

Keeping Your Document Archive Up-To-Date and Handy

Once you have created your emergency document archive, it is important to update both the digital and hard copy files on a regular basis. We suggest you do this at least once a year. Be sure to update photos of all family members and pets. Children, grandchildren and pets grow and change quickly, so you may want to update their photos more often. If your pet looks one way when freshly groomed, but another way when shaved or wooly, you may want to include multiple photos so you have a good representation in both states available. Other times to update your photo and information archive would include, for example, if you move or remodel your home. Remember to include copies of changes to important documents, new bank and brokerage accounts, insurance accounts, etc. Most importantly, know where your Emergency Archive is located, or keep it with your “grab and go” pack.

Recovering Your Documents and Information

In the unfortunate event that you are forced to evacuate your home due to an emergency or disaster, your EnduraVault® Archive will make dealing with government and NGO relief agencies such as the Red Cross and your financial institutions and insurance companies much easier. Your “grab and go” pack should include your EnduraVault binder and/or your CD/DVD or flash drive containing your important information. You will be able to load the flash drive or CD/DVD on any PC and be able to recover your photos, identification information and all important documents.

Need Help?

Are too busy or don't think you have the skills or tools to create your own emergency EndraVault Archive? We'll be happy to do it for you or help you get set up and train you in the steps of preparing your own archive.

The Federal Emergency Management Administration states that personal preparedness is a personal responsibility. As many hurricane victims now know, after weeks, months and years of attempting to establish the identity and value of their losses, much of their frustration could have been mitigated by having their most important documents and photos immediately available in the wake of a disaster.

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Are you prepared?

A guide to preparing copies of important documents and photographs to aid in your recovery in the aftermath of a major disaster.

In addition to food, water, medical supplies and shelter, this guide describes what you will need to expedite recovery following an emergency or disaster.

It has been almost four years since hurricane Katrina struck the Gulf Coast in 2005. Many victims who survived the storm are still struggling to reconstruct their lives because of their inability to adequately identify missing or destroyed property.

Today, many families already have the necessary tools to create and store digital images of photos and important documents.

You Will Need

- Digital camera
- All-in-One Copier/Scanner/Printer or Stand Alone Scanner
- Adobe Acrobat® Professional, Elements or similar software
- WinZip® or similar file compression software
- PC with CD/DVD writing or flash drive (USB port) capability
- Blank CD/DVDs or flash drive

Creating Your Emergency Photo and Document Archive

First and foremost, you should take current photos of your family members and pets. Record the information for each family member, as outlined on the following page. You should also create a photo inventory including interior and exterior photos of your home, as well as multiple photos of your vehicles and valuable personal property.

Next, identify and gather all of your important documents. This guide includes a comprehensive list of the types of documents you should add to your archives. How much or how little you choose to add to your archive is your personal decision. However, the more you include, the easier your recovery process will be in the event of a major disaster.

Depending upon the number of documents and photos you have, creating your archive may be a time consuming process and can done over several sessions. Begin with your most important documents, such as birth certificates, deeds, drivers license, and insurance policies and vehicle certificates of ownership.

Fold Here

Getting Started

① Begin by gathering your tools together (i.e., camera, scanner and software).

Install the required software on your PC and familiarize yourself with its use.

② Next, create a folder on your hard drive named, for example, “Smith Family Emergency Document Archive.”

- Within this folder, create sub-folders for various types of documents, e.g.:
- John Smith - Personal (store John’s personal identification documents here)
- Mary Smith - Personal (store Mary’s personal identification documents)
- Do the same for other family members.

③ Create additional folders for:

- Personal Property (save appraisals and photos of personal property here)
- Pets (save photos, pet license and medical needs for your pets in this folder)
- Real Estate (save deeds and photos of real estate in this folder)
- Vehicles (save ownership certificates and photos of all of your vehicles here)

④ Other folders you may want to create include:

- Address Book/Bookmarks (save backup copy of your eMail address book and browser bookmarks)
- Backups of your Financial Information (save a backup copy of Quicken®, Quickbooks® or Microsoft® Money). Include copies of bank and brokerage statements which can be used to identify your account number as well as the institution’s contact information.

⑤ Once you have created your Archive folders, you can then save copies of your photos and begin scanning your important documents into the appropriate folders.

⑥ When you have completed a session of entering your data, you can then create a .zip file of your Archive folder (this provides you with the means to encrypt and password protect your information). You should then copy your .zip file to a flash drive, CD/DVD or upload your Archive .zip file to a secure web site. Keep your CD/DVD or flash drive in your “grab and go kit,” or in a place where you will have access to it in the wake of a disaster.

*PDF is an acronym for Portable Document Format. PDF is the standard for all documents stored electronically. You may be familiar with PDF files from downloading them from the internet. PDF documents can be created from scanned documents or documents you create in Excel, Word and other applications utilizing Adobe Acrobat Professional or a similar software product.

Personal Information Checklist *(prepare for each family member)*

- Full Name and Nick Name
- Date of Birth/Age
- Height/Weight
- Hair and Eye Color
- Distinguishing Marks (e.g. birthmarks, tattoos)
- Race/Gender
- Blood Type
- Medical Needs/Handicaps
- Recent Photograph (4x6 or 5x7 minimum size, scan or import)
- Birth Certificate (scan Birth Certificate)
- Social Security Account Number (scan SSA card)
- Driver License Number and State of Issue (scan Drivers License)
- Diplomas/Educational Certificates (scan items)
- Professional Licenses (scan items)
- Passport Number (scan Passport page with photo)
- Life Insurance Policy (scan with riders)
- Medical Insurance Policy (scan with riders)
- Medical/Medicare Insurance Card (scan)
- Home Address
- Work/School Address
- Phone Number/Cell Phone Number
- eMail Address

Important Documents Checklist

- Deeds, Homeowner’s Insurance (scan documents)
- Photos of Real Estate (exterior and interior room by room)
- Vehicle Owner’s Certificates (scan documents)
- Vehicle Insurance Policies (scan documents)
- Photos of Vehicles (multiple views including interior photos)
- Personal Property Appraisal Documents (scan)
- Personal Property Photos
- Personal Property Insurance Riders (scan)
- Wills and Trust Documents (scan)
- Corporate/Partnership Documents (scan)
- Photos of Pets
- Pet License Number and Jurisdiction of Issue (scan Pet Licenses)
- Pet Implant Number and Provider (scan)
- Stock and Mutual Fund Records (scan)
- Bank and Brokerage Account Statements (scan)
- Personal Financial Management Software (backup)
- eMail Addresses and Bookmarks (backup)
- Emergency Contact List (include at least one out of the area contact)

Make copies of this page to use as checklists for compiling the necessary information/documents.