

Record Retention Policy Guidance for Inn Use

Each Inn should review and adopt a record retention policy for current and future leaders and administrators to follow. We've listed the most common items that an Inn should maintain in their short- and long-term records. Your Inn should consider what additional items are important to incorporate in your version of a record retention policy.

- Financial records should be kept for 10 years.
- End-of-year financial statements, audit reports, and IRS filings should be kept permanently.
- Foundational documents, including the application for charter, charter, bylaws, policies, and minutes, etc. should be kept permanently.
- Dues payment records, and donor records, should be kept for 10 years.
- Volunteer records (e.g., who served on which committees) should be kept for three years

Digital copies of these documents are acceptable, but if the Inn has contracts or other items with original signatures, they may wish to keep the paper copies. The years listed are minimums but should not be considered maximums, should the Inn opt to keep records longer than what is suggested. Other documents may also be kept for the purposes of historical reference.

Another resource for digital record keeping is the American Inns of Court optional Chapter Management System (CMS), which contains a document library strictly for Inn leader use. The document library in the CMS eliminates the need for "shoebox succession planning" where documents and files are turned over as volunteers ascend the ranks of the various executive committee office roles.

The national office of the American Inns of Court also maintains electronic historical records for each Inn on its computer servers. You are encouraged to send new documents that are outside of general reporting for the national Inn electronic records. (Please do not send documents older than 24 months at this time, as it's likely that we already have these documents on file.)

If you have any questions, feel free to contact your region's chapter relations director.