**[ORGANIZATION]**

SUBJECT: Document Retention/Destruction Policy

EFFECTIVE: [DATE]

APPROVED: [DATE]

This is the document retention/destruction policy of [ORGANIZATION].

[ORGANIZATION]shall retain records for the period of their immediate or current use, unless longer retention is necessary for historical reference or to comply with contractual or legal requirements. Records and documents outlined in this policy include paper, electronic files (including emails) and voice mail records regardless of where the document is stored. This includes items stored on network servers, desktop or laptop computers, handheld devices and/or any other wireless devices with text messaging capabilities. Any employee of [ORGANIZATION], or any other person who is in possession of records belonging to [ORGANIZATION] who is uncertain as to what records to retain or destroy, when to do so, or how to destroy them, may seek assistance from Senior Director of Finance and Administration*.*

In accordance with 18 U.S.C. §1519 and the Sarbanes Oxley Act, [ORGANIZATION]shall not knowingly destroy a document with the intent to obstruct or influence an “investigation or proper administration or any matter within the jurisdiction of any department, agency of the United States…or in relation to or contemplation of such matter or case”. If an official investigation is under way or even suspected, document purging must stop in order to avoid criminal obstruction. In order to eliminate accidental or innocent destruction, [ORGANIZATION]has the following document retention policy:

## Accounting Records

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Annual financial statements | **Permanent**  |
| Subsidiary ledgers | **10 years** |
| General ledger | **Permanent** |
| Annual audit records | **Permanent** |
| Journal entries | **10 years** |
| Internal reports | **3 years** |
| Canceled checks (see exception below) | **10 years** |
| Canceled checks for important payments (e.g. property purchase, taxes, etc.) | **Permanent** |
| A/P invoices | **10 years** |
| A/R invoices | **10 years** |
| Cash books | **10 years** |
| Depreciation schedules | **10 years** |
| Accounts payable | **10 years** |
| Accounts receivable | **10 years** |
| Audit reports | **Permanent** |
| Chart of accounts | **Permanent** |
| Expense records | **10 years** |

**Accounting Records (continued)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Inventory records | **10 years** |
| Purchase orders | **3 years** |
| Sales records | **10 years** |
| Duplicate deposit slips | **10 years** |
| Bank statements | **10 years** |
| Scrap and salvage records | **10 years** |

**Tax Records**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Federal tax returns (excluding payroll) | **Permanent** |
| State & local tax returns | **Permanent** |
| Form 990 & supporting documentation | **Permanent** |
| 1099 forms | **Permanent** |
| Magnetic tape & similar records | **Permanent** |
| Payroll taxes (W2, W3) | **Permanent** |
| Payroll taxes (Form 941, state withholding, unemployment) | **Permanent** |
| Capital stock and bond records | **Permanent** |

**Payroll Records**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Payroll deductions | **10 years** |
| Time cards | **10 years** |
| W-4 forms | **10 years** |
| Payroll records | **10 years** |
| State unemployment tax records | **Permanent** |
| Cancelled payroll checks | **10 years** |
| Deductions register | **10 years** |
| Earnings records | **10 years** |

**Insurance Records**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Policies (including expired) | **Permanent** |
| Claims for loss/damages | **Permanent** |
| Accident reports | **Permanent** |
| Appraisals | **Permanent** |

**Workplace Records**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Incorporation records | **Permanent** |
| Bylaws | **Permanent** |
| Policies | **Permanent** |
| Meeting minutes | **Permanent** |

**Legal Records**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Current contracts and leases | **Permanent** |
| Expired contracts and leases | **10 years** |
| General correspondence | **4 years** |
| Legal correspondence | **Permanent** |

**Personnel Records**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Employment applications (persons not hired) | **3 years** |
| Employment applications (persons hired) | **7 years after separation** |
| Performance evaluations | **7 years after separation** |
| Promotions, raises, reclassifications | **7 years after separation** |
| Job descriptions & performance goals | **7 years after separation** |
| Disciplinary warnings, demotions, lay-off & discharges | **7 years after separation** |
| Retirement or pension plan records | **10 years** |
| Incentive plans | **7 years after expiration** |
| I-9 forms | **3 years after separation** |

The retention periods described above are guidelines. There are circumstances under which a record or document may have to be maintained longer than the guidelines.

## Document Protection

Documents (hardcopy, online or other media) will be stored in a protected environment for the duration of the schedule above.

## Document Destruction

Hardcopy documents will be destroyed by [insert method of destruction, e.g. shredding, etc.]after they have been retained until the end of the schedule above. Electronic copies will be destroyed by [insert method of destruction, e.g. deletion software, etc.].