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How Long to Keep a Pilot Logbook: Retention by Authority

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Executive Summary

No single rule answers "how long do you keep a pilot logbook", because authorities write three different things: a **retention period**, a **production window** (a period during which the log must be produced on request), or nothing at all. This report read the primary text of ten authorities as of November 2026 and sorted each into one of those three types.

Four texts state a retention period. **Australia** requires seven years after the day the last entry is made ((www.legislation.gov.au)), and CASA repeats it on its own page ((www.casa.gov.au)). **India's** Aircraft Rules, 1937 (replaced from 1 January 2027 by rules whose text was not read) say log books are preserved for not less than five years after the date of the last entry ((civilaviation.gov.in)). **Germany** states at least five years after the last entry in an administrative notice for pilots (NfL 2212-21, dated 16 April 2021; its current status was not re-checked) ((www.strassenbau.niedersachsen.de)); the two-year logbook rule in its personnel licensing ordinance covers other personnel, not pilots ((www.gesetze-im-internet.de)) ((www.gesetze-im-internet.de)). **New Zealand** goes the other way: its rule says a bound logbook is to be retained permanently by the licence holder ((www.aviation.govt.nz)).

The **United Kingdom** is a production window, not a plain retention rule. During the two years beginning with the date of the last entry, the holder must cause the log to be produced to an authorised person ((www.legislation.gov.uk)). Wikipedia's page paraphrases this as logbooks that "must be retained for at least 2 years" ((en.wikipedia.org)), but the Order's paragraph speaks only of production.

Five of the ten authorities (the US, Canada, EASA, Ireland and Brazil) state no retention period in the text read. For the US, Canada, EASA and Brazil: Title 14 of the US Code of Federal Regulations, section 61.51, as displayed by the eCFR (up to date as of 11/10/2026), has a production duty but no retention period ((www.ecfr.gov)) ((www.ecfr.gov)). Canada's section 401.08 sets a duty to maintain and a content list, and nothing on duration ((laws-lois.justice.gc.ca)). EASA's FCL.050 is one sentence about keeping a reliable record ((www.easa.europa.eu)), and Brazil's RBAC 61 has a duty to present the CIV without a time window ((pergamum.anac.gov.br)).

"None stated" does not mean "safe to discard". Canada's Standard 421.08 shows what a missing log costs: a sworn declaration without corroboration is not accepted as evidence of experience beyond that for a Commercial Pilot Licence ((tc.canada.ca)). Ireland's regulator tells applicants they must send all their logbooks for inspection ((www.iaa.ie)). This is record-keeping explanation only, not legal advice, and it does not replace an authority's or an examiner's decision.

Introduction and Background

A career pilot generates a long paper or digital trail: logged flights, signatures, totals, endorsements. The practical question is when any of it can be discarded. The question is easy to ask and hard to answer from commercial guides, because the rules differ by jurisdiction and because the word "retain" is routinely used for rules that do not use it.

This report separates three things that guides tend to merge:

- **Duty to keep a log.** A rule requiring a pilot to maintain a logbook while flying, with content requirements. This exists in almost every jurisdiction read.
- **Retention period.** A rule stating how long the log must be preserved, usually counted from the last entry.
- **Production window.** A rule stating that during a period the log must be handed to an authority on request. A production window implies the log still exists but is worded as a duty to produce, not to preserve.

The distinction matters because a widely read reference page, Wikipedia's "Pilot logbook", states retention for Australia and the United Kingdom only, and carries no retention statement for the United States, Canada or India ((en.wikipedia.org)) ((en.wikipedia.org)). Its United Kingdom reference points at the 2016 "made" version of article 235 of the Air Navigation Order ((en.wikipedia.org)), and the current article (revised) carries the same paragraph (5) wording ((www.legislation.gov.uk)).

Scope and method are narrow. We opened each authority's primary text, searched the clause (and neighbouring clauses) for the words retain, retention, preserve, keep, years and period, and recorded the text version and date shown on the page. Where we could not read a text we say "not verified". Operator-held flight time and rest records are out of scope. This is not legal advice, and it is not operational guidance; the authority's text and the operator's approved procedures govern.

Pilot Logbook (pilots.landing.aero), the invitation-only electronic logbook from the publisher of this report, is relevant to the archive question discussed in the implementation section. It is described there in proportion, as one way to hold an archive, and no authority approval of it is claimed.

Key Findings by Authority

Table 1 below sets out one row per authority. Each row names the clause read, what the text says, the type of statement, and the version of the text. The type column uses three labels: "states a period" (retention), "states a production window", and "no period found in the text read". A "no period found" row records a negative finding about the clause we read, not a claim that no rule exists anywhere in that country's law.

Authority	Clause read	What the text says	Type	Text version read
United States (FAA)	14 CFR 61.51	Document time "in a manner acceptable to the Administrator" ((www.ecfr.gov)). Present the logbook "upon a reasonable request" by the Administrator, an NTSB representative or a law enforcement officer ((www.ecfr.gov)). No retention period in the section.	No period found in the text read (production on request, no window)	eCFR "up to date as of 11/10/2026" ((www.ecfr.gov))
Canada (Transport Canada)	CARs 401.08(1) to (3); Standard 421.08	Maintain a personal log ((laws-lois.justice.gc.ca)); only the holder or an authorised person may make entries ((laws-lois.justice.gc.ca)). No retention period or production window in the section. Standard 421.08 covers a lost log ((tc.canada.ca)).	No period found in the text read	Justice Laws page, date modified 2026-11-02; Standard 421 page, date modified 2026-08-20
United Kingdom (CAA)	Air Navigation Order 2016, art. 228 and 235(5)	"During the period of two years beginning with the date of the last entry" the log must be produced to an authorised person ((www.legislation.gov.uk)).	States a production window (two years from last entry)	legislation.gov.uk, latest available (revised)
EASA (Part-FCL)	FCL.050; AMC1 FCL.050; FCL.045(c)	The pilot shall "keep a reliable record of the details of all flights flown" ((www.easa.europa.eu)); present the record "without undue delay" on request ((www.easa.europa.eu)).	No period found in the text read	Easy Access Rules, published October 2026 ((www.easa.europa.eu))
Ireland (IAA)	PLAM.024; FAQ LBQ.2	Format rules, electronic logbooks acceptable on conditions ((www.iaa.ie)). Applicants "must send all your logbooks for inspection" ((www.iaa.ie)).	No period found in the text read	PLAM.024 Revision 01, 24.08.2023; FAQ undated
Germany (LBA framework)	Section 120 LuftPersV; NfL 2212-21	The notice says logbooks are to be kept at least five years after the last entry ("Flugbücher sind für mindestens fünf Jahre nach dem letzten Eintrag aufzubewahren") ((www.strassenbau.niedersachsen.de)). Section 120 LuftPersV has a two-year rule, but only for personnel under § 1 Nr. 2 to 4 (flight engineers, police helicopter flight technicians, air-sports-equipment operators), not pilots ((www.gesetze-im-internet.de)) ((www.gesetze-im-internet.de)).	States a period (5 years in the administrative notice NfL 2212-21, whose current status was not re-checked; the 2-year ordinance rule covers other personnel)	LuftPersV page, undated; NfL dated 16 APR 2021
Australia (CASA)	CASR 1998 reg. 61.355; 61.365	Offence not to retain the logbook "for 7 years after the day" of the last entry ((www.legislation.gov.au)); separate 7-day production period when CASA directs production ((www.legislation.gov.au)).	States a period (7 years) and a production window (7 days)	Compilation No. 103, 29 September 2026; CASA page updated 20 Oct 2026

Authority	Clause read	What the text says	Type	Text version read
New Zealand (CAA NZ)	Part 61, rule 61.29(c)	A bound logbook is "retained permanently by the pilot licence holder" ((www.aviation.govt.nz)); at least 12 months after a revocation in the stated case ((www.aviation.govt.nz)).	States a period (permanent; 12 months in the revocation case)	Part 61 consolidation, 5 April 2025
India (DGCA / MoCA)	Aircraft Rules, 1937, rule 67A	Log books preserved for not less than 5 years after the date of the last entry ((civilaviation.gov.in)). The replacement rules (in force 1 January 2027) were not read ((www.pib.gov.in)).	States a period (5 years); replacement text not verified	Scan with "Updated: February" header, year illegible
Brazil (ANAC)	RBAC 61, 61.29 and 61.31; IS 61-001G	Record flights in the CIV ((pergamum.anac.gov.br)); present it to ANAC "sempre que assim for solicitado" ((pergamum.anac.gov.br)). No retention period found.	No period found in the text read (production on request, no window)	RBAC 61 Emenda 16 header: "Versão em vigor em 02.01.2025" ((pergamum.anac.gov.br))

The first reading of *Table 1* is that periods and windows are the minority. Of ten rows, four state a retention period (Germany, Australia, New Zealand, India), one adds a production window alongside it (Australia), one states only a production window (United Kingdom), and five carry no period in the text read (United States, Canada, EASA, Ireland, Brazil). The second reading is that three of the largest licensing systems, the US, Canada and EASA, fall in the "none stated" group, which is the finding most commercial guides skip. The subsections below take each group in turn.

Authorities that state a retention period

Australia is the clearest. The regulation makes it an offence not to retain the logbook for seven years after the day the last entry is made ((www.legislation.gov.au)), and a separate subregulation requires each entry to be retained unaltered throughout the period ((www.legislation.gov.au)). The duty to keep a personal logbook sits in regulation 61.345, which itself has no period ((www.legislation.gov.au)). CASA's own page states the same seven years from the last date of entry ((www.casa.gov.au)) and adds that entries must stay unaltered through the period ((www.casa.gov.au)).

New Zealand is stricter in form. Rule 61.29(c) says a bound paper logbook is retained permanently by the licence holder ((www.aviation.govt.nz)), with a minimum of 12 months after revocation in the case the rule addresses ((www.aviation.govt.nz)). Since April 2025 the Director may approve software for an electronic logbook ((www.aviation.govt.nz)), and the CAA's logbook page says guidance on approval of such software is still in development ((www.aviation.govt.nz)).

India has a five-year rule in the Aircraft Rules, 1937, Part IX "Log Books" ((civilaviation.gov.in)). Rule 67A concerns the personal log book of flight crew, and its sub-rule reads that log books shall be preserved for not less than five years "after the date of the last entry" ((civilaviation.gov.in)). Two cautions apply. The source is a scan whose header ("Updated: February") has no legible year, so its consolidation date is unverified. And the Press Information Bureau announced on 04 November 2026 that the Bharatiya Vayuyan Niyam, 2026 replaces

the Aircraft Rules, 1937 ((www.pib.gov.in)) ((www.pib.gov.in)), in force from 1 January 2027 ((www.pib.gov.in)). The release lists "Flight crew logbooks and recording of flight time" as a topic ((www.pib.gov.in)) but states no retention period for them, and the text of the new rules was not found. Whether the five-year wording survives is not verified.

Germany has a notice-based period for pilots and a separate ordinance rule for other personnel. The licensing ordinance (section 120 LuftPersV) requires a logbook to be kept two years counted from the day of the last entry, but only for personnel under § 1 Nr. 2 to 4 (flight engineers, police helicopter flight technicians and air-sports-equipment operators) ((www.gesetze-im-internet.de)); pilots (Luftfahrzeugführer) are § 1 Nr. 1 and are not covered ((www.gesetze-im-internet.de)). The administrative notice NfL 2212-21, which sets the form under FCL.050 for flight operations under the LBA, the Bundeswehr aviation office (LufABw) and the Länder aviation authorities, says logbooks are to be kept at least five years after the last entry ((www.strassenbau.niedersachsen.de)) and recommends a longer period where proof may be needed later ((www.strassenbau.niedersachsen.de)).

Authorities that state a production window

The **United Kingdom** is the case this report was built around. Article 235(5) of the Air Navigation Order 2016 says that during the period of two years beginning with the date of the last entry, every person required by article 228 to keep a personal flying log must cause it to be produced to an authorised person ((www.legislation.gov.uk)) ((www.legislation.gov.uk)). Article 228 covers every member of the flight crew of a UK-registered aircraft ((www.legislation.gov.uk)) and anyone flying to qualify for a licence, rating or certificate ((www.legislation.gov.uk)). The "authorised person" is defined in Schedule 1 as a constable or a person authorised by the CAA by name, class or description ((www.legislation.gov.uk)).

Three observations follow from the text. First, paragraph (5) uses the word "produced", not "retained" or "preserved". Second, the Order's separate article 256 does refer to a log book "during the period for which it is required under this Order to be preserved" ((www.legislation.gov.uk)), so a careful reader will see that the Order assumes a preservation concept without stating a separate number for personal logs in the articles read. Third, failure to produce falls under the offences listed in Schedule 13 ((www.legislation.gov.uk)), with a summary conviction fine not exceeding level 3 ((www.legislation.gov.uk)). The UK's retained Part-FCL, FCL.050, adds no period ((www.legislation.gov.uk)).

Australia also has a window: regulation 61.365 lets CASA direct a holder to produce the personal logbook ((www.legislation.gov.au)), and the holder must produce an up to date version within 7 days ((www.legislation.gov.au)). CASA's page restates the 7-day period ((www.casa.gov.au)). **India's** rule 17 requires a log book that need not be carried on board to be produced within seven days of the demand ((civilaviation.gov.in)), again separate from the five-year retention rule.

Authorities where no period was found

United States. Section 61.51 sets what to log (for each flight or lesson logged, date, time, places, aircraft and conditions) ((www.ecfr.gov)). The duty is purposive: time must be recorded when it is used to meet a requirement for a certificate, rating or flight review ((www.ecfr.gov)). Paragraph (i) is the only production rule, covering the logbook alongside medical certificates ((www.ecfr.gov)); the listed requesters are the

Administrator, an authorised NTSB representative ((www.ecfr.gov)) and a law enforcement officer ((www.ecfr.gov)). AOPA writes that "there is no requirement to keep a logbook" ((www.aopa.org)), and elsewhere that section 61.51(a) requires logging only of training and experience used for a certificate or rating plus recent experience ((www.aopa.org)). By contrast, the same Part 61 does state periods for instructors: flight instructors must retain endorsement and test records for at least 3 years ((www.ecfr.gov)), and sport pilot instructors for 3 years ((www.ecfr.gov)).

Canada. Section 401.08(1) requires every applicant for and holder of a flight crew permit, licence or rating to maintain a personal log ((laws-lois.justice.gc.ca)), documenting experience acquired for issuance and recency ((laws-lois.justice.gc.ca)). Subsection (2) lists the content ((laws-lois.justice.gc.ca)), and subsection (3) limits who may make entries ((laws-lois.justice.gc.ca)) to the holder or someone the holder authorised ((laws-lois.justice.gc.ca)). The section ends at subsection (3), with only an amendment note ((laws-lois.justice.gc.ca)). The only period found in the neighbouring Subpart 401 text concerns an instrument recency record, kept for three years ((laws-lois.justice.gc.ca)); that attaches to the recency record, not expressly to the personal log. Section 401.03 has a production duty for the licence and medical certificate, not for the log ((laws-lois.justice.gc.ca)).

EASA and Ireland. FCL.050 is a single sentence requiring the pilot to keep a reliable record, in a form and manner established by the competent authority ((www.easa.europa.eu)). AMC1 FCL.050 describes the logbook as a permanent record ((www.easa.europa.eu)) and sets format and electronic-logbook conditions, but we found no period in FCL.050, AMC1 or GM1 in the Easy Access Rules published October 2026 ((www.easa.europa.eu)). FCL.045(c) requires the record to be presented "without undue delay" on request ((www.easa.europa.eu)), which is a production duty without a window. Where EASA does state retention periods, they attach to organisation records, for example three years for approved training organisations ((www.easa.europa.eu)). For Ireland, PLAM.024 states the format is the only acceptable one ((www.iaa.ie)) and says nothing on retention, while its FAQ asks for all logbooks at licence application ((www.iaa.ie)).

Brazil. RBAC 61 in Emenda 16 requires licence holders to record flights in the CIV ((pergamum.anac.gov.br)) and puts the duty to keep records current on the pilot ((pergamum.anac.gov.br)). Only the CIV Digital or an operator's flight-hours declaration is accepted as proof of experience ((pergamum.anac.gov.br)). The Supplementary Instruction IS 61-001G assigns the maintenance of the CIV Digital to the pilot ((pergamum.anac.gov.br)). No retention period was found in 61.29, 61.31 or IS 61-001G; the CIV must be presented whenever requested ((pergamum.anac.gov.br)), with no stated window. We could not fully confirm that Emenda 16 is the latest.

Why "No Period Stated" Is Not "Safe to Discard"

A missing retention rule describes what an authority requires of the pilot while flying. It does not describe what later events will ask for. At least four events use old hours: an airline transport pilot licence (ATPL) application, a licence validation or conversion, an employer's records check, and an investigation after an occurrence. For each, the authority's own text was searched for what it asks to see. *Table 2* lists those rules; where an authority's text says nothing about an event, the cell says so, and we do not invent a requirement for any employer or institution.

Authority	Event that asks for history	What the authority's own text says
United States	Certificate application (for example ATP)	Experience used for a certificate must be logged ((www.ecfr.gov)). The FAA application form has an examiner statement that the examiner reviewed the "pilot logbook and/or training record" ((www.faa.gov)); FAA Order 8710.3E tells examiners to check the experience against the logbook ((www.faa.gov)).
United States	Lost or missing log	Flying magazine quotes the FAA as accepting the last airman certificate application or last medical application as a record of hours ((www.flyingmag.com)); Order 8710.3E notes the experience reported on the application "can be used to substantiate past" experience ((www.faa.gov)).
Canada	ATPL application	Standard 421.34(4) requires a minimum of 1500 hours total flight time, of which 900 in aeroplanes ((tc.canada.ca)); 421.11(6)(a) asks for a personal log or other reliable record of pilot-in-command under supervision time ((tc.canada.ca)).
Canada	Lost log	A sworn Affidavit or Statutory Declaration ((tc.canada.ca)) with corroborating evidence where practicable ((tc.canada.ca)); without it, not accepted for experience beyond that for a Commercial Pilot Licence ((tc.canada.ca)).
Canada	Foreign licence holders	Transport Canada says to be ready to present the flight logbook ((tc.canada.ca)) and accepts digital logbooks by email ((tc.canada.ca)); without a certified log, credit may be limited to the ICAO Annex 1 minimum ((tc.canada.ca)).
United Kingdom	Licence application; authority inspection	CAA guidance asks applicants with an electronic logbook to download and submit it ((www.caa.co.uk)); article 235(5) governs production for two years from the last entry ((www.legislation.gov.uk)).
EASA / Ireland	Licence application or upgrade	The IAA FAQ says all logbooks must be sent for inspection ((www.iaa.ie)); the IAA licensing FAQ says original logbooks must be submitted for the ATPL grant ((www.iaa.ie)).
Australia	CASA direction to produce	7 days to produce an up to date version ((www.legislation.gov.au)); CASA does not hold logbook data for individuals ((www.casa.gov.au)).
New Zealand	Flight test; submission to the Director	An applicant must produce an up-to-date, summarised and certified logbook for a flight test ((www.aviation.govt.nz)); submission requires certified totals ((www.aviation.govt.nz)).
Brazil	Proof of experience	CIV Digital or operator declaration ((pergamum.anac.gov.br)); present the CIV on request ((pergamum.anac.gov.br)).
India	Demand for log books	Seven days to produce a log book not carried on board ((civilaviation.gov.in)).

The interpretive point from *Table 2* is that old hours are asked for at a licence or certificate event, not at a fixed age of the log. Flying magazine, citing the FAA, makes this concrete for the US: there is no time limit on aeronautical experience that a commercial pilot applicant has accumulated ((www.flyingmag.com)). The consequence is that a pilot who discards the early volumes of a log may have no document for the hours that sit at the base of a later total. Transport Canada's lost-log rule is a measured demonstration of that cost: the corroboration requirement and the Commercial Pilot Licence ceiling ((tc.canada.ca)) mean an ATPL candidate may find part of the total unsupported.

Accident and incident investigation appears in the texts only as a production power. In the US the NTSB representative and law enforcement officers are among those who may ask to inspect the logbook ((www.ecfr.gov)) ((www.ecfr.gov)), and AOPA notes an inspection need not involve surrendering custody of the logbook ((www.aopa.org)). In the UK the authorised person may be a constable or a person authorised by the CAA ((www.legislation.gov.uk)). We did not read an investigating authority's own text, so we state nothing about what such bodies require.

For the employer records check we found no authority rule, so this report describes no employer requirement. Operator-held flight time records have their own rules and are not covered.

Production Windows Versus Retention: The Date Arithmetic

Table 3 below shows the arithmetic for the four jurisdictions that state a period of years, plus the permanent New Zealand rule. It shows how the clock works, not what a pilot should do. Example A uses a last entry on 14 March 2026. Example B uses a leap day, 29 February 2028, because anniversaries of 29 February do not exist in non-leap years, and the texts read do not say which neighbouring date applies.

Authority and clause	Trigger	Example A: last entry 14 March 2026	Example B: last entry 29 February 2028
United Kingdom, ANO art. 235(5)	"two years beginning with the date of the last entry" ((www.legislation.gov.uk))	Production duty runs 14 Mar 2026 to 13 Mar 2028; first day without the duty: 14 Mar 2028	Runs to 28 Feb 2030 (day before the missing anniversary); first day without the duty: 1 Mar 2030
Germany, section 120 LuftPersV (§ 1 Nr. 2 to 4 personnel only, not pilots)	two years counted from the day of the last entry, for those personnel categories ((www.gesetze-im-internet.de))	Not applicable to pilots	Not applicable to pilots
India, rule 67A (Aircraft Rules, 1937; replaced from 1 January 2027, replacement text not read)	"not less than 5 years after the date of the last entry" ((civilaviation.gov.in))	Earliest disposal: 15 Mar 2031	Earliest disposal: 1 Mar 2033 (later of the two candidates)
Germany, NfL 2212-21	at least five years after the last entry ((www.strassenbau.niedersachsen.de))	Earliest disposal: 15 Mar 2031	Earliest disposal: 1 Mar 2033 (later candidate)
Australia, CASR 61.355	"7 years after the day" of the last entry ((www.legislation.gov.au))	Retain through 14 Mar 2033; earliest disposal: 15 Mar 2033	Earliest disposal: 1 Mar 2035 (later candidate)
New Zealand, rule 61.29(c)	retained permanently ((www.aviation.govt.nz))	No disposal date	No disposal date

Three notes on *Table 3*. First, the arithmetic assumes the whole logbook has one "last entry". A pilot with several bound volumes has several last-entry dates, one per volume, and none of the texts read say whether the clock is per volume or per career; counting per volume is our reading, not an authority statement. Second, the UK date is a production-window end, not a disposal date: a pilot who destroys a log on 14 March 2028 has

not, on the text of article 235(5), breached a retention period, but equally the Order's article 256 refers to a preservation period for logs ((www.legislation.gov.uk)), so the cautious reading is to treat the window end as a floor. Third, "earliest disposal" is arithmetic only. Nothing in the clauses compels disposal at that date, and the events in *Table 2* can ask for hours well after any of these dates.

A worked comparison shows how far apart the clocks run. A pilot whose last entry in a volume is 14 March 2026 may, on the text of the four period-stating rules, face duties ending as early as 13 March 2028 (UK production window), 15 March 2031 (India, German notice) and 15 March 2033 (Australia), while New Zealand has no end. The spread between the shortest and longest stated period is 5 years (7 minus 2). Because a pilot's licence may be validated or converted in a different jurisdiction from the one that issued it, the relevant rule is often the destination authority's, not the one in force when the entry was made.

Paper, Electronic and Other Records

Authorities treat the form of the log differently, and that affects what a pilot actually keeps.

- **FAA (United States).** Section 61.51(a) requires time to be documented "in a manner acceptable to the Administrator" ((www.ecfr.gov)). FAA Advisory Circular 120-78B says electronic recordkeeping under part 61 does not require formal FAA approval, acceptance or authorisation ((www.faa.gov)). AOPA notes the FAA gives no rules on how the record is kept ((www.aopa.org)).
- **Transport Canada.** The only digital-logbook statement found is for foreign pilot applicants, who may email digital logbooks or digital copies of paper logbooks ((tc.canada.ca)). Transport Canada's general page says experience must be entered into a personal log, training record or some other acceptable record ((tc.canada.ca)). We found no statement on electronic personal logs for the routine section 401.08 duty.
- **UK CAA.** Electronic logbooks are acceptable for all types of application provided they have been printed, signed and dated ((www.caa.co.uk)). Schedule 1 allows a log book to be kept in a book or by other means the CAA approves in the particular case ((www.legislation.gov.uk)).
- **EASA and Ireland.** AMC1 FCL.050 says the pilot logbook may be kept in electronic format ((www.easa.europa.eu)), with entries kept readily available to the competent authority ((www.easa.europa.eu)) and paper entries in ink or indelible pencil ((www.easa.europa.eu)). The IAA accepts electronic logbooks on conditions ((www.iaa.ie)). Wikipedia's page says that in Ireland electronic logbooks are not acceptable for the issue of an ATPL ((en.wikipedia.org)); read the IAA page current at the time of application.
- **CASA (Australia).** The logbook can be paper or electronic ((www.casa.gov.au)), a program or app is a listed format ((www.casa.gov.au)), and an electronic logbook is produced as a printed copy ((www.casa.gov.au)) with each page certified as a true copy ((www.legislation.gov.au)).
- **New Zealand.** The Director may approve electronic logbook software ((www.aviation.govt.nz)). A CAA Vector article says it is now possible to seek approval ((www.aviation.govt.nz)) and advises making sure the electronic record is approved and backed up ((www.aviation.govt.nz)).
- **Brazil.** The CIV Digital is defined as a legal electronic document made available by ANAC ((pergamum.anac.gov.br)); only the CIV Digital or an operator declaration proves experience ((pergamum.anac.gov.br)).

ICAO's Annex 1 mentions the personal log book only in notes, for example that maintenance of competency may be recorded in operator records or the personal log book ((ffac.ch)) (read in a hosted copy of the 14th edition; no retention period appears).

Practice we suggest, separate from requirements

The following is our suggestion, not a rule of any authority.

- **Keep signed pages and page totals.** Several authorities certify totals or signatures at the point of use: New Zealand requires certified totals when submitting to the Director ((www.aviation.govt.nz)), and India's rule 67A requires certification at least at the end of each calendar month ((civilaviation.gov.in)).
- **Keep corroborating material.** Standard 421.08 names copies of journey log book entries as corroborating evidence ((tc.canada.ca)), and Brazil accepts an operator's flight-hours declaration ((pergamum.anac.gov.br)). Operator statements of hours are the kind of document a gap in the log can later be rebuilt from.
- **Keep dated exports with a checksum.** An export file with a recorded date and hash lets a pilot show the file has not changed since a given date; this is our practice suggestion, not an authority's.
- **Keep the application forms that recorded your experience.** The FAA treats experience reported on an application as capable of substantiating past experience ((www.faa.gov)).
- **Print on a schedule.** The UK CAA requires printed, signed, dated electronic logbooks for applications ((www.caa.co.uk)) and CASA requires certified printed copies ((www.casa.gov.au)), so an annual signed print is a low-cost hedge.
- **Hold a second copy elsewhere.** A backup in a separate location protects against the loss that Standard 421.08 is written for ((tc.canada.ca)).

Data Analysis and Evidence

The evidence in this topic is textual rather than statistical, but it can be counted. Of the ten authority rows in *Table 1*, the stated periods range from 2 years (the UK production window) to 7 years (Australia), with Germany's notice and India at 5 years and New Zealand at "permanent". Treating each stated number as a data point:

Measure	Value	Source rows
Authorities read	10	*Table 1*
Texts stating a retention period	4 (Germany, Australia, New Zealand, India)	(www.strassenbau.niedersachsen.de) (www.legislation.gov.au) (www.aviation.govt.nz) (civilaviation.gov.in)
Texts stating a production window only	1 (UK, 2 years from last entry)	(www.legislation.gov.uk)
Texts with production on request, no window	3 (US, EASA, Brazil)	(www.ecfr.gov) (www.easa.europa.eu) (pergamum.anac.gov.br)
Texts with no period and no production window	2 (Canada; Ireland's PLAM.024)	(laws-lois.justice.gc.ca) (www.iaa.ie)

Measure	Value	Source rows
Shortest stated period of years	2 years	(www.legislation.gov.uk)
Longest stated number of years	7 years	(www.legislation.gov.au)

Retention periods do appear elsewhere in the same systems. The US instructor-record periods are 3 years ((www.ecfr.gov)) ((www.ecfr.gov)); EASA's approved training organisation records are kept three years after completion ((www.easa.europa.eu)); and the competent authority's records are kept five years by default ((www.easa.europa.eu)). In India, the same Press Information Bureau release states "at least 30 days" for meteorological records ((www.pib.gov.in)) and none for pilot logbooks. Rule-writers evidently state numbers when they mean to, so silence on the pilot's own log reads as a drafting choice; that is our inference, not a statement in any text.

Two differences are worth stating openly. First, Germany's five-year notice is addressed to pilots' logbooks under FCL.050, while the two-year rule in section 120 LuftPersV applies to personnel under § 1 Nr. 2 to 4 (flight engineers, police helicopter flight technicians and air-sports-equipment operators), not to pilots (Luftfahrzeugführer, § 1 Nr. 1) ((www.gesetze-im-internet.de)) ((www.strassenbau.niedersachsen.de)); this is a difference of scope, not a conflict. Second, the text of Wikipedia's UK sentence says "retained for at least 2 years" ((en.wikipedia.org)) while the ANO paragraph speaks of production ((www.legislation.gov.uk)); the number agrees, the legal verb does not.

Implementation Considerations and Process Changes

A practical archive policy follows from the table.

1. **Anchor on the strictest rule that could apply to you.** If a pilot might validate or convert into Australia or New Zealand, the seven-year and permanent rules are the relevant comparators ((www.legislation.gov.au)) ((www.aviation.govt.nz)).
2. **Keep the whole log until the last licence event is finished.** The ATPL and conversion events in *Table 2* ask for cumulative history, and a lost log is the scenario Canada's Standard 421.08 handles with corroboration limits ((tc.canada.ca)).
3. **Treat a production window as a floor.** The UK window and Australia's 7-day period describe how fast you must produce ((www.legislation.gov.au)), which only works if a complete log still exists.
4. **Re-check at each event.** Texts change: Part-FCL text is stated current to 12 November 2026 ((www.legislation.gov.uk)), the Australian regulations were at compilation 103 on 29 September 2026 ((www.legislation.gov.au)), and India's rules change on 1 January 2027 ((www.pib.gov.in)).

Pilots can hold the archive in three ways. A **paper logbook** has the longest track record, and in New Zealand it is the default: an electronic logbook needs the Director's approval of the software ((www.aviation.govt.nz)). A **spreadsheet or general-purpose logbook app** is acceptable to the authorities that accept electronic logs on conditions (printed and signed in the UK ((www.caa.co.uk)), certified print in Australia ((www.casa.gov.au))), but the pilot is responsible for exports and backups. A **dedicated electronic logbook** can add scheduled backups, whole-logbook export, and prints that follow an authority's layout.

Pilot Logbook (pilots.landing.aero) is one such product. It is invitation-only: a pilot can request an invite at pilots.landing.aero. As described by its maker, the logbook can print as a PDF or Word file for an airline interview, a licence application or a checkride, and is built around the pilot's own entries; no independent source supports these capability claims. That is a description of a tool, not evidence that any authority has approved it: this report makes no claim of authority approval, and the rules above (printed and signed in the UK, certified copies in Australia, Director approval of software in New Zealand ((www.aviation.govt.nz))) apply to any electronic logbook. Pilots should verify each feature on the product page before relying on it and read the destination authority's own text. It does not fit every reader: a pilot content with a paper log and a disciplined photocopy routine is served equally well.

Implications and Future Directions

Four developments are visible as of November 2026. India's Bharatiya Vayuyan Niyam, 2026 enters into force on 1 January 2027 ((www.pib.gov.in)); the new text was not read here. New Zealand has opened an approval route for electronic logbook software ((www.aviation.govt.nz)) while the guidance for approvers is still in development ((www.aviation.govt.nz)). In Brazil, proof of experience runs through the CIV Digital, a legal electronic document made available by ANAC ((pergamum.anac.gov.br)). EASA's current consolidation of the aircrew rules is the October 2026 Easy Access Rules ((www.easa.europa.eu)).

The structural implication is that "keep it for the whole career" is sound practice but is a legal requirement only in New Zealand among the authorities read, and a legal requirement for fixed numbers of years in Australia and in India under the Aircraft Rules, 1937 (replaced from 1 January 2027). Germany states five years in an administrative notice of the aviation authorities (NfL 2212-21), which applies to flight operations under the LBA, the Bundeswehr aviation office (LufABw) and the Länder aviation authorities, rather than in the ordinance text. For the US, Canada and EASA states without national periods, the useful standard is the later event's evidence need. Pilots with international careers should expect the destination authority's text to govern the event, not the origin authority's.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

How long should pilots keep logbooks and other flight records?

No single answer exists. Operator-held flight time records have their own rules and are not covered here. Of the ten authorities read, four state a retention period, one a production window, and five carry none in the text read (*Table 1*). The longest stated number is seven years from the last entry in Australia ((www.legislation.gov.au)), and New Zealand says permanently ((www.aviation.govt.nz)).

What are the FAA pilot logbook record keeping requirements?

Section 61.51 requires time to be documented "in a manner acceptable to the Administrator" ((www.ecfr.gov)) and requires the logbook to be presented on reasonable request ((www.ecfr.gov)). No retention period appears in the section, as displayed by the eCFR as of 11/10/2026 ((www.ecfr.gov)). Flight instructors, separately, keep endorsement records for 3 years ((www.ecfr.gov)).

What does EASA FCL.050 say about retention?

FCL.050 requires the pilot to keep a reliable record of all flights flown ((www.easa.europa.eu)); neither it nor AMC1 and GM1 FCL.050, as read in the Easy Access Rules published October 2026 ((www.easa.europa.eu)), state a period. National authorities may add one; Germany's administrative notice NfL 2212-21 does, at five years ((www.strassenbau.niedersachsen.de)).

What are Transport Canada's pilot logbook requirements?

CARs 401.08 requires every applicant for and holder of a flight crew permit, licence or rating to maintain a personal log ((laws-lois.justice.gc.ca)) with the content listed in subsection (2) ((laws-lois.justice.gc.ca)). No retention period appears. Standard 421.08 handles a lost log through an affidavit and corroboration ((tc.canada.ca)).

Should a pilot keep a paper pilot logbook forever?

Forever is a legal requirement only where the text says so (New Zealand ((www.aviation.govt.nz))). Elsewhere it is a practice choice. Our reasoning: keeping paper costs little compared with a gap at an ATPL or conversion event ((tc.canada.ca)).

Do aviation authorities accept electronic pilot logbooks?

Several do, on conditions: the FAA by the "manner acceptable to the Administrator" wording and AC 120-78B ((www.ecfr.gov)) ((www.faa.gov)); the UK CAA if printed, signed and dated ((www.caa.co.uk)); EASA's AMC1 allows electronic format ((www.easa.europa.eu)); CASA allows paper or electronic ((www.casa.gov.au)); New Zealand requires Director approval of the software ((www.aviation.govt.nz)). Check the authority's own current page.

Conclusion

The honest answer to "how long to keep a pilot logbook" is: it depends on the authority, and for several of the largest it is not written down. Australia states seven years from the last entry ((www.legislation.gov.au)), India five under the Aircraft Rules, 1937, which are replaced from 1 January 2027 by rules whose text was not read ((civilaviation.gov.in)), Germany at least five years in the federal logbook notice ((www.strassenbau.niedersachsen.de)) (the two-year rule in section 120 LuftPersV covers other personnel, not pilots ((www.gesetze-im-internet.de))), and New Zealand permanent retention of a bound logbook ((www.aviation.govt.nz)). The United Kingdom states a two-year production window ((www.legislation.gov.uk)), which is a different thing from a retention period. The United States, Canada, EASA, Ireland (PLAM.024) and Brazil texts read state no period ((www.ecfr.gov)) ((laws-lois.justice.gc.ca)) ((www.easa.europa.eu)) ((pergamum.anac.gov.br)).

For a professional pilot, the decision turns on the later events rather than on the clause. Because licence events can ask for cumulative hours ((www.flyingmag.com)) and a lost log is recovered only partially in some regimes ((tc.canada.ca)), keeping the full log, with signed pages, dated exports and a second copy, is a low-cost practice. This report is record-keeping explanation, not legal advice, and a pilot with a specific question should read the authority's current text or ask the authority.

Source links

Links cited in this article, in order of first appearance. Full addresses are provided for readers using extracted text.

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