Non-compliance will be investigated and addressed as per company policy.

8. Related Documents

- Record Management Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Incident Response SOP

9. Revision History

Version	Date	Description of Change	Author
1.0	2024-06-01	Initial template	Records Manager