



**Innovatively Organized LLC**  
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## ARCHIVE YOUR FILES WITH EASE

What shape is your filing system in? Are your filing drawers stuffed so full that it's nearly impossible to get another piece of paper into — or out of — them? Once a year, you should take time to review your files and purge as much as possible, leaving room for next year's papers.

1. Determine what to keep. As you sort through papers, ask yourself, "When will I really need this again?" "Can it be easily recreated or retrieved elsewhere?" Don't hang onto things unless you have a really good reason! Be ruthless — remember, 80% of the things you file will never get referred to again!
2. Keep records retention guidelines in mind. Your accountant, attorney, or professional organizer can tell you which documents you should keep for legal purposes.
3. Keep only day-to-day paperwork at your fingertips. For rarely-used files that must be kept, archive them in an out-of-the-way area, such as a closet, basement, or off-site storage facility.
4. Some things can be immediately tossed. Instruction manuals for products you no longer own, old research materials, previous drafts of letters, out-of-date magazines and articles, and receipts for items past their return date can be discarded.
5. Stash important documents in a safety deposit box. It is imperative that you stock your safety deposit box or home safe with the following papers: adoption and citizenship papers; passports; birth, death, and marriage certificates; deeds; divorce decrees; insurance policy papers; lease agreements and loan documents; mortgage papers; personal property appraisals (jewelry, collectibles); Social Security cards; stock and bond certificates; vehicle titles; copies of wills; and powers of attorney papers. And don't forget to LOCK your home safe. It is NOT fireproof unless the lock is engaged.

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Elizabeth Bowman is a professional organizer and the president of Innovatively Organized, a professional organizing services company. She has a passion to help busy professionals streamline their homes, work spaces, and schedules.

Visit [www.InnovativelyOrganized.com](http://www.InnovativelyOrganized.com) for more information. You may also contact Elizabeth directly at 206.369.8853 or [elizabeth@innovativelyorganized.com](mailto:elizabeth@innovativelyorganized.com).

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