

Sample Document Retention and Destruction Policy

Example for Consideration by Lodges

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Note: This sample Document Retention and Destruction Policy is adapted from the example provided by the National Council of Nonprofit Associations. The IRS, on Form 990, asks if the tax exempt entity has such a policy. This is intended for illustrative and educational purposes only and must not be considered professional advice nor a rendering of a professional opinion. The wording is illustrative only and must be adapted to the specific facts of the organization considering adopting such a policy. Professional advisors who are already affiliated with organizations can provide excellent insight to this issue.

Document Retention and Destruction Policy

_____ Lodge

Adopted _____

The records of this organization should be managed in an effective manner. While not all records must be maintained indefinitely, guidelines must be established to properly manage the records of the organization. Records should only be destroyed when they are no longer required as a matter of law, applicable governmental regulation or as a matter of good management. Officers, members and employees must never destroy records in anticipation of any litigation or regulatory investigation.

The following table provides the minimum requirements for retention of records.

Type of Document	Minimum Requirement
Accounts payable ledgers and schedules	7 years
Audit reports, financial statements	Permanently
Bank reconciliations and bank statements	3 years
Checks (for important payments and purchases)	Permanently
Contracts, mortgages, notes and leases (expired)	7 years
Contracts (still in effect)	Permanently
Correspondence (general)	3 years
Correspondence (legal and important matters)	Permanently
Deeds, mortgages, and bills of sale	Permanently
Employment applications	3 years
Insurance Policies (expired)	3 years
Insurance records, current accident reports, claims, policies, etc.	Permanently
Minute books, bylaws and charter	Permanently
Payroll records and summaries	7 years
Personnel files (terminated employees)	7 years
Retirement and pension records	Permanently
Tax returns and worksheets	Permanently
Timesheets	7 years
Withholding tax statements	7 years