



Week Two: Save copies of what matters most in an emergency.

In a weather emergency, you may not have time to gather the paperwork, vital documents and keepsakes that mean the most to you before evacuating. Take the time now to gather this information together and store it in a safe place.

So what constitutes a document that you would need in an emergency? The first things to add to your “must have” list are your vital records and your insurance policies. These are the documents you will need as soon as you get to safety in the event that you must evacuate.

What are Vital Records?

For each member of your family, you will need the following documents, if applicable:

- Driver’s license
- Birth certificate
- Adoption papers
- Social security cards
- Passports
- Citizenship papers such as “green cards” or naturalization documents
- Marriage license
- Divorce Decrees
- Child custody papers
- Current military ID
- Military discharge (DD Form 214)
- Medical and vaccination records for pets along with current photos and ID chip numbers in case you are separated



You will need copies of all of your policies, including homeowners, renters, flood, earthquake, auto, life, health, disability and long-term care. Bring any insurance cards as well as your Policy Worksheet with the policy numbers and insurance company contact information.

How to Store These Documents

Ideally, you want all of this information quickly accessible to you in the event that you are not able to return to your home. You will want to keep hard copies of your vital documents in a format that is easy to pick up and carry, such as a small waterproof/fireproof safe or box. For insurance policies and other important records, digital storage may be the best option. Uploading scanned copies of your documents to a cloud document storage service or to a thumb drive can ensure that you have access to these files when needed and they are easier to change and carry than hard copies.

Other Documents You May Need

- Property Records: Real estate deeds of trust and mortgage documents (at least the two-page settlement statement provided by the title company showing the actual cost of the house and purchase expenses); rental agreement or lease; auto/boat/RV registration and titles; video, photos or a list of household inventory.
- Medical Information: Immunization and other medical records, prescription information (drug name and dosage), health insurance identification cards, physician names and phone numbers, powers-of-attorney for health care, and living wills.
- Estate planning documents: Wills, trusts, funeral instructions, powers-of-attorney, attorney names and phone numbers.
- Financial records: First two pages of your previous year's federal and state tax returns, stock and bond certificates, investment records, brokerage and retirement account information, credit card, checking and savings account numbers, contact information for credit unions, banks, financial institutions, credit card companies and financial advisers.



Make two copies of your thumb drive and send the second to a trusted friend or relative who lives in a different part of the country.