

## **DOCUMENT RETENTION & DESTRUCTION POLICY**

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The Baltimore Humane Society takes seriously its obligations to preserve information including, but limited to, litigation, audits, investigations, adoptions, surrenders, euthanasias, and veterinary services.

From time to time, the Executive Director may issue a notice, known as a "legal hold," suspending the destruction of records due to pending, threatened, or otherwise reasonably foreseeable litigation, audits, government investigations, or similar proceedings. No records specified in any legal hold may be destroyed, even if the scheduled destruction date has passed, until the legal hold is withdrawn in writing by the Executive Director.

The following table provides the minimum requirements.

<b>Type of Document</b>	<b>Minimum Requirement</b>
Accounts payable ledgers and schedules	7 years
Audit reports	Permanently
Bank reconciliations	2 years
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)	2 years
Correspondence (legal and important matters)	Permanently
Correspondence (with customers and vendors)	2 years
Deeds, mortgages, and bills of sale	Permanently
Depreciation schedules	Permanently
Duplicate deposit slips	2 years
Employment applications	3 years
Expense analyses/expense distribution schedules	7 years
Year end financial statements	Permanently
Insurance policies (expired)	3 years
Insurance records, current accident reports, claims, policies, etc.	Permanently
Internal audit reports	3 years
Inventories of products, materials, and supplies	7 years
Invoices (to customers, from vendors)	7 years
Minute books, bylaws and charter	Permanently
Patents and related papers	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
Trademark registrations and copyrights	Permanently
Withholding tax statements	7 years

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## 1. Electronic Documents and Records

Electronic documents will be retained as if they were paper documents. Therefore, any electronic files that fall into one of the document types on the above schedule will be maintained for the appropriate amount of time. If a user has sufficient reason to keep an e-mail message, the message should be printed in hard copy and kept in the appropriate file or moved to an “archive” computer file folder. Backup and recovery methods will be tested on a regular basis.

## 2. Emergency Planning

The Baltimore Humane Society’s records will be stored in a safe, secure, and accessible manner. Documents and financial files that are essential to keeping the Baltimore Humane Society operating in an emergency will be duplicated or backed up at least every week and maintained off-site.

## 3. Document Destruction

The Executive Director is responsible for the ongoing process of identifying its records, which have met the required retention period, and overseeing their destruction. Destruction of financial and personnel-related documents will be accomplished by shredding.

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 upon conclusion of the investigation.

## 4. Compliance

Failure on the part of employees to follow this policy can result in possible civil and criminal sanctions against the Baltimore Humane Society and its employees and possible disciplinary action against responsible individuals. The Executive Director and Board Chair will periodically review these procedures with legal counsel or the Baltimore Humane Society’s certified public accountant to ensure that they are in compliance with new or revised regulations.