



# Legal Hold vs Retention Periods

As mentioned before, the two types of Object Lock made available by Amazon S3 are Legal Holds and Retention Periods. Though they both serve the same purpose of protecting an object from being overwritten or removed, they differ from each other in several different key aspects which are discussed below:

**Legal Hold** allows for the indefinite protection of an object version without a predefined time frame. Once applied, it remains in effect until explicitly removed by a user with the **s3:PutObjectLegalHold** permission.

**Retention Period**, on the other hand, is a specific duration during which the object version is protected. After this period expires, the object can be deleted or modified according to the permissions set.

Feature	Legal Hold	Retention Period
Duration	Indefinite, until removed	Fixed, defined at the time of setting
Modification	Can be placed or removed by users with the appropriate permissions	Cannot be altered until the period expires
Purpose	Ensures indefinite protection until no longer needed	Ensures protection for a set time period
WORM Enforcement	Yes	Yes

**Note:** Both Object Lock methods are unified by the Write Once, Read Many (WORM) model, which ensures that data cannot be altered once written.