

RETENTION PERIOD AND LOCATIONS FOR DOCUMENTS

	DOCUMENTS	YEARS	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 the company's registered office	- 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 the retention period for records and documents					
DIRECT TAXES	Books and records required for determining taxable income	7	Until the 7th year/ financial year following the taxable period	Paper (ideally), digital is also permitted	The professional or private premises of the taxpayer where the Administration can carry out a review	- Force majeure - Unforeseeable circumstances	Administrative: ex officio assessment and/or a fine of between EUR 50 and EUR 1,250 Criminal: in case of fraudulent intent or fraud: a fine of between EUR 250 and EUR 500,000 and 8 days to 2 or even 5 years imprisonment in case of serious fraud
	IT	7	From 1 January following the last year/financial year of use				
VAT	Books	7/15/25*	From 1 January following closing	Paper or digital	Free to determine on the condition that the books and documents can be provided to the Administration upon request and without undue delay.	- Force majeure - Unforeseeable circumstances	Administrative: ex officio assessment and/or a fine of between EUR 50 and EUR 5,000 Criminal: in case of fraudulent intent or fraud: a fine of between EUR 250 and EUR 500,000 and 8 days to 2 or even 5 years imprisonment in case of serious fraud
	Invoices and other documents	7/15/25*	From 1 January after the date	Paper or digital			
	Table of operating assets	12/22/32**	From 1 January after the date/closing	Paper or digital	Full online access must be guaranteed to digitally stored documents, which should be provided irrespective of whether these data are in the 'cloud' on Belgian or foreign servers.		
	IT (media and readers)	7/15/25*	From 1 January following the last year of use		Taxpayers established in Belgium must keep paper books and records in Belgium.		
CORPORATE LAW	Documentation including authentic legal instruments of the company, reports and minutes of the official company bodies and the share register	Lifetime	5 years following closing of the liquidation	Paper (in original format) Except: share register (paper or digital)	Share register: at the company headquarters Other documents: not specified, but for practical reasons preferably kept at the company headquarters	- Force majeure - Unforeseeable circumstances	

(*) If it related to a operating asset subject to a 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: you must always keep an original or copy of documents from branches of foreign companies in Belgium.

The information contained in this document is for information purposes only and does not constitute legal advice. The completeness and accuracy of the information used cannot be guaranteed. None of the companies belonging to the BDO group, nor its partners, employees or stakeholders, can be held liable for damages resulting from actions or abstentions based on the content of this document.

Update 2021 | Contact: www.bdo.be • legal@bdo.be

