



Records Retention Policy

This policy provides for the systematic review, retention, and destruction of documents received or created by the Houston Coalition for Life (HCL) in connection with the transaction of business. This policy covers all records and documents, regardless of physical form, contains requirements for how long certain documents shall be kept, and how records shall be destroyed. This policy is designed to ensure compliance with federal and state laws and regulations, to eliminate accidental or innocent destruction of records, and to facilitate the HCL's operations by promoting efficiency and maximizing valuable storage space.

Document Retention

The Houston Coalition for Life follows the document retention procedures outlined below. Documents that are not listed, but are substantially similar to those listed in the schedule, will be retained for the indicated length of time:

Organization Records

Annual Reports: Permanent
Articles of Incorporation: Permanent
Board Meeting Minutes: Permanent
Board Policies/Resolutions: Permanent
Bylaws: Permanent
Fixed Asset Records: Permanent
IRS Application for Tax-Exempt Status (Form 1023): Permanent
IRS Determination Letter: Permanent
State Sales Tax Exemption Letter: Permanent
Contracts (after expiration): 7 years
Correspondence (general): 3 years

Accounting and Tax Records

Annual Audits and Financial Statements: Permanent
Depreciation Schedules: Permanent
IRS Form 990 Tax Returns: Permanent
General Ledgers: 7 years
Business Expense Records: 7 years
IRS Form 1099: 7 years
Journal Entries: 7 years

Invoices: 7 years
Petty Cash Vouchers: 3 years
Cash Receipts: 3 years
Credit Card Receipts: 3 years (credit card number is destroyed immediately after use)

Bank Records

Check Registers: 7 years
Bank Deposit Slips: 7 years
Bank Statement and Reconciliation: 7 years
Electronic Fund Transfer Documents: 7 years

Payroll and Employment Tax Records

Payroll Registers: Permanent
State Unemployment Tax Records: Permanent
Earnings Records: 7 years
Garnishment Records: 7 years
Payroll Tax Returns: 7 years
W-2 Statements: 7 years

Employee Records

Employment and Termination Agreements: Permanent
Retirement and Pension Plan Documents: Permanent
Records Relating to Promotion, Demotion or Discharge: 7 years after termination.
Accident Reports and Worker's Compensation Records: 5 years
Salary Schedules: 5 years
Employment Applications: 3 years
I-9 Forms: 3 years after termination
Time Cards: 2 years

Donor and Grant Records

Donor Records and Acknowledgment Letters: 7 years
Grant Applications and Contracts: 7 years after completion

Legal, Insurance, and Safety Records

Appraisals: Permanent
Copyright Registrations: Permanent
Environmental Studies: Permanent
Insurance Policies: Permanent
Real Estate Documents: Permanent
Stock and Bond Records: Permanent
Trademark Registrations: Permanent
Leases: 6 years after expiration
OSHA Documents: 5 years
General Contracts: 3 years after termination

Electronic Documents and Records

Electronic documents will be retained as if they were paper documents. Therefore, any electronic files, including records of donations made online, that fall into one of the above document types will be maintained for the indicated period of time.

Electronic files will be backed up at least once every month.

Emergency Planning

The HCL's records will be stored in a safe, secure, and accessible manner. Due to the nature and volume of the records described above – some of which are stored on computers – the HCL's records are not stored in a fireproof or flood-proof manner.

Document Destruction

The office supervisor may decide to retain records longer than indicated above, but does not have authority to destroy records before this period of time has elapsed.

Destruction of financial and personnel-related hard copy documents will be accomplished by shredding. This may be accomplished by shredding at HCL facilities or by using a shredding service.

Destruction of computer files will be accomplished by deleting the file and then defragmenting the drive which contained the file. The office supervisor has authority to determine if back-ups of a deleted computer file should also be deleted.

Document destruction will be suspended immediately upon any indication of an official investigation or when a lawsuit is filed or appears imminent. Destruction will be reinstated in accordance with this policy upon conclusion of the investigation or lawsuit and all appeals.

Compliance

Failure on the part of employees or volunteers to follow this policy can result in possible civil and criminal sanctions against the HCL and its employees, and possible disciplinary or legal action against responsible individuals. Compliance by all concerned is essential.