

WHAT TO KEEP, AND

If you're like many Americans, you probably have years of official documents filed away that you no longer need. Keeping your records stored safely, where you and your loved ones can find them, can save you both time and frustration.

ORIGINAL DOCUMENTATION

Documents	Notes	Shred After Seven Years	Shred After Ten Years	Shred Never
Adoption papers	Copies to lawyer			✓
Birth certificate				✓
Cemetery deed	Copies to heirs			✓
Death certificates	Copies to executor			✓
Diplomas				✓
Divorce decree	Copies to lawyer			✓
Guardianship arrangements	Copies to executor, guardian			✓
Health/immunization records	Copies to doctor			✓
Household inventory (with photos)	Copies to insurance agent			✓
Lawsuits	Copies to lawyer			✓
Marriage certificates	Copies to executor			✓
Medical directive	Shred when a new one is signed; copies to lawyer, heirs			
Military discharge/Veterans' papers				✓
Naturalization certification/Citizenship papers	Copies to executor			✓
Passports	Shred when replaced			
Powers of attorney	Shred when a new one is signed; copies to attorney-in-fact			
Real estate deeds	Shred 10 years after sold		✓	
Retirement plan benefits	Copies to Financial Advisor			✓
Social Security card	Copies to executor			✓
Trusts	Shred when a new one is signed; copies to lawyer, heirs			
Vehicle titles/warrants	Shred when vehicle is sold			
Wills	Shred when a new one is signed; copies to lawyer, heirs			

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TAX AND INVESTMENT DOCUMENTS

Documents	Notes	Shred After Seven Years	Shred After Ten Years	Shred Never
Annuity contract	Shred after annuity is paid out			
Bank statement		✓		
Canceled checks		✓		
Credit card statements		✓		
IRA Form 8606	Shred seven years after liquidation	✓		
Home/real estate purchases/improvements	Shred 10 years after home is sold		✓	
Investment account statements	Shred seven years after investments are sold	✓		
Loan agreements	Shred 10 years after repayment			
Pension plan documents	Copies to Financial Advisor			✓
Stock and bond certificates	Surrender upon sale			
Tax return documents	Shred seven years after filing date	✓		

OTHER DOCUMENTS

Documents	Notes	Shred After Seven Years	Shred After Ten Years	Shred Never
College financial aid	Shred 10 years after repayment		✓	
Employment contract	Shred after job change			
Insurance policies/invoices	Shred one year after termination; copies to agent			
Letter of last instructions	Shred after writing a new one; copies to executor			
Loan statements	Shred 10 years after repayment		✓	
Receipts (under warranty)	Shred when warranty expires			
Receipts (expensive items)	Shred after items are sold; copies to insurance agent			
Social Security statement	Shred after new one arrives; copies to Financial Advisor			
Vehicle registration	Shred after new one arrives			

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