



What to Keep and When to Shred

A Guide to Safekeeping and Managing Paper Records

Below is a list of what you need to keep and when you can discard it. Keeping these records stored safely, where you and others can find them, can save you time and greatly increases the likelihood that they will not get lost.

Tax and investment documents	Shred after:	Copies to:
Annuity contract	7 years after annuity paid out	Financial Professional
Bank statement and canceled checks	7 years	
Credit card statement	7 years	
Form 8606	7 years after IRA is liquidated	
Home purchase/improvement*	10 years after home is sold	
Investment account statement	7 years after investments are sold	
Loan agreement	10 years after repaid	
Pension plan documents	Never discard	Financial Professional
Real estate purchase/improvements	10 years after sold	
Stock/bond certificate	N/A – Surrender upon sale	
Tax return/supporting documents	Refer to IRS Publication 17 (chapter 1)	

**Deeds, surveys, title policies, blueprints, loan papers, homeowner’s warranty, receipts, etc.*

Originals you may need	Shred after:	Copies to:
Adoption papers	Never discard	Executor, lawyer
Birth certificate	Never discard	
Cemetery deed	Never discard	Heir
Citizenship papers	Never discard	Executor
Death certificate	Never discard	Executor
Diploma	Never discard	
Divorce decree	Never discard	Lawyer
Guardianship arrangements	Never discard	Executor, guardian
Health/immunization records	Never discard	Doctor, heir
Household inventory with photos	Never discard	Insurance agent
Lawsuits	Never discard	Lawyer
Marriage certificate	Never discard	Executor
Medical directive	New one signed	Doctor, heir
Military discharge	Never discard	
Naturalization certification	Never discard	
Passport	After replaced	
Power of attorney	New one signed	Attorney-In-Fact
Real estate deed	10 years after sold	
Retirement plan benefits	Never discard	Financial Professional
Social Security card	Never discard	

Trust document	Never discard	Trustee, attorney
Vehicle title/warranty	Never discard	
Veteran's papers	Never discard	
Wills	Never discard	Executor

Other documents

Shred after:

Copies to:

College financial aid	10 years after repaid	
Employment contract	7 years	
Insurance policy/invoices	1 year after termination	Agent
Letter of last instructions	After writing a new one	Executor
Loan statement	10 years after repaid	
Passwords	Password changed	
Personal property tax receipt	2 years	
Property tax assessment	New one arrives	
Receipt (items under warranty)	Warranty expires	
Receipt (expensive items)	Item sold or donated	
Social Security statement	New one arrives	Financial Professional
Vehicle registration	New one arrives	
Warranty (with stapled receipt)	Disposal of item	

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