

Health Provider

Document Retention Schedule



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The following selected recommendations and citations were presented as suggested minimum document retention guidelines in the Journal of Health Law Summer 2004 issue. The following abbreviations are listed in the citations:

AHIMA: American Health Information Management Association
 CFR: Code of Federal Regulations
 USC: United States Code

Please consult with your attorney or trade association before implementing a document retention and destruction schedule.

Health Information	Retention Period	Citation
Adult medical records	10 years following most recent encounter	
Disease Index	Permanent	AHIMA Guidelines
Emergency room, paramedic communications	6 years	
Master patient index	Permanent	AHIMA Guidelines
Minor medical records	Age 25 or 10 years following most recent encounter, whichever is longer	
Operative index	10 years	AHIMA Guidelines
Register of births	10 years required, permanent retention recommended	AHIMA Guidelines
Register of deaths (including fetal deaths)	10 years required, permanent retention recommended	AHIMA Guidelines
Register of surgical procedures	Permanent	AHIMA Guidelines
Release or disposal of human remains	10 years required	ARS § 36-343
Medical record source data (e.g. x-rays)	6 years following data collection, some risk management programs require longer retention	

Pharmacy	Retention Period	Citation
Controlled substances inventory and orders	2 years	AHIMA Guidelines
Controlled substances dispensed and administered	2 years	AHIMA Guidelines
Other prescriptions	2 years	AHIMA Guidelines

Laboratory	Retention Period	Citation
Appointment books	3 years	AHIMA Guidelines
Blood and blood component disposition	5 years	AHIMA Guidelines
Blood and blood product testing	5 years after processing records are completed, or six months after the latest expiration date, whichever is later	42 CFR § 493.1105
Immunohematology records and transfusion records	5 years after processing records are completed, or six months after the latest expiration date, whichever is later	42 CFR § 493.1105
Patient record index	10 years, permanent for unusual cases	AHIMA Guidelines
Patient testing records and instrument printouts	2 years	42 CFR § 493.1105
Refrigeration and blood inspection records	5 years	AHIMA Guidelines
Chronological test register	5 years or until statistics are complete	AHIMA Guidelines
Requests for tests	2 years	AHIMA Guidelines

Radiology	Retention Period	Citation
Appointment books	3 years	AHIMA Guidelines
Patient record index	10 years or permanent for unusual cases	AHIMA Guidelines
Radioisotopes records	Permanent	AHIMA Guidelines
Chronological test registers	5 years or until statistics are complete	AHIMA Guidelines
Requests for tests	2 weeks	AHIMA Guidelines

Clinic	Retention Period	Citation
Appointment books	3 years	AHIMA Guidelines
Encounter statistics	1 year	AHIMA Guidelines
Patient name index	Permanent	AHIMA Guidelines

Emergency Department	Retention Period	Citation
On-call physician list	5 years	42 CFR § 489.20(r)(1-3)
Central patient log	5 years	42 CFR § 489.20(r)(1-3)
Medical and other records of individuals transferred to/from hospital	5 years	42 CFR § 489.20(r)(1-3)

Nursing	Retention Period	Citation
Operation index	Permanent	AHIMA Guidelines
Patient records index	Permanent	AHIMA Guidelines
Physician index	10 years	AHIMA Guidelines
Surgery log	Permanent	AHIMA Guidelines
Tumor registry files	Permanent	AHIMA Guidelines
Private duty name file	6 years after last use	AHIMA Guidelines
Training: attendance, course outlines, examinations	Permanent	AHIMA Guidelines

Administrative	Retention Period	Citation
HIPAA Privacy Standards documentation including policies and procedures, written communications, actions, activities, or designations required to be documented by regulation	6 years from the date of creation or the last effective date	45 CFR § 164.530(j)
HIPAA Security Standards documentation including policies and procedures, written record of an action, activity, or assessment require by the Standards	6 years from the date of creation or the last effective date	45 CFR § 164.316(b)
Accident/incident reports	6 years from the date of creation or the last effective date	AHIMA Guidelines
Annual reports	Permanent	AHIMA Guidelines
Appraisal reports	Permanent	AHIMA Guidelines
Audit reports	Permanent	AHIMA Guidelines
Articles of incorporation	Permanent	AHIMA Guidelines
Bylaws	Permanent	AHIMA Guidelines
Daily census	5 years	AHIMA Guidelines
Insurance policies	6 years following expiration	AHIMA Guidelines
Licenses, permits, contracts	Permanent	AHIMA Guidelines
Minutes of board, executive committee, medical staff meetings	Permanent	AHIMA Guidelines
Payroll: 1) deduction authorizations, 2) bonds, 3) insurance, 4) individual earnings, 5) journals, 6) rate schedules, 7) contracts, 8) W-4s, 9) W-2s	1) 20 years, 2) 10 years, 3) 8 years, 4) Term of employment plus 6 years, 5) 25 years, 6) 6 years, 7) 3 years, 8) 4 years, 9) 4 years after taxes paid	2) AHIMA, 3) AHIMA, 4) 29 CFR § 516.6 (2 year requirement), AHIMA, 5) AHIMA, 6) 29 CFR § 516.6 (2 year requirement), AHIMA, 7) 29 CFR §516.5, 8) AHIMA, 9) AHIMA

Administrative	Retention Period	Citation
Policies and procedures	Life of policy plus 6 years	AHIMA Guidelines
Property deeds and titles	Permanent	AHIMA Guidelines
Statistics on admissions and services	Permanent, (though daily and monthly reports can be destroyed after year-end statistics are compiled)	AHIMA Guidelines
Admission register	Permanent	AHIMA Guidelines
Listings	6 years	AHIMA Guidelines
Employee Health	Retention Period	Citation
Employee health records	5 years following employment termination	AHIMA Guidelines
OSHA employee exposure records	30 years	29 CFR Parts 1910, 1915, and 1926
OSHA: employee health records	Durations of employment + 30 years	29 CFR Parts 1910, 1915, and 1926
OSHA: all records of occupational injury and illness	5 years	29 CFR § 1904.2-1904.6, § 1904.33
Business office	Retention Period	Citation
Aliens: statement of income paid	As long as information is material to the IRS	26 CFR § 1.6001-1, AHIMA Guidelines
Bank deposits	2 years	AHIMA Guidelines
Bank statements	6 years	AHIMA Guidelines
Budgets	5 years	AHIMA Guidelines
Cash receipts	6 years	AHIMA Guidelines
Cashier's tapes from bookkeeping machine	6 years	AHIMA Guidelines
Charge slips to patients	5 years	AHIMA Guidelines
Cancelled checks	7 years	AHIMA Guidelines
Check registers	6 years	AHIMA Guidelines
Correspondence: 1) credit and collections, 2) General, 3) insurance	1) 7 years, 2) 6 years, 3) 4 years	AHIMA Guidelines
Endowments, trusts, bequests	Permanent	AHIMA Guidelines
Equipment depreciation records	Permanent	AHIMA Guidelines
Financial reports	Permanent	AHIMA Guidelines
Daily income summary	5 years	AHIMA Guidelines
Invoices: 1) fixed assets, 2) accounts receivable and payable	1) life of the asset plus 6 years, 2) 6 years	AHIMA Guidelines
General journals	Permanent	AHIMA Guidelines

Business office	Retention Period	Citation
General ledgers	Permanent	AHIMA Guidelines
Patient ledger cards	7 years	AHIMA Guidelines
Medicare reimbursement documentation	6 years suggested	42 CFR § 413.20
Open patient accounts	6 years, generally. Accounts deemed uncollectible and written off the books should be retained until after statutes have expired for those accounts	
Patient accounts -- paid	6 years	
Unemployment tax records	4 years	AHIMA Guidelines
Vouchers: 1) capital expenditures, 2) cash	1) Permanent or life of the item plus 6 years, 2) 10 years	AHIMA Guidelines
Welfare agency record	7 years	AHIMA Guidelines

Personnel	Retention Period	Citation
Absence reports	5 years	AHIMA Guidelines
Attendance and time records	2 years	AHIMA Guidelines
Employee benefit summaries	6 years after filing	29 USC § 1027
Job classifications	Permanent	AHIMA Guidelines
Overtime reports	5 years	AHIMA Guidelines
Payroll and time records	5 years	AHIMA Guidelines
Personnel records	6 years following employment termination	AHIMA Guidelines
Pension records	Permanent	AHIMA Guidelines
Social Security reports	4 years after taxes paid or 4 years after date taxes were due, whichever is later	26 CFR § 31.6001.21
Timecards	2 years	
Volunteer service certification	Permanent	AHIMA Guidelines

Purchasing & Receiving	Retention Period	Citation
Packing slips	3 months	AHIMA Guidelines
Purchase orders	2 years	AHIMA Guidelines
Purchase requisitions	3 years	AHIMA Guidelines
Receiving report	5 years	AHIMA Guidelines
Returned goods credit	2 years	AHIMA Guidelines