

In Case of Emergency: What Information Will You Need?



In this day and age, we must be prepared for any natural or man-made disaster. It is important to build a kit that can include essential food, water and supplies to last at least 72 hours. It's also vital to have a communication plan so every family member knows the how to attempt to reach one another after a disaster. The third piece of your disaster plan should be preparing the documents that help you put your life back together after an emergency. The Emergency File is a place to store critical information that will make it easier to recover in the event of a disaster.

Think Ahead

Information can be your greatest asset in an emergency. Your emergency file needs to contain vital information that you would need in a variety of emergency situations. Possible emergencies include:

- Fire
- Natural disasters
- Health crisis
- Theft
- Enemy attack

Contacts, health and insurance information and other critical records can help you react quickly in an emergency.

Gather What's Important

What belongs in the Emergency File? Think of what you would need to recover from a disaster. It's important to have information about:

- Bank accounts
- Investment accounts
- Insurance policies
- Homeowner's insurance policies



- Social security numbers
- Marriage and birth certificates
- Personal property

You are encouraged to maintain a written and photographic inventory of your possessions, including model and serial numbers, so you can estimate the value of your property for insurance or tax purposes in the event of damage or loss. Irreplaceable keepsakes and photographs should be stored in a fire safe box. Consider sending copies of vital records to an out of town friend or relative as an extra precaution.

Keep It Handy

In an emergency, you need to be able to get your emergency file as quickly as possible. Make sure all household members know where the Emergency File is kept. Ideally, this file should be kept on a designated “grab and go” location near an exit.

Keep It Safe

Because it contains all of your family’s critical personal information, it should be protected against identity theft. Keep the emergency file in a locked, portable fire-safe. Carry the key on your keychain.

When a plan is in place for the unexpected, you can feel more secure and confident that your recovery time after an emergency will be shortened.

