

Document Retention and Destruction Policy

Document Destruction

This Document Retention and Destruction Policy identifies the record retention responsibilities of staff, volunteers, members of the board of directors, and outsiders for maintaining and documenting the storage and destruction of Adopt-a-Village in Guatemala's ("AAV") documents and records.

AAV's staff, volunteers, members of the board of directors, committee members and outsiders (independent contractors via agreements with them) are required to honor the following rules:

- Paper or electronic documents indicated under the terms for retention in the following section will be transferred and maintained by the president or treasurer;
- All other paper documents will be destroyed after three years;
- All other electronic documents will be deleted from all individual computers, data bases, networks, and back-up storage after one year;
- No paper or electronic documents will be destroyed or deleted if pertinent to any ongoing or anticipated government investigation or proceeding or private litigation; and
- No paper or electronic documents will be destroyed or deleted as required to comply with government auditing standards (Single Audit Act).

Record Retention

Records include any documentation, regardless of format, created or received in the course of conducting the organization's business. This includes but is not limited to, paper documents, electronic files, emails, photographs, audio recordings, and video recordings.

Records will be stored in a secure environment to prevent unauthorized access, loss, theft, or damage. Electronic records will be stored on secure servers with access controls and regular backups. Physical records will be stored in locked cabinets or rooms. Records that have met their retention period and are no longer required for legal, operational, or historical purposes will be disposed of securely. Disposal methods may include shredding, deletion, or other appropriate means to ensure information is irrecoverable.

Retention periods for different types of records will be determined based on legal requirements, regulatory obligations, operational needs, and historical value. The following general guidelines will be used:

Type of Document	Minimum Requirement
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)	Contract period
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 records, current accident reports, claims, policies, and so on (active and expired)	Permanently
Internal audit reports	3 years
Inventory records for products, materials, and supplies	3 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

