

How Long to Keep Financial Documents

A guide on how long to safely store or electronically file personal finance and investment records.

Less than a Year

- **Renter's agreement**- Keep until you've moved out and have received your security deposit.
- **Credit card statements**- When your statement comes out each month, match this with any records or receipts you have. However, if you use your credit card to buy something that you will claim as a tax deduction, then keep it for 7 years in a tax-related folder.
- **Bills, deposits, withdraws**- Keep this until the bill is paid or the deposit/withdraw has completed.

One-Year

- **Bank records**- Keep anything related to taxes, your business, home projects, and your mortgage for 1 year.
- **Paycheck stubs**- Keep until you receive your W-2 Form from your employer to ensure they match. You should also cross-reference this with your Social Security statement earnings record.
- **Brokerage statements**- Keep until you get the annual summary statement to confirm they match. If brokerage statement is reflective of a tax claim, keep for 7-years in a tax-related folder.
- **Retirement plan statements**- Keep quarterly statements until you receive your annual summary statement.

6 Years or Longer

- **Property records**- Keep for 6 years after selling your home. Keep all documentation in regards to the purchase of your home, remodeling projects, and any add-ons.
- **Tax-related documents**- Keep for 7 years. The IRS can audit you 3 years after filing a return if it suspects a good-faith error, and the IRS has 6 years to contact you if it thinks you underreported your gross income by 25% or more, according to Bankrate.com.

Forever

- **Loans**- Even after paying off your loan, keep documentation to prove as such.
- **Tax returns**- Although you can dispose of tax-related documentation after 7 years, it is recommended to keep tax returns forever for record of payments you've made to the government.
- **IRA contribution records**- If you made nondeductible contributions to a Traditional IRA, keep records to prove that you already paid tax on this money.
- **Legal filings or inheritances**
- **Birth and death certificates**
- **Social Security cards**
- **Marriage licenses**
- **Divorce papers**
- **Military discharge documents**
- **Life insurance policies**
- **Estate documents to include:**
 - **Financial & Healthcare Power of Attorney**
 - **Will & Trust**
 - **Advance Care Directive**

References: <https://www.finra.org/investors/insights/save-or-shred-how-long-you-should-keep-financial-documents>
<https://bettermoneyhabits.bankofamerica.com/en/privacy-security/how-long-to-keep-documents-before-shredding>
<https://www.bankrate.com/finance/personal-finance/how-long-to-keep-financial-records.aspx>

