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Record Retention: What You Need to Know About Employment Records *Barbara Theofilos, CPA*

As CPAs we are very often asked the question “How long should I keep this?” Well, the answer is that it depends! Employers often face confusion on the length of time certain employment related records should be retained. The following guidelines should help clear up some of the confusion.

- Payroll records, time sheets/cards – *3 years*
- Collective bargaining agreements – *3 years*
- Wage computations – *2 years*
- Selection, hiring & employment records – *1 year after creation of the document or the hire/no hire decision (whichever is later)*
- Form I-9 – *3 years after date of hire or one year after date of termination (whichever is later)*
- Employment benefits – *6 years*
- Tax records – *4 years after filing the 4th quarter for the year*
- Safety data – *5 years following the year records pertain to*
- Family medical leave records – *3 years*
- Health care continuation – No recordkeeping requirements under COBRA; however, it is recommended that records be maintained for 6 years from the date of record
- Polygraph test records – *3 years*
- Affirmative action plan/data – *2 years*
- Credit reports – No retention requirement
- Drug test records – *1 year from test date*
- Ohio unemployment compensation insurance employment records – *5 years*
- Ohio income tax employer records – *4 years*

Be sure to create a destruction log once the record retention time period is met. It is important to ensure that no confidential employee information is inadvertently released.

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