TuneAIBot

OpenAI API Data Use and Retention: An Overview

Information checked as of November 7, 2026 | A reference summary of key points in OpenAI's official materials.

This document is a high-level summary for general informational purposes only. It is not an official OpenAI document, does not amend or replace OpenAI's policies or contractual terms, and is not legal advice. OpenAI determines its policies and service terms. Users must comply with the current OpenAI policies and terms. Always consult OpenAI's official website for the latest information before relying on this summary.

Key Points

Model training	By default, data sent to the API is not used to train or improve OpenAI models. An organization that explicitly opts in to data sharing is an exception.
Abuse monitoring logs	By default, these are retained for up to 30 days. They may be retained longer when required by law or reasonably necessary to protect OpenAI or a third party from harm.
API application state	Data stored to fulfill an API request varies by feature. Some items, such as files, conversations, threads, and vector stores, may remain until deleted.

1. Use for Training and Model Improvement

OpenAI states that, since March 1, 2023, data sent to the API is not used to train or improve OpenAI models unless the customer explicitly chooses to share it. Check the data controls for your organization or project to review sharing settings.

2. Retention Is Not the Same for Every Type of Data

It is not accurate to assume that all data sent to the API is temporarily stored and then deleted. OpenAI's official materials distinguish at least the following:

- Abuse monitoring logs: May include customer content such as prompts and responses. By default, they are retained for up to 30 days, with legal and safety exceptions.
- Application state: Data stored to provide an API feature. Retention periods and deletion methods depend on the endpoint, parameter, and feature.
- External services: Data sent from the API to a third-party service may be subject to that service's own retention policies.

3. Zero Data Retention (ZDR) and Related Controls

Zero Data Retention and Modified Abuse Monitoring are controls available to eligible customers after OpenAI approval and acceptance of additional requirements. They have endpoint and feature limitations and do not automatically disable all application-state storage.

Do not assume that all data is unretained solely because you use the API or have an Enterprise contract.

TuneAIBot

What to Check When Using the API

Actual data handling depends on the API and your organization and project settings.

- Check data-retention terms for the endpoints, features, and parameters you use (for example, `store`).
- Check whether objects such as Files, Threads, Vector Stores, and Conversations remain stored until deleted, and delete them when appropriate.
- Review organization and project data-sharing settings, ZDR approval status, applicable scope, and exceptions.
- If data is sent to a third-party service or integration, check that provider's data-retention policy as well.

Purpose and Limitations of This Summary

This document is only a reference summary intended to explain OpenAI API data use and retention at a high level. It does not guarantee how any particular contract, implementation, endpoint, or account setting applies. OpenAI has authority over its policies, and users must follow OpenAI's current official policies and terms. If this summary differs from current information, the latest information on OpenAI's official website takes precedence.

Official OpenAI Sources

Data controls in the OpenAI platform
https://developers.openai.com/api/docs/guides/your-data

Enterprise privacy at OpenAI
https://openai.com/enterprise-privacy/

Checked November 7, 2026. OpenAI's official information may change. Check the latest information at the links above before use.