

## Example Document Retention Policy

*This template is not intended as legal advice. Your organizational goals, purpose, values, and bylaws should drive the creation of this document.*

**XYZ Organization**  
**Adopted/Amended \_\_/\_\_/20\_\_**

### Section 1. Introduction

Most organizations must keep copies of certain documents for legal, regulatory, and/or operational reasons. \_\_\_\_\_ (“Organization”) is committed to good business practice and upholding the laws and regulations that govern its operation. The goal of this policy is to outline, for employees of the Organization, proper procedures for storing and disposing of both electronic and paper documents.

### Section 2. Business Records

A business record is any print or electronic document created and maintained in the ordinary course of business. However, not every document constitutes a business record that must be kept. A document should be retained if it contains business activities that have evidentiary or reference value, or if it is the sole copy of a document. This includes, for example, job offers, contract negotiations where final pricing is set, or a policy memo. It does not include, for example, in-progress drafts, discussions, or negotiations, received copies of policy memos where an original already exists, or non-business correspondence.

### Section 3. Record Retention Schedule

The following table lists all document types created and maintained by the Organization that qualify as business records. For each document type, a mandatory retention schedule and method of disposal have been stipulated, in addition to storage locations.

Document Type	Document Owners(s)	Onsite Storage (Years)	Onsite Storage Location	Offsite Storage (Years)	Offsite Storage Location	Total Years Stored	Method of Disposal
A. Accounting and General Records							
B. Payroll Records							
C. Other							

**Section 4. Policy Suspension**

In some instances, this Document Retention Policy may be temporarily suspended, specifically if an investigation, litigation, or audit is anticipated. In some instances, this policy's disposal schedule may conflict with the need to produce documents relevant to the aforementioned legal or regulatory procedures. If this is the case, then the need to comply fully with the law and/or regulation will override this policy, causing this policy to be temporarily suspended until the matter in question is satisfactorily resolved. Suspension of this policy will take the form of no business documents being disposed of whatsoever for a period of time.

**Section 5. Policy Non-Compliance**

It is in violation of this policy to dispose of any business document types named in the retention schedule above. If you believe you have accidentally disposed of or destroyed a business document, please contact the policy administrator listed below immediately as the document may still be retrievable or salvageable, or may exist elsewhere as a copy. Your honesty in coming forward will have a significant positive impact on any disciplinary action taken, if any. If you know of anyone willfully disposing of or destroying any business documents of Organization, you are under obligation to report these activities to the policy administrator listed below.

Any employee who is found to have violated this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Failure to report known violations of this policy will be handled very seriously.

**Section 6. Contacts**

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this policy, or would like to report a policy violation, contact \_\_\_\_\_.

**Declaration of Understanding**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have read, understand, and agree to adhere to the Organization's Document Retention and Destruction Policy.

**Name (Printed):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name (Signed):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Today's Date:** \_\_\_\_\_