

Top 7 Strategies for Writing Accounting Procedures

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Wouldn't it be nice if you could find your decorations, costumes, cards and wrapping paper in just seconds and put them away just as quickly after the holiday? You can with a plan! Use these steps below for organizing holiday storage and you'll spend less time on this mundane task and more time celebrating. And don't wait until the holidays, or worse, after the holidays, to read these tips. That's too late. Plan ahead. Start now. Start here...

STEP #1: COLOR CODE STORAGE BOXES. You can buy holiday storage bins, or even ordinary plastic storage bins, in different colors. Or buy containers with different color lids. Or spray paint the exterior of your existing lids appropriate colors. Use all purple for Halloween ornaments and all green and red for Christmas items. That way you'll know at a glance which storage bins to pull for each holiday.

STEP #2: TAKE INVENTORY. List each item in an individual holiday storage container on a sheet of paper. Then put that paper in a translucent sheet protector. Tape the sheet protector to the outside of the bin. You won't have to open each box now to know what's inside.

STEP #3: MAKE A BLUEPRINT. Have you ever struggled to repack decorations into boxes only to find what came out doesn't seem to fit on the return trip? Solve this by mapping the "location" of the items in the boxes in blueprint drawing fashion. Of course you'll have to get everything to fit just so in the boxes the first year. But next year you'll easily be able to duplicate the repacking process by following your packing blueprint.

STEP #4: USE A CODING SYSTEM on holiday storage boxes that tells you in what order to open them. Put the number one on the box that contains the items you'll work with first. Or write "open first" on certain boxes. For example, at Christmas you may typically start with your tree stand, tree lights and/or outdoor lights. Other things you might use first are holiday cooking related items (e.g. Santa or pumpkin cookie cutters), gift wrap and gift tags. Keep other boxes closed until you're ready for those items.

STEP #5: CLUSTER. Two columns of stackable bins that are all orange (for Halloween) in the back corner of your garage are easy to spot. Always group storage boxes together by holiday, even if you can't fit all of the holidays in the same section of the garage, attic or closet.

STEP #6: KEEP A HOLIDAY PLANNER. Keep one three-ring notebook with the inventory sheets mentioned earlier. (This can be in addition to taping the inventory sheets to the individual storage boxes.) You can put all holiday inventory sheets in one notebook and separate the different holiday information with notebook dividers and tabs (sold at office supply stores) labeled Halloween, Christmas, Thanksgiving, etc.

Keep the notebook on your bookshelf year-round. You also can add divided sections to this notebook for holiday recipes, holiday collection lists (so you don't buy duplicate collectibles in a series), holiday gift ideas and holiday card mailing lists.

It's best to do all of these "printable" on your computer and print them versus hand-writing them; that makes for easier updating. You can either put the paper in three-hole punched translucent sheet protectors or leave a wide left margin and three whole punch the paper yourself.

STEP #7: START NOW. Work on your storage plan through every upcoming holiday so that when year two arrives, your plan is in place and complete. It's an investment of time and patience that will benefit you next year and every year thereafter.

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