

# How Long to Hold Documents

## **ONE YEAR (Unless needed for tax purposes, then keep for seven years)**

- Paycheck stubs
- Utility bills
- Canceled checks
- Credit card receipts
- Bank statements

## **SEVEN YEARS**

- Brokerage statements
- Income tax returns
- Receipts
- Cancelled checks and other documents that support income or deductions on tax returns
- Purchase confirmations
- 1099's

## **HOLD WHILE ACTIVE**

- Contracts
- Insurance documents
- Stock certificates
- Property records
- Warranties
- Stock records
- Records of pensions and Retirement plans
- Property tax records
- Disputed bills
- Home Improvement records

## **KEEP FOREVER**

- Life insurance policies
- Wills
- Mortgage records

## **KEEP BILL STORAGE SIMPLE**

According to the organization experts, all it takes is a 13-pocket accordion file folder to corral a year's worth of paid bills. Simply label each of the tabs with the name of the month and leave the last one empty for the year's tax return. Once a bill is paid, file it in the appropriate month along with credit receipts and bank statements. Not only does this give you a quick way to track payments, but it also provides easy record keeping come tax time.

## **WHAT TO KEEP**

Do you have a box in the back of your closet with canceled checks going back to the 1980s – just in case? Bill statements not needed for taxes can be tossed or shredded as soon as you have confirmation that your payment has been credited to your account, according to Bankrate.com. Receipts for major purchases such as appliances, autos, and furniture should be kept for the life of the item in case you need to file an insurance claim. Tax experts recommend keeping tax returns for seven years. Decluttering your finances will not only save you time and stress – it can save you money as well.

Wishing you a healthy and rewarding year ahead!