# Checklist for a Document Retention Policy

Companion to [WSBA’s Law Firm Guide to Document Retention](https://wsbacms.wsba.org/docs/default-source/resources-services/practice-management-%28lomap%29/guide-to-best-practices-for-client-file-retention-and-management.pdf?sfvrsn=306a3df1_10)

[ ]  Records regarding property that you safeguard for the client or a third party must be preserved for 7 years per RPC/LLLT RPC 1.15A.

[ ]  Trust account records and related documents preserved for 7 years per RPC/LLLT RPC 1.15B.

[ ]  Each client matter assigned a unique identifier

For example, a new client matter might be assigned “Jones20190102,” where Jones is the client’s last name and “20190102” is the date the client retained you.

[ ]  Physical file is indexed

For practices that tend to include a lot of physical documents and records, you may want to use an index to keep track of how many notebooks, folders, and accordion files exist. If you practice in a group with others, you may want to devise a system to “check out” parts of the file so you always know where it is.

[ ]  Physical files are always locked in a secure cabinet at the close of business day

[ ]  Physical files that are received are scanned and filed within 1 business day

[ ]  Email correspondence (ingoing and outgoing) is preserved and saved throughout the course of the client matter. Email accounts for departing employees are archived for future reference.

[ ]  Within 2 days of conclusion of client matter, responsible attorney reviews the contents of the client file and identifies intrinsically-valuable files and original documents

[ ]  Original documents and files are not retained by the firm and/or are only held for the duration of the client matter and then returned to the client.

[ ]  Within 7 days of conclusion of client matter, original documents and valuable files are returned/provided to the client along with a summary of the document retention policy

[ ]  Retention policy includes a file closing checklist