Place Google Chat messages on hold

As part of your Google Workspace data eDiscovery projects, you can use holds to preserve Chat messages indefinitely to meet legal or preservation obligations. You can apply a hold to individual accounts or all accounts in an organizational unit. Holds override retention rules, so data on hold is protected from your standard information governance rules that might purge it otherwise.

If a user on hold deletes messages, the messages are removed from the user's view. However, the messages are still available to Vault. As long as the hold is in place, you can search and export all messages.

If your Google Workspace administrator deletes a user's account in the Admin console, the user's data is no longer available in Vault and cannot be restored. If you want to hold or retain a user's data, the user must have both Google Workspace and Vault licenses. Learn more about Preserving data for users.

For more information about holds, see the holds FAQ.

> If your Google Workspace administrator removes a user's Vault-supporting license, Vault holds no longer protect the user's data from deletion. Data marked for deletion can be immediately purged and can't be restored. Learn more about Preserving data for users.

Important information about Chat holds

Before you set holds, we recommend you read Get started with holds in Google Vault   and review the Chat messages   supported in Vault.

Expand all | Collapse all

What data can be held

Holding messages in Chat spaces

Deleted messages on hold are always visible in Vault, but not visible to users

Place a hold on Chat messages

1. Sign in to https://vault.google.com   .
2. Click **Matters**.
3. If the matter already exists, click it to open it. Otherwise, create a matter:
   a. Click **Create**.
   b. Enter a name for the matter and, optionally, a description.
   c. Click **Create**.
4. Click **Holds** ⟩ **Create**.
5. Enter a unique name for the hold.
6. Click **Choose service** ⟩ **Chat**.
7. Click **Continue**.
8. Select the scope of the hold:
   - **Specific accounts—**Enter one or more account or group email addresses.
   - **Organizational unit—**Select an organizational unit.
     Note: We strongly recommend that you don't select the top organizational unit. You won't be able to delete any Google Workspace accounts from your organization. Learn more
9. Choose if you want the hold to include messages in Chat spaces.
10. Click **Continue**.
11. Click **Create**.

Edit a hold on Chat messages

You can change some hold parameters, but you can't change the service (Chat to another service) or the scope type (such as accounts to an organizational unit).

1. Sign in to https://vault.google.com .
2. Click **Matters** and then the matter that contains the hold.
3. To change the accounts or organizational units that are covered by the hold:
   a. Click **Scope**.
   b. Add or remove accounts or change the organizational unit.

      Note: You can't add accounts to a hold that covers an organizational unit, and you can't add organizational units to a hold that covers specific accounts.

      If you remove all accounts, you're prompted to delete the hold.

   c. Click **Continue**.
4. To change if the hold applies to messages in Chat spaces:
   a. Click **Scope**.
   b. Click ⬤Include conversations in Chat spaces.
5. Click **Save**.