

What records should you keep?

Keep two files - short-term and long-term.

Short-term files would include items from the past year, such as:

- paid or unpaid bills
- bank statements & credit card statements
- canceled checks
- health records
- major purchase receipts
- insurance policies
- income tax receipts for deductions, income, etc.

Long-term files should include:

- bank statements & credit card statements (with home improvement expenses)
- receipts for home improvements
- canceled checks
- warranties and operating instructions for appliances
- income tax records
- gift tax returns
- inheritance papers
- retirement investment statements
- investment account statements (primarily year-end statements with tax info)
- legal papers about formerly owned properties
- reports from trusts
- birth certificates
- Social Security cards
- burial vault/plot deeds
- wills/living wills
- powers of attorney
- car titles
- house titles/deeds
- pension plan statements
- annuities statements
- mutual funds statements
- stocks & bonds

How long should you keep these records?

Three Years:

- household bills
- credit card statements
- receipts for minor purchases

Seven Years:

- canceled checks
- check registers
- bank statements
- pay stubs (primarily year-end stub with all info)
- tax returns and supporting documentation

Forever (or until assets are sold):

- receipts for home improvements
- receipts for major purchases
- annual investment statements
- gift tax returns
- inheritance papers
- insurance policies
- mutual fund statements
- copy of your will
- health care proxy forms
- death certificates
- divorce decrees
- Social Security cards
- marriage license

*Remember that many financial statements are now available online.

Source: MFS