



SHORT GUIDE · PROCESS · ARCHIVING

How long does this box have to stay? From now on, the retention date sits on the document.

Invoices, contracts and HR records must be kept for years, often in boxes with handwritten labels. This short guide shows how PaperOffice keeps retention period and legal basis on the document type, locks documents with WORM and keeps the evidence ready. For administration and accounting.

WHAT YOU TAKE AWAY

Retention period and legal basis belong to the document type, the WORM lock to the single document. Change history, legal hold and certificate stay with the document, and the export delivers data with originals.

01 · THE PROBLEM

The box is on the shelf. Nobody knows its deadline.

Retention duties depend on the document type: invoices, contracts, HR files and business letters each have their own periods and legal bases. In a paper archive the period is on the box label; on a shared drive it is usually nowhere. Only whoever built the archive knows what may go and when.

WHY IT HAPPENS

Periods follow the type, not the folder

One folder mixes invoices, correspondence and contracts. Each type has its own retention period, yet the box label only shows a year.

Files stay editable

On a shared drive, any file can be overwritten, moved or deleted. Nothing there shows whether a PDF still matches the version that was filed.

Evidence takes days

When an audit asks for a year's records, the search starts in boxes and subfolders. Who changed what and when can rarely be shown.

HOW YOU NOTICE IT

- The archive boxes show a year but no retention period.
- Which boxes may be destroyed gets sorted out again every year.
- A contract sits on the drive in three versions, and nobody knows which one applies.
- For a tax audit, records are pulled together over several days.
- In the end, a gut feeling decides whether anything gets deleted.

02 · THE WAY WITH PAPEROFFICE

The rule follows the type, the lock follows the document.

In PaperOffice, the document type brings the retention period and legal basis. The WORM lock secures the single document, and change history, legal hold and export provide the evidence. Each step uses a building block that exists in the app.

1

Bring in and detect the type

Documents arrive in a workspace by upload, network scanner or import; older stock comes as a ZIP or from a Storage Mount. AI-DMS detects the type, such as invoice or contract.

[MODULE: IMPORT & MIGRATION](#)

2

Retention on the document type

Types with retention carry years, jurisdiction and legal basis from the catalog. For your own types, you enter the values yourself. The rule then applies to every document of that type.

[MODULE: CLASSIFICATION](#)

3

Lock the document

From the Business workspace type on, WORM locks the file: it stays unchanged and cannot be deleted, moved or renamed until the period ends. The document shows end date and days left.

[MODULE: WORKSPACES](#)

4

Prove what changed

The **Revisions** tab shows changes with field, old and new value, user and time. A legal hold blocks deletion with a reason, and the compliance certificate carries SHA-256 and a verification link.

[MODULE: AUDIT CENTER](#)

5

Find and hand over

Search finds documents by full text, scans and meaning, and filters narrow by type and upload date. The export delivers the metadata as a table, with originals and OCR text if needed.

[MODULE: SMART SEARCH](#)

03 · IN THE APP

From document type to a locked record.

This is how you set up retention and lock documents. You need a workspace of type Business or Compliance in the PaperOffice cloud and the retention periods of your key document types, agreed with your tax advisor.

1

Retention per document type

Under **Document AI** > **Document Types**, check retention years, jurisdiction and legal basis for each type on the **Retention** tab. For your own types, you enter the values there.

2

Lock the document

In the document, choose **Activate WORM retention**. On the **Revisions** tab, set the **Period start** to immediately or end of year and confirm. The lock is irreversible.

3

Export the history

On the **Revisions** tab, filter by field changes and download the entries shown as CSV: date, time, action, field, old and new value, user.

4

Legal hold and certificate

On the **Revisions** tab, **Place legal hold** blocks deletion with a reason, for all versions. On a locked document, **Download certificate** gets the compliance certificate with SHA-256 and verification link.

5

Export for the audit

Filter the list by type, select the documents, open **Actions** > **Share & export** > **Export data** and choose **Complete bundle**: table, originals and OCR text in one ZIP.

TIP FROM PRACTICE

Lock a record once it is final The period runs from the lock. Lock invoices after they are booked, and for statutorily bound types choose end of year as the period start. Until then, type and file can still be corrected.

04 · AN EXAMPLE

One records room, six rows of shelves.



A wholesaler with 60 employees keeps invoices, contracts and HR records in a records room with rolling shelves. The office manager looks after the boxes, and newer records also sit as files on a shared drive.

BEFORE

- Records go into boxes, with the year handwritten on the label.
- Every year he works out again which boxes may be destroyed.
- On the shared drive, anyone can change, move or delete files.
- For an audit he spends days pulling records from shelves and folders.

WITH PAPEROFFICE

- New documents arrive in a Business workspace by scanner and upload.
- Each document type carries its period and legal basis, agreed with the tax advisor.
- He locks booked invoices with the period starting at the end of the year.
- For an audit he filters by type, selects and exports data with originals.

An example for illustration; the company and people are fictitious. Check with your tax advisor which retention periods apply to your document types and whether your process meets your obligations.

05 · CHECKLIST

Before you move your archive.

These ten points help you set up retention periods cleanly and lock documents day to day.

- ☐ The periods of your key document types are agreed with your tax advisor.
- ☐ Your own types, such as maintenance contracts, are set up with their period.
- ☐ You have decided when a document gets locked, for example after booking.
- ☐ During an audit or a legal dispute, a legal hold with a reason is placed.
- ☐ Older stock has been imported and spot-checked.
- ☐ For each of these types, years, jurisdiction and legal basis are set under [Document AI](#) › [Document Types](#) .
- ☐ Archive documents sit in a workspace of type Business or Compliance in the PaperOffice cloud.
- ☐ The period start is settled per document type: immediately or end of year.
- ☐ Rights are set per workspace, and auditors get the [View + Download](#) right.
- ☐ A process documentation describes how your business archives with PaperOffice.

06 · FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What admin and accounting ask before they start.

Does this meet GoBD requirements?

PaperOffice provides the building blocks: retention period and legal basis per type, WORM lock, change history, legal hold, certificate and export. Whether your process as a whole is sufficient is for your tax advisor to judge, based on your process records.

Can a locked document still be changed?

The file stays unchanged, and deleting, moving and renaming are blocked until the period ends. Data fields remain editable, and every change appears on the **Revisions** tab. The lock cannot be undone.

What does a tax audit receive?

You filter by type, select the documents and export the metadata as XLSX, CSV, JSON or PDF, with originals and OCR text if needed. Auditors get the **View + Download** right on the workspace through a user group.

When does the retention period start?

When you lock the document, either immediately to the day or at the end of the year. The years come from the document type. So lock records promptly, for example in the year they are booked.

How does our existing stock get in?

As a ZIP or from a Storage Mount, up to 2,000 files per job. A SHA-256 check skips duplicates, AI-DMS detects the type, and the report shows what was imported.

Is there an API for this?

Yes. The REST API offers document-retention-activate, document-revisions, document-legal-hold and documents-export. Over MCP, `po_documents_audit_trail_get` returns the history and `po_documents_legal_holds_create` places a legal hold.

07 · HOW TO START

Set up the first retention period on a real document type

Create an account at app.paperoffice.ai, set up a Business workspace, check the period of a document type and lock your first document. Billing is based on usage; prices are on the pricing page.

Settle the periods

Agree with your tax advisor which retention periods and legal bases apply to your document types.

Set up the types

Check the values under [Document AI > Document Types](#), enter them for your own types and decide when a document gets locked.

Bring in your stock

Import older records year by year and lock the documents you have checked.

DATASHEETS ON THIS TOPIC

Classification

paperoffice.ai/downloads/paperoffice-ai-datasheet-classification.pdf

Audit Center

paperoffice.ai/downloads/paperoffice-ai-datasheet-audit-center.pdf

Smart Search

paperoffice.ai/downloads/paperoffice-ai-datasheet-smart-search.pdf

Import & Migration

paperoffice.ai/downloads/paperoffice-ai-datasheet-import-migration.pdf

Workspaces

paperoffice.ai/downloads/paperoffice-ai-datasheet-workspaces.pdf

Network Scanner

paperoffice.ai/downloads/paperoffice-ai-datasheet-integration-network-scanner.pdf

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Archiving

paperoffice.ai/en/solutions/process/ai-audit-proof-archiving-compliance



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