



# Document Retention Policy

(11-12-24)

## 1. Introduction

This Document Retention Policy outlines the guidelines and best practices for the retention and disposal of documents and records by the International Association of Arson Investigators in accordance with industry standards, IRS guidelines, and the state of Maryland nonprofit recordkeeping guidelines. It aims to ensure efficient document management, compliance with legal requirements, and preservation of valuable association records. This Policy facilitates the Directors' fulfillment of duty of care, establishes transparency, and ensures compliance.

## 2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish uniform guidelines for document retention and disposal that are aligned with our not-for-profit status, and the regulatory environment in which we operate. This policy helps manage Association Records, effectively safeguards sensitive information, and facilitates compliance with legal and financial obligations. The Executive Director will oversee the Policy ensuring it is maintained according to the stipulations outlined herein.

## 3. Document Types and Retention Periods

Below is a list of common document types maintained by the association, along with their respective retention periods. It is important to note that these are general guidelines, and specific requirements may vary depending on federal and state regulations. Physical files may be transferred to digital format for storage.

### 3.1 Membership Records

#### Retention Period:

- Membership Applications: Retain permanently
- Member Certification Records: See Addendum A

### 3.2 Financial Records

#### Retention Period:

- Financial Statement and Audit Reports: Retain permanently
- Bank Statements and Reconciliations: Retain for a minimum of 7 years
- Expense Reports and Receipts: Retain for a minimum of 7 years
- Budget and Financial Plans: Retain for a minimum of 7 years
- Tax Records, including IRS Form 990: Retain permanently
- Invoices and Receipts: Retain for a minimum of 7 years

*(Source: IRS publication, 4221 – NC, “compliance guide for tax exempt organizations, (other than 501(c)(3) public charities)”*



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## 3.3 Governance and Administration

### Retention Period:

- Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation: Retain permanently
- Board Meeting Minutes and Resolutions: Retain permanently
- Annual reports: Retain permanently
- Legal Correspondence and Contracts: Retain permanently
- Policy and Procedure Manuals: Retain permanently

## 3.4 Program Records

### Retention Period:

- Program Reports and Evaluations: Retain for a minimum of 6 years
- Grant Agreements and Documentation: Retain for a minimum of 7 years after the grant period's completion
- Marketing and Promotional Materials: Retain for a minimum of 3 years

## 3.5 Personnel Records

### Retention Period:

- Employee Records: Retain for a minimum of 7 years after employment termination
- Payroll Records: Retain for a minimum of 7 years

## 4. Record Disposal

Records that have reached the end of their retention and are no longer required for legal, operational, or historical purposes, should be disposed of securely to protect sensitive information. Disposal methods may include shredding, electronic deletion, or other secure methods.

## 5. Record Storage

All records, whether in physical or electronic format, should be stored securely in a designated and organized manner. Access to sensitive documents should be restricted to authorized personnel only.

## 6. Review and Updates

This document retention policy shall be reviewed periodically, at least once every two years, to ensure it remains current and compliant with applicable laws and regulations.

## 7. Legal Compliance

The Association will comply with all federal, state, and local laws and regulations regarding document retention and disposal.

## 8. Effective Date: November 12, 2024 (original date: September 18, 2023)



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## Document Retention Policy Compliance Checklist (Effective Date: September 18, 2023)

DOCUMENT	RETENTION PERIOD	DISPOSAL METHOD	2023	WHO
<b>Membership Related</b>				
• Membership Applications	Permanent	N/A		
• Certification/Recertification Files	See Addendum A	N/A		
• Membership Correspondence	Two (2) years	Shred/Delete		
<b>Financial/Accounting Related</b>				
• Audits/Financial Review	Permanent	N/A		
• Annual Financial Statements/General Ledger	Permanent	N/A		
• Chart of Accounts	Permanent	N/A		
• Fixed Asset Purchases/Depreciation Schedules	Permanent	N/A		
• Membership Applications	Permanent	N/A		
• Tax Returns (Form 990s)	Permanent	N/A		
• Account Payables/Accounts Receivables	Seven (7) years	Shred/Delete		
• Expense Records/Receipts	Seven (7) years	Shred/Delete		
• Inventory Records	Seven (7) years	Shred/Delete		
• Purchase Orders/Sales Records	Seven (7) years	Shred/Delete		
• Budget and Financial Plans	Seven (7) years	Shred/Delete		
• Bank Statements/Reconciliation Reports	Seven (7) years	Shred/Delete		
• Cancelled Checks/Electronic Payment Records	Seven (7) years	Shred/Delete		
<b>Governance and Administration Documents</b>				
• Bylaws/Articles of Incorporation/IRS Determination	Permanent	N/A		
• Deeds/Title Documents/Legal Documents	Permanent	N/A		
• Contracts with Management Company	Permanent	N/A		
• Insurance Policies and Contracts	Permanent	N/A		
• Policy and Procedure Manuals	Permanent	N/A		
• Copyrights/Trademark Registration/Logos	Permanent	N/A		
• Minutes of Board of Directors Meetings	Permanent	N/A		
• Board Resolutions	Permanent	N/A		
• Historical Documentation	Permanent	N/A		
• Contracts (Hotel/Vendors/Consultants/Other)	Six (6) years post completion	Shred/Delete		
• Correspondence (Physical/Digital)	Thirteen (13) months	Shred/Delete		
<b>Program Records</b>				
• Ethical Practices and Grievances Investigative Files	Ten (10) years from closure	Shred/Delete		
• Appellate Review Files	Ten (10) years from closure	Shred/Delete		
• Grant Agreements/Documentation	Seven (7) years post completion	Shred/Delete		
• Minutes from Committee Meetings	Six (6) years	Shred/Delete		
• Program Reports/Evaluations	Six (6) years	Shred/Delete		
• Membership Surveys	Three (3) years	Shred/Delete		
• Meeting Registrations/Sponsorship/Advertising	Two (2) years	Shred/Delete		
• Literature/Pamphlets/Speeches/Brochures/Other	Discretionary; Minimum 13 mos.	Shred/Delete		
• Inventory	Discretionary; Useful Life	Donate/Discard		
<b>Personnel Records</b>				
• Employee Files	Seven (7) years	Shred/Delete		
• Payroll Records	Seven (7) years	Shred/Delete		
• Applications for Employment	Three (3) years	Shred/Delete		



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## **Certifications Document Retention Policy Document Retention Policy Addendum A**

### **1. Introduction**

This Certifications Document Retention Policy outlines the guidelines and best practices for the retention and disposal of documents and records specific to certification by the International Association of Arson Investigators (IAAI) in accordance with industry standards, IRS guidelines, and the state of Maryland nonprofit recordkeeping guidelines. It aims to ensure efficient document management, compliance with legal requirements, and preservation of valuable association records. This Policy facilitates the Directors' fulfillment of duty of care, establishes transparency, and ensures compliance.

### **2. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to establish uniform guidelines for document retention and disposal that are aligned with our not-for-profit status, and the regulatory environment in which we operate. This policy helps manage Association Records, effectively safeguards sensitive information, and facilitates compliance with legal and financial obligations. The Executive Director will oversee the Policy ensuring it is maintained according to the stipulations outlined herein.

### **3. Applications**

This document outlines the document retention policy for the following credential categories:

- a. CFI Current and Recertification
  - b. CFI Denied Applications/Failed Exams
  - c. CFI Expired
  - d. CFI Appeals and Complaints
  - e. CFI Retired Status
  - f. FIT Current, NFA, and Recertification
  - g. FIT Denied Applications/Failed Exams
  - h. FIT Expired
  - i. ECT New, Reciprocity, and Recertification
  - j. ECT Denied Applications/Failed Exams
  - k. ECT Expired
  - l. CI New, Reciprocity and Recertification
  - m. CI Expired
  - n. MVFCE New
  - o. MVFCE Denied Applications
  - p. MVFCE Recertification and Expiration
- a. **CFI Current and Recertification**
- Original application without attachments to include signature page and notation of training and experience/credit claim with approval documentation.
    - Applicable to applicants/candidates who applied beginning 1/1/2024.
  - Recertification application without attachments and approval form
    - Retained for the two most current renewal cycles (every 5 years)



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**b. CFI Denied Applications/Failed Exams**

- Applications not approved will be kept on file for 2 years from the date of denial.
- Candidates who failed their first and second attempts at the CFI exam will have their original application, sans attachments, along with their notices of failure on file for 1 year after the date of their second failed attempt.

**c. CFI Expired**

- The original application and most recent recertification application will be kept on file for 2 years from the date of expiration.

**d. CFI Appeals and Complaints**

- Any Form 11's filed to appeal the notice of a failed CFI exam attempt will be kept on file for 2 years after the decision from the IAAI Certifications Committee has been given to the applicant.
- Complaints claimed/ filed against a current IAAI-CFI holder will be kept on file for 2 years.

**e. CFI Retired Status**

- The original application and most recent recertification application will be kept on file for 2 years from the date of letter submitted announcing retirement.

**f. FIT Current, NFA, and Recertification**

- Original application without attachments to include signature page and notation of training and experience/credit claim with approval documentation.
  - Applicable to applicants/candidates who applied beginning 1/1/2024.
- Recertification application without attachments and approval form
  - Retained for the two most current renewal cycles (every 3 years)

**g. FIT Denied Applications/Failed Exams**

- Applications not approved will be kept on file for 2 years from the date of denial.
- Candidates who failed their first and second attempts at the FIT exam will have their original application, sans attachments, along with their notices of failure on file for 1 year after the date of their second failed attempt.

**h. FIT Expired**

- The original application and most recent recertification application will be kept on file for 2 years from the date of expiration.

**i. ECT New, Reciprocity, and Recertification**

- Original application without attachments to include signature page and notation of training and experience/credit claim with approval documentation.
  - Applicable to applicants/candidates who applied beginning 1/1/2024.
- Recertification application without attachments and approval form
  - Retained for the two most current renewal cycles (every 3 years)



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**j. ECT Denied Applications/Failed Exams**

- Applications not approved will be kept on file for 2 years from the date of denial.
- Candidates who failed their first attempt at the ECT exam will have their original application, sans attachments, along with their notices of failure on file for 1 year after the date of their failed attempt.

**k. ECT Expired**

- The original application and most recent recertification application will be kept on file for 2 years from the date of expiration.

**l. CI New, Reciprocity and Recertification**

- Original application without attachments to include signature page and notation of training and experience/credit claim with approval documentation.
  - Applicable to applicants/candidates who applied beginning 1/1/2024.
- Recertification application without attachments and approval form
  - Retained in the two current renewal cycles (every 3 years)

**m. CI Denied Applications/Failed Exams**

- Applications not approved will be kept on file for 2 years from the date of denial.
- Candidates who failed their first and second attempts at the CI exam will have their original application, sans attachments, along with their notices of failure on file for 1 year after the date of their second failed attempt.

**n. CI Expired**

- The original application and most recent recertification application will be kept on file for 2 years from the date of expiration.

**o. MVFCE New**

- Original application without attachments\* to include signature page and notation of training and experience/credit claim with approval documentation.
  - CFITrainer.Net transcript of Knowledge One Motor Vehicles will be kept with the original application, due to the prerequisite requirement.
  - Applicable to applicants/candidates who applied beginning 1/1/2024.

**p. MVFCE Denied Applications**

Applications not approved will be kept on file for 2 years from the date of denial.

**q. MVFCE Recertification and Expiration**

- Recertification and expiration will follow retention of whatever the MVFCE attaches to for the candidate- either CFI or FIT, whichever is higher.