



Effective date: 10/19/20

Policy Memorandum DPA Guide to Document Retention

PURPOSE: To establish a uniform policy for guidelines by which the Department, Districts and Posts can adhere to with regards to Retention of Required Documents.

BACKGROUND: Section 710 of our National By-Laws mandates that all books, papers, accounts, and proceedings pertaining to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States shall be subject to inspection at all time. The Congressional Charter, By-Laws, Manual of Procedure and Rituals of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States do not provide guidance on the requirement to maintain many of these documents. Therefore the below policy is established to provide DPA guidance on this issue.

APPLICABILITY: This policy shall apply to all entities of the DPA operating within the geographical area of responsibility.

CONSIDERATION: In that all posts and districts of the DPA may or may not own property, have a post home, operate a canteen, and may be constrained by the different laws and regulations of their host country, there cannot be one set of guidelines that would be universally accepted. However, for the generic documents required for day-to-day operations, the attached guidelines shall apply. Highlighted items identify those documents that must be maintained.

POLICY: All entities under the umbrella of the Department of Pacific Areas shall maintain the applicable documents as they relate to your Post or District. To ensure a neat and orderly file and to ease in the transfer of these documents to your successors, record keeping by electronic means is authorized provided a backup file is maintained.


SUMMARY: Obviously, the attached list is not all encompassing, nor is it intended to be. A good rule of thumb in determining what files and records to keep is that if the file or record has no financial or historical significance, then it is probably time to dispose of it. However, keep in mind that if you need to file a claim the insurance or bonding company will want to see supporting documents.

APPROVAL: This Policy Memorandum shall be effective upon approval of the Department Convention or Council of Administration. It shall be a standing policy that may be amended or revised by two-thirds (2/3) vote at a Department Convention or by the Council of Administration.

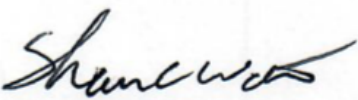
This Policy Memorandum the “DPA Guide to Document Retention” was approved by the Department of the Pacific Areas Council of Administration October 19, 2020, by electronic ballot vote.



Department of Pacific Areas
Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States

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ATTCH: Retention Guide

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VFW Document Retention Guidelines

The following list has been compiled in response to requests from Posts that have asked how long to retain certain files and records. Please keep in mind that this list does not have the effect of law, and a judicious amount of common sense should be used when applying it to your Post/District or Department.

<u>Record Name</u>	<u>Retention Period</u>
Accounts payable invoices	7 years
Accounts payable ledger	7 years
Accounts receivable ledger	7 years
Annual financial reports	Permanent
Annuity & deferred payment plans	Continuing record
Audit reports, annual	10 years
Audit reports, periodic	2 years
Audit work papers	5 years
Balance sheets	5 years
Bank deposit slips	5 years
Bank statements	5 years
Bills of lading	2 years
Bonds - Fidelity	3 years after termination
Bonds - Surety	3 years after termination
Budgets	5 years
Bylaws	Until superseded
Cancelled checks	7 years
Cash receipt records	7 years
Certified annual financial statements	Permanent
Community activity reports	3 years
Contracts	7 years after termination
Correspondence, executive	10 years
Correspondence, general	3 years
Depreciation schedules	Permanent
Election of Officer Reports	5 years
Employee records	4 years after termination
Employee contracts	7 years after termination
Employee withholding records	7 years
Employee accident reports	30 years after settlement
Employee insurance records	11 years after termination
Employee termination	7 years
Entertainment, gift & gratuity records	3 years
Expense vouchers	7 years

<u>Record Name</u>	<u>Retention Period</u>
Fidelity bonds	3 years after termination
Financial reports, periodic	2 years
Financial reports, annual	Permanent
Freight bills	3 years
Freight claims	2 years
Garnishments	7 years after termination
General ledger	Permanent
Income statements, annual	Permanent
Income statements, periodic	2 years
Incorporation papers	Permanent
Inspection reports	3 years
Insurance records, general	4 years after Policy expiration
Inventory records	Permanent
Labor Cost Records	3 years
Lease Records	3 years after termination
Membership Applications	Permanent (<i>see note 1</i>)
Membership Rosters	5 years
Minutes of Post Meetings	5 years (<i>see note 2</i>)
Payroll register	7 years
Periodic financial reports	2 years
Petty cash records	3 years
Property records	Permanent
*Quartermaster reports	5 years (<i>see note 3</i>)
Shipping & Receiving documents	2 years
Tax records	Permanent

Note 1: Membership applications should be retained as a permanent record to aid in establishing length of membership, original eligibility, and other items of historical value.

Note 2: In some instances, it may be advisable to retain the minutes of Post meetings when those minutes contain policy decisions. Normally, however, those policy decisions would have been incorporated into the Post Bylaws, and the minutes would only be of minor historical significance.

Note 3: Monthly Quartermaster reports usually prove to be "dead files" once the quarterly and annual audit reports are completed. However, it is recommended that they be retained for a period of five years, should a detailed reconstruction of the Post's financial situation be required by an auditor or the IRS.