

# Shred me, shred me not

**W**ith tax season looming, many people can picture a memory from the not-too-distant past. Box after heavy box of documents and receipts, with the appropriate year scribbled on the outside, collecting dust for eternity. But in the digital age, should all records now be digitized? Some shredded? Which ones, and when? If confusion is setting in, fear not. Here are some simple tips that could make this year's post-tax routine a little lighter.

## Shred immediately

- Sales receipts (unless related to warranties, taxes or insurance)
- Canceled checks (unless tax-related)
- ATM receipts
- Paid credit card and utility bills
- Credit offers
- Expired warranties

## Shred after one year

- Pay stubs
- Bank statements
- Paid, undisputed medical bills

## Shred after seven years

- Tax-related receipts
- Tax-related canceled checks
- W-2s
- Tax deduction records

## Keep while useful

- Vehicle titles (for as long as it's your baby)
- Home deeds (for as long as there's no place like it)
- Pay stubs (until checked against your W-2)
- Disputed medical bills (until resolved)
- Home improvement receipts (until you've sold and paid any capital gains taxes)

## Keep for life

- Birth certificates or adoption papers
- Social Security cards
- Citizenship papers
- Passports
- Marriage or divorce decrees
- Family death certificates
- Tax returns (even if these are no longer paper, it's still advised to hold on to them)

## Benefits of going paperless

- Takes up far less room
- Easy access
- Fast file retrieval
- Increased security
- Eco-friendly
- Better data recovery
- File longevity

## A million ways to virtually store

Digitizing wisely requires more than just scanning and organizing, especially for tax-related data. Secure storage solutions, like Everplans and Vault, can ensure long-term privacy and offer confidence that your files have protection. There are also highly rated mobile apps, like Adobe Scan, ABBYY FineReader PDF, Genius Scan and others. Find what suits you – and let the privacy



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**KENNETH DOW**, MANAGING PARTNER, THE DOW GROUP / FINANCIAL ADVISOR, RJFS

1901 Butterfield Road, Suite 100 // Downers Grove, IL 60515 // 630.716.8100 // [raymondjames.com/thedowgroup](https://raymondjames.com/thedowgroup)

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