

Retention periods

The retention periods for different sectors in one convenient overview.

Please be aware that these retention periods are based on the Dutch legislation.

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Healthcare

The retention periods for medical records are generally clearly defined, but specific criteria can sometimes lead to exceptions. Patients' wishes may also influence how long records are kept, especially due to frequently changing legislation.

Retention Periods

Retention Period: 20 Years

The general rule is that a treating physician must retain each medical record for twenty years, starting from the date of the last modification made to the record.

A medical record is kept longer if:

- + A different statutory retention period applies.
- + This is necessary for proper care.
- + The information is of significant importance to someone else.

A medical record is kept for a shorter period if:

It concerns medical data not covered by the Dutch Medical Treatment Agreement Act (WGBO), such as information related to nursing and home care. These records may not be retained longer than strictly necessary.

Exceptions

For children, the twenty-year retention period begins at the age of 18. Therefore, these medical records must be retained until the patient reaches the age of 39.



Healthcare

Retention Period: 40 Years

The Working Conditions Decree stipulates that in cases of exposure to certain hazardous substances, a minimum retention period of forty years applies, counted from the end of the exposure.

Retention Period: 115 Years

The Public Records Act (Archiefwet) requires academic hospitals to retain core documents for 115 years, starting from the patient's date of birth.

Patient Rights

Healthcare providers are required to document medical information in a patient record, as prescribed by the Medical Treatment Agreement Act (Wet op de Geneeskundige Behandelingsovereenkomst – WGBO). It is essential that this record is securely protected, as mandated by the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR – Algemene Verordening Gegevensbescherming).

In addition to the provider's obligation to maintain a medical record, patients have specific rights. These rights are defined in the WGBO, the GDPR, and the Supplementary Provisions on the Processing of Personal Data in Healthcare Act (Wabvpz). For example, patients have the right to access, correct, supplement, or request the deletion of their medical records. They can also request that their record be transferred to another healthcare provider.





Government

Within government organisations, it can be challenging to determine what should or should not be considered part of the archive. This is partly due to the complexity of the Open Government Act and the associated selection lists. Archive-IT is happy to help with this!

Selection Lists

The Public Records Act (Archiefwet) does not prescribe general retention periods for public records held by government bodies. However, the law requires each government body to use one or more selection lists. These lists specify which categories of records are to be destroyed after a certain period and which are to be permanently preserved due to their administrative, legal, or historical value. Records that must be permanently preserved are to be transferred—no later than twenty years after their creation—to the National Archives or a local or regional archival service, unless exceptions apply. These services ensure that the information remains accessible to the public.



Government

Open Government Act

The Open Government Act (Wet open overheid – Woo) regulates which documents must be made publicly accessible to promote transparency within government bodies. The law applies to administrative bodies, the Houses of the States General and the Joint Session, the Council for the Judiciary, the College of Representatives, and the Council of State—unless the latter acts in its capacity as royal authority. Certain exceptions apply, such as for the Administrative Jurisdiction Division of the Council of State and the Netherlands Court of Audit, for which specific provisions are in place.

Under the Act, government bodies are required to proactively disclose 17 categories of information, such as policy documents, permits, and decisions. Additionally, they are expected to make as much other information publicly available as possible on their own initiative.

Furthermore, information must be disclosed upon request, unless exemptions apply—for example, in cases involving privacy or security risks. The Act also imposes an obligation on government bodies to maintain a well-organised information management system. This means that public information must be accessible, searchable, and managed sustainably in order to enhance transparency and efficiency.

Housing Corporations

Retention periods for housing associations can sometimes appear complex, partly due to applicable exemptions. This requires consideration not only of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), but also of other relevant laws and regulations.

Retention Periods

Retention Period: 2 Years

According to the Exemption Decree (Vrijstellingenbesluit), personal data of tenants must be retained for up to two years after the termination of the rental agreement. This includes information such as surname, given names, initials, titles, gender, date of birth, address, postal code, city of residence, telephone number, and other contact details, as well as the tenant's or landlord's bank account number.

Retention Period: 5 Years

Personal data related to the application for housing benefit must be retained for up to five years after the benefit has ended.

Exceptions

- + Income verification forms (IBRI) must be retained until the financial audit has been completed.
- + Other data of the tenant or co-tenant(s) may not be retained longer than necessary for the purposes for which they were collected.



Housing Corporations

Specific Purposes

Personal data may be retained for a longer period if this is necessary for specific purposes, such as:

- + Archiving in the public interest.
- + Scientific or historical research.
- + Statistical analyses.
- + Compliance with legal obligations (for example, tax retention requirements or legal procedures).

When retaining personal data for an extended period, it is important to protect privacy. The following measures are recommended:

- + Data minimisation: Only retain data that is strictly necessary.
- + Anonymisation: Anonymise the data wherever possible.





Pharmacy

Due to the large variety of documents and the complexity of regulations within the pharmaceutical sector, it is not always clear how documents should be stored appropriately.

Retention Periods

Retention Period: 1 Year

According to Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) guidelines, preparation protocols, analytical test data, and quality control records of compounded products must be retained for at least one year after the batch's expiry date.

Retention Period: 5 Years

For clinical studies, documentation related to a batch must be retained for at least five years following the completion of the last clinical trial. In addition, data concerning adverse events, safety reports (such as PSURs and DSURs), and other pharmacovigilance records must also be kept for a minimum of five years.

Retention Period: 15 Years

For medical devices combined with medicinal products (combination products), specific requirements apply to design and development files. These must be retained for at least fifteen years after the final production of the device.



Pharmacy

Retention Period: 20 Years

The retention period for prescriptions is aligned with the Medical Treatment Agreement Act (WGBO): 20 years. This applies to both paper and electronic prescriptions. It also applies to individual, non-standardised preparations, as the preparation protocol is considered a personalised extension of the prescription.

Retention Period: 25 Years

Data collected as part of medicinal product research must be retained for a minimum of 25 years.

Retention Period: 30 Years

For data collected in the context of medical-scientific research into advanced therapy medicinal products (ATMPs), a minimum retention period of 30 years applies.

Exceptions

- + Business-critical documents, including raw data (for example, relating to stability validation), must be retained for as long as the marketing authorisation remains valid.

Legal and Notarial

Strict rules apply to documentation within the legal sector. Not only retention periods, but also accessibility and document management are of great importance.

Retention Periods

Retention Period: 5 Years

The limitation period for legal claims to request documents is five years after involvement in the case has ended.

Retention Period: 7 Years

Financial records, including all related books, documents, and data carriers, must be retained for seven years.

Retention Period: 5 or 20 Years

The retention period for the closure of a legal practice and the limitation period for professional liability claims is either five or twenty years, depending on the nature of the case.

Accessibility

Lawyers must ensure that case files are easily retrievable and that information is presented clearly and accessibly. After the financial settlement of a case, the file is reviewed, streamlined, and archived. Archiving follows the VINDT principle: Confidential, Insightful, Sustainable, and Accessible.



Legal and Notarial

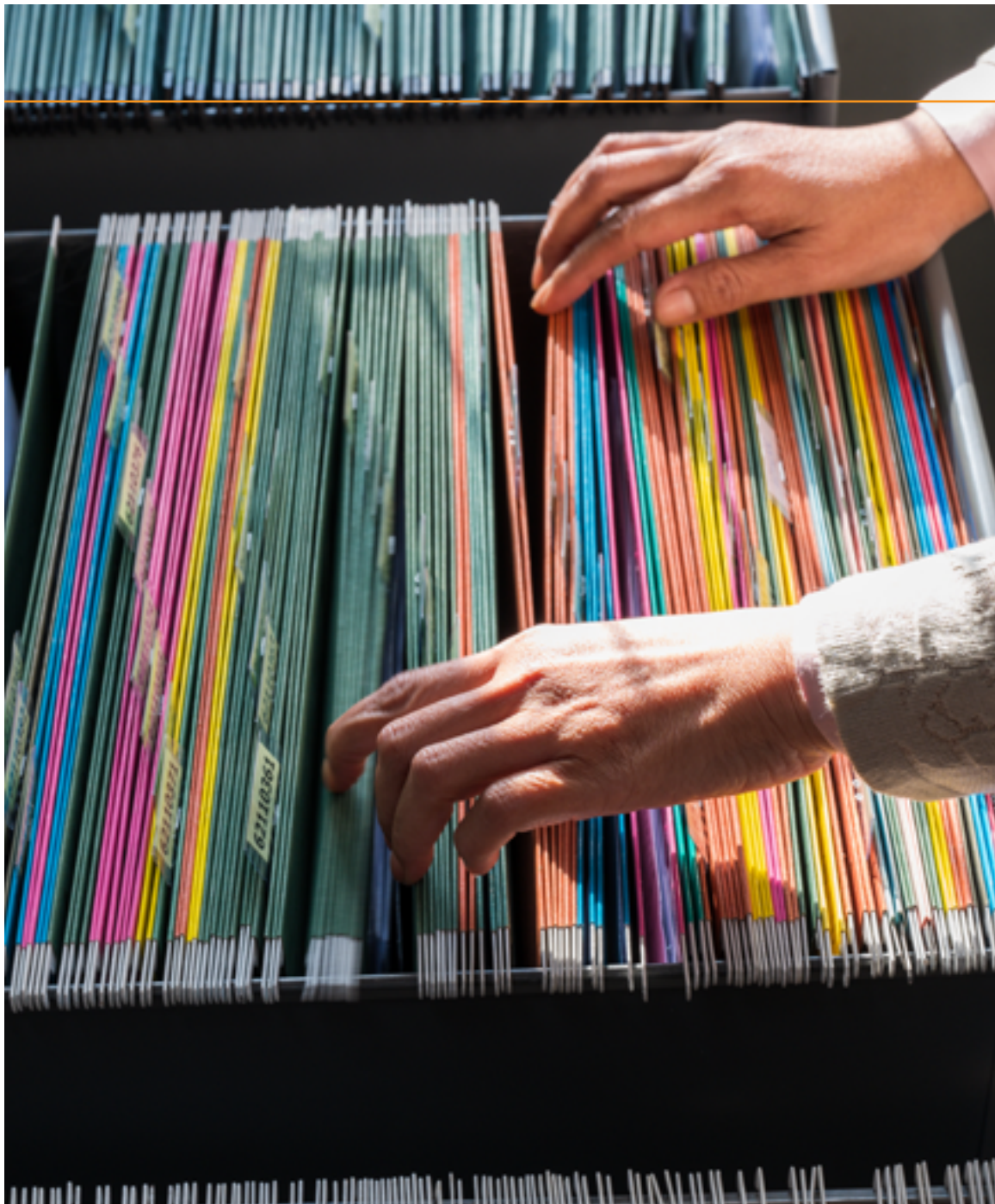
Document Management

Effective information and document management is crucial for law firms and notaries.

Documents are vital due to:

- + Their contribution to efficient business operations.
- + Their relevance to ongoing and past legal matters handled by the firm
- + The need to demonstrate accountability for the firm's actions.
- + The recording of agreements.
- + Compliance with applicable laws and regulations.





Education

Within the education sector, various regulations apply to document retention periods. A distinction is also made between primary and secondary education and higher education.

Retention Periods in Primary and Secondary Education

Primary and secondary schools are required to establish their own selection list specifying the retention periods for each type of document. The following retention periods are legally defined:

Retention Period: 6 Months

Central examination papers, including grade lists, must be retained for at least six months.

Retention Period: 2 Years

Personal data of a pupil or teacher must be kept for up to two years after deregistration or termination of employment.

Retention Period: 3 Years

If a student has been referred to special education, personal data must be retained for three years.

Retention Period: 5 Years

Educational reports may be kept for up to five years after deregistration. Student records must also be retained in the student administration system for five years after deregistration.



Education

Retention Period: 7 Years

Financial and tax-related records must be retained for seven years.

Exceptions

Address details may be retained with consent, for example, for organising a reunion.

Retention Periods in Higher Education

In higher education, institutions must adhere to the Retention Schedule for Universities and University Medical Centres or the Retention Schedule for Universities of Applied Sciences. The following retention periods are legally defined:

Retention Period: 1 or 2 Years

Documents with limited evidential value must be retained for one or two years.

Retention Period: 2 Years

Student data may be retained for up to two years after deregistration.



Education

Retention Period: 5 Years

Data that may form the basis for legal action must be retained for five years.

Retention Period: 7, 9 or 10 Years

Financial and tax records must be retained for seven, nine, or ten years. Universities and universities of applied sciences may decide whether to differentiate between these periods or apply a standard retention period of ten years.

Retention Period: 10 Years

Archive files with a stronger legal basis must be retained for ten years.

Retention Period: 50 Years

Records that entitle a graduate to their degree or foundation year certificate must be retained for fifty years.

Personnel Files

A personnel file contains various HR documents, and the retention periods vary depending on the type of document. Proper file management is therefore essential to ensure documents are stored, managed, and either destroyed or archived in accordance with applicable regulations and time limits.

Retention Periods

Retention Period: 1 Year After Termination of Employment

The following documents must be retained for one year after the end of employment: Job application, CV, references, correspondence with the applicant, certificates of conduct, psychological assessments.

Retention Period: 2 Years After Termination of Employment

The following documents must be retained for two years after the end of employment: Employment contract (including amendments), correspondence regarding appointments, promotions/demotions, and dismissal, agreements related to works council membership, performance and appraisal interview reports, documentation under the Dutch Gatekeeper Improvement Act, correspondence with the company doctor and the Employee Insurance Agency (UWV) concerning sickness absence and reintegration and reports on problem situations.



Personeelsdossiers

Retention Period: 5 Years After Termination of Employment

The wage tax declaration and a copy of the employee's identification document must be retained for five years after termination of employment.

Retention Period: 7 Years After Termination of Employment

Personal details (employee record card), start date of employment, payroll records, terms and conditions of employment, information on cohabitation and commuting allowance declarations.

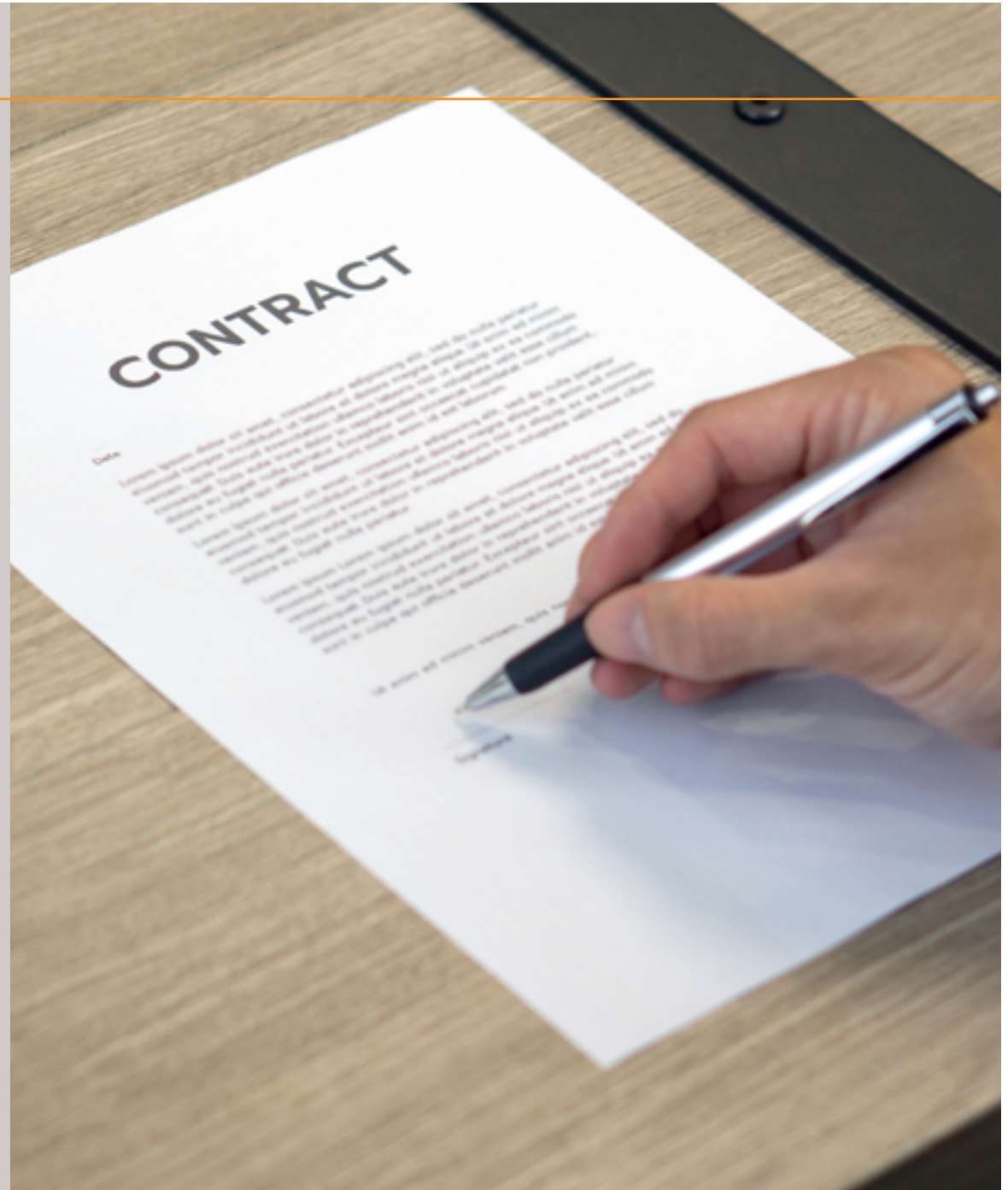
Exception

Documents related to an employment dispute or legal proceedings must be retained for a longer period.

File Management

An employer must maintain a well-secured personnel file for each individual employee. The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) serves as the guideline for processing and archiving these files. Failure to comply with retention obligations may result in tax penalties imposed by the tax authorities.

As long as an employee remains in service, it is sufficient to periodically review and update the personnel file to keep the information current.





Administratie

The multitude of administrative documents can make it difficult to keep an overview. Therefore, proper document management is essential.

Retention Periods

Retention Period: 7 Years

The standard retention period for administrative records is seven years. In some cases, shorter retention periods may apply depending on the importance the tax authorities attach to different types of data. It is advisable to contact the tax authorities to agree on specific arrangements.

The core records that must be kept for seven years include:

- + The general ledger.
- + Accounts receivable and accounts payable.
- + Inventory records.
- + Purchase and sales administration.
- + Payroll administration.

Retention Period: 10 Years

There are exceptions to the standard seven-year retention period. Records related to immovable property must be retained for 10 years due to the revision period for input tax deduction on real estate.

Additionally, electronic services, radio and television broadcasting services, and telecommunications services are also subject to a 10-year retention obligation.



Administration

Document Management

All data recorded about your business is considered part of the administration.

This includes, among other things:

- + Cash administration and receipts.
- + Financial notes.
- + Interim audit calculations.
- + Received invoices and copies of sent invoices.
- + Bank statements.
- + Contracts, agreements, and other arrangements.
- + Diaries and appointment books.
- + Correspondence.
- + Software and data files.

Overview

Healthcare

Retention Period: 20 Years

Every medical record must be retained for 20 years from the date of the last amendment.

Retention Period: 40 Years

For exposure to certain hazardous substances, records must be kept for 40 years from the end of exposure.

Retention Period: 115 Years

Core documents of Academic Hospitals must be retained for 115 years from the patient's date of birth.

Exceptions

- + For children, the 20-year retention period starts from their 18th birthday.
- + Medical data not covered by the Medical Treatment Contracts Act (WGBO) must not be kept longer than necessary.
- + Medical data must be retained for a longer period if:
 - + It is necessary for proper care;
 - + The data is of importance to another person.

Government

The Public Records Act does not prescribe general retention periods for the records of public authorities. Therefore, public authorities are required to maintain one or more selection lists that specify which categories of records must eventually be destroyed and which must be preserved permanently.

Housing Corporations

Retention Period: 2 Years After

Termination of Tenancy Agreement
Personal data.

Retention Period: 5 Years After

Termination of Tenancy Agreement
Personal data related to housing benefit applications.

Exceptions

- + Income declaration forms (IBRI) must be retained until the completion of the auditor's review.
- + Other tenant data must not be retained longer than necessary for the purposes for which it was collected.

Pharmacy

Retention Period: 1 Year

Standardised preparation protocols, analytical test data, and quality control records.

Retention Period: 5 Years

Clinical trial documentation and data related to adverse events, safety reports, and other pharmacovigilance information.

Retention Period: 15 Years

Combination products (medical devices combined with medicinal products).

Retention Period: 20 Years

Prescriptions and individual, non-standardised preparations.

Retention Period: 25 Years

Data collected for pharmaceutical research.

Retention Period: 30 Years

Data collected for medical-scientific research involving advanced therapy medicinal products (ATMPs).

Overzicht

Legal & Notarial

Retention Period: 5 Years

Legal claim to request documents (from the moment of involvement in the case).

Retention Period: 7 Years

Administration and all related books, records and data carriers.

Retention Period: 5 or 20 Years

Termination of practice and limitation period for professional liability claims.

Education

Retention Period: 6 Months

Central examination including grade lists.

Retention Period: 2 Years

Personal data after student deregistration.

Retention Period: 3 Years

Personal data when referred to special education.

Retention Period: 5 Years

Educational reports, student records in the student administration, and data underpinning legal claims.

Retention Period: 7 Years

Financial and tax-related documents.

Retention Period: 10 Years

Archived files with a stronger legal basis.

Retention Period: 50 Years

Data entitling a graduate to their degree or foundation year certificate.

Personnel Files

Retention Period: 1 Year

Application letters, CVs, references, correspondence, letters of recommendation, certificate of good conduct, psychological assessments.

Retention Period: 2 Years

Employment contracts, correspondence regarding appointments, promotions/demotions and dismissals, agreements regarding works council membership, records of performance appraisals, correspondence with the occupational physician and the UWV.

Retention Period: 5 Years

Tax withholding declarations and copies of identity documents.

Retention Period: 7 Years

Personal data, start date, salary records, employment conditions, partnership details, commuting allowance declarations.

Exceptions

- + Longer retention applies to data related to labour disputes or legal proceedings.
- + Limited visibility of data after termination of employment.

Administration

Retention Period: 7 Years

Core records, such as the general ledger, accounts receivable and payable, inventory records, purchase and sales records, and payroll administration.

Retention Period: 10 Years

Data relating to real estate, and the provision of electronic services, radio and television broadcasting, and/or telecommunications services.

References



Ron de Pré Team Leader Guest Services

"The collaboration with Archive-IT is going very well. Whenever I have questions, I get help immediately and any doubts I may have are quickly resolved. What I find particularly impressive is how well they've organised the logistics. From retrieval to transportation – everything is carried out with great precision! I'm truly impressed by this."

Debora Janssen Legal Secretary

"When you see the measures Archive-IT takes to achieve and maintain a high level of information security, you just know: for service, quality, and precision, Archive-IT is the right place to be. We've already requested several files, both physically and digitally, and the speed of their response is excellent!"

Saskia Spierdijk Director of Service Company

"Our collaboration with Archive-IT went very smoothly, and the communication between us was excellent. The swift action and flexibility were major advantages. The timeframe posed quite a challenge, as around 30,000 files had to be transported and stored in a very short period. Archive-IT truly delivered on its promises!"



About Archive-IT

Archive-IT is the trusted partner for organisations seeking control over their information management and aiming to be future-ready. Our headquarters are located in Reuver, Limburg. We also have offices in Raamsdonksveer and Hoogezand (Netherlands), as well as in Belgium, Germany, and France. Our roots lie with Jalema, a manufacturer of archive and office supplies, which gives us unparalleled knowledge of the archiving world.

We offer smart, secure, and innovative solutions that seamlessly combine physical and digital archiving and integrate effortlessly with modern digital working environments. With our integrated approach – from process optimisation to fully compliant information management – we make the past accessible, meet today's demands, and prepare your organisation for a digital and sustainable future.

Contact

There are always exceptions to the rule, which is why it is essential to carefully assess and categorise all types of documents. Each department should have a clear policy in place regarding the handling of documents.

Our colleagues at Archive-IT are happy to work with you to find a suitable solution tailored to your organisation. We can support you in clearly and efficiently mapping out your information. Feel free to contact us to discuss the possibilities – no obligation.

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Request a consultation with one of our experienced advisers. Send an email to info@archive-it.nl, call us on 077 750 11 00, or schedule a meeting using the button below. We're happy to assist you!

[Schedule a Consultation](#)

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