



## **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.