

PERIOD OF RETENTION AND STORAGE OF DOCUMENTS

	Documents	Year	Period Specifically	Form	Location	Exceptions	Penalty
Accounting law	Statutory books (central book, subsidiary books and inventory book)	7	From 1 January of the year following closing	Paper or digital	In Belgium or abroad via digital access from company headquarters	► Force majeure ► Unforeseeable circumstances	Criminal: a fine of EUR 26 up to EUR 10,000 or EUR 50,000 in case of fraudulent intent.
	Supporting documents (invoices, credit notes, etc.)	7		Paper or digital			
	Internal documents	3		Paper or digital			
	IT	During retention period For records and documents					
Direct taxes	Books and records necessary to determine taxable income	10	Until end of 10th year/ financial year after taxable period	Paper or digital	Professional or private premises of the taxpayer where the Administration can conduct inspections	► Force majeure ► Unforeseeable circumstances	Administrative: ex-officio assessment or a fine of EUR 50 to 1,250 Criminal for fraudulent intent or fraud: fine of EUR 250 to 500,000 or imprisonment from 8 days to 2 years or even 5 years (if committed in the context of serious fraud)
	Computer system / any other electronic device (data on analyses, programmes and management)	10	Until end of 10th year/ financial year after taxable period in which system was used				
VAT	Books	10/15/25*	From 1 January after closure of the books	Paper or digital	To be freely determined provided the books and records are made available to the Administration upon request and without undue delay. Access to digitally stored documents should ensure full online access and should be provided regardless of whether these data reside in the "cloud" on Belgian or foreign servers. Belgium-based taxpayers must keep paper books and records in Belgium.	► Force majeure ► Unforeseeable circumstances	Administrative: ex-officio assessment and/or fine of EUR 50 to 5,000, Criminal for fraudulent intent or fraud: fine of €250 to €500,000 and imprisonment from 8 days to 2 or even 5 years (if committed in the context of serious fraud)
	Invoices and other documents	10/15/25*	From 1 January after date (for invoices and copies of invoices: date of issue)	Paper or digital			
	Table of operating assets	15/25/35**	From 1 January after start of asset review period	Paper or digital			
	IT (media and readers)	10/15/25*	From 1 January following the last year of use of the system				
Company law	Documents include the authentic acts of the company, the reports and minutes of the company's organs and the share registers.	Lifetime	5 years following closing of the liquidation	Paper (in original format). Exception: share register (paper or digital)	Share register: at the company head-quarters Other documents: not specified, but for practical reasons preferably kept at the company head-quarters In the event of liquidation: at a place designated by the General Meeting.	► Force majeure ► Unforeseeable circumstances	

(*) If related to an operating asset, subject to 15 or 25-year review period.

(**) Pursuant to article 11, §5 RD no. 3, every taxpayer must keep a table of operating assets that makes it possible to check the deductions and revisions made. This table must be kept for 7 years as from the expiry of the 5, 15 or 25-year review period. However, in his answer to a parliamentary question of 21 January 2013, the Minister of Finance stated that a separate table of business assets is not required when the necessary elements for a possible revision are already apparent from a combination of the data in the depreciation tables kept for income tax purposes and those mentioned in the book for incoming invoices.

Note: documents from branches of foreign companies must always be kept as originals or copies in Belgium.

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