

# Records Retention and Destruction Policy

**Established By: Pastor Steve Wilson, Executive Pastor**

## 1. Purpose

This policy sets out how Berean Baptist Church generates, retains, and ultimately disposes of records—whether paper or electronic. It is designed to ensure compliance with applicable laws, protect the church’s legal and financial interests, and preserve historic value. It provides clarity to staff, volunteers, and leadership regarding their responsibilities and establishes a process for secure destruction of records when their retention period has expired.

## 2. Scope

This policy applies to all documents and records created, received, or maintained by Berean Baptist Church in the course of ministry operations—whether in paper form or as electronic files (emails, PDFs, scanned documents, cloud data). It covers all staff, volunteers, committees, ministry teams, and trustees.

## 3. Administration

The Executive Pastor is responsible for implementing this policy, monitoring applicable laws, and periodically reviewing or updating the retention schedule. No records shall be destroyed if litigation is pending, reasonably anticipated, or a claim is filed. A litigation hold will override this schedule. The Executive Pastor shall ensure that electronic records and backups are included and that destruction is executed securely (shredding paper, secure deletion of digital files).

## 4. Retention and Destruction Schedule

Record Category	Retention Period	Comments
Corporate records: articles of incorporation, bylaws, constitutions	Permanent	Vital to church identity.
Board/minutes of trustees, congregational meetings	Permanent	Maintains governance history.
Property records (deeds, easements, surveys)	Permanent	Legal interest in property.
Contracts and service agreements	7 years after expiration/termination	Typical guidance.
Financial records (accounts payable/receivable, canceled checks, bank statements)	7 years	IRS and risk-management recommendations.

## Records Retention and Destruction Policy (cont.)

Tax-exemption documents and IRS correspondence	Permanent	Critical for nonprofit status.
Personnel files (for employees)	7 years after termination	Good practice for employment claims.
Background checks, volunteer screening records	5 years or longer	HR category.
Accident and injury reports (non-misconduct incidents)	7 years from incident	For minors: until child turns 21 + additional years.
Incident reports involving children (youth ministry, supervision)	Indefinitely	Potential for delayed claims; best practice suggests indefinite retention.

### 5. Destruction Procedure

Once a record's retention period has expired and no litigation hold exists, destruction may proceed. Paper records must be shredded or otherwise irreversibly destroyed. Electronic records must be securely deleted and removed from backups.

### 6. Litigation Hold

If the church becomes aware of threatened litigation, investigation, or claim, the Executive Pastor must suspend the destruction of all relevant records. The retention/disposition schedule is halted until legal clearance is provided.