

Organizing Financial Paperwork

Getting Organized

We've likely all thought about what we would grab should a tornado strike, a flood or fire threaten our home; favourite photos, the family pet or any number of nostalgia items. But what would be the most helpful as you try to reorganize once the emergency is over? What information do you need to have at hand if a disaster or emergency arises and your home becomes inaccessible?

The following chart provides an outline of what information you should save and where it should be stored. A financial binder is a starting place for what documents you should have at home and what will be easily taken when you leave your home in an emergency.

Where to Store Important Documents

Safety Deposit Box	Fireproof Box at Home	Lawyer/Relative/Friend
Automobile titles	Cancelled cheques	Funeral/Burial/special instructions
Birth certificates	Recent tax records	Living will
Citizenship papers	Insurance Policies/Loan Documents	Power of attorney
Death certificates	Living will	Trust documents
List of Personal Property	Power of attorney/Personal Directives	Will (copy or original)
Education degrees/certificates	Original will	Copy of personal and professional directories
Legal documents	Trust documents	
Property deeds	Warranties	
Marriage documents	Copy of items in your financial binder	
Military documents	Back tax records	
Stocks/ bond certificates	Passport	

What's Important when organizing your records for safety and accessibility

- Valuable or hard to replace items should be stored in a safe place such as a safety deposit box at a financial institution
- A lawyer, executor, relative or friend who might assist in case of your incapacitation or death should have easy access to documents that may be needed
- A system of keeping track of important papers will save hours of searching and allow you to cope more effectively in emergency situations – we are calling ours a binder but you can use file folders, a memory stick, shoebox, drawer or whatever works for you
- Plan and evaluate for the storage of all papers in order to be organized.

Why Do I Need a Financial Information Binder?

- Provides a quick reference for information pertaining to your financial situation
- Helps you manage your financial affairs more efficiently
- Should be updated annually or when a significant change occurs
- Store a copy of important binder information in a fireproof box at home, with a friend or use cloud electronic format with the original handy for ongoing use at home.

Suggested Binder Items

- Financial information (e.g. banking information, statements)
- Personal property inventory
- Net worth statement / spending plans
- Goal list
- Loan / mortgage documents
- Income tax information / assessments
- Rental / lease agreements
- Insurance policies (life, auto, home)
- Pension benefit statements
- Birth certificates / immunization records / social insurance cards
- Credit reports
- Pay stubs
- Personal / professional directory

Organizing Your Records

You may wish to organize your sections under tabs such as: **Financial, Personal/Family, Professional, Legal Documents, Inventory, Taxes, Income Statements, Warranties, Insurance, etc.** Use them according to how you decide to organize your records – make it yours!