

# Prepare in a Year



## 5. Important Documents



**A**fter a major disaster, you may need financial assistance and will want to document any property loss for insurance and income tax purposes. Having ready access to the documents necessary for completing application forms, as well as those which could be difficult to replace, will help reduce delay and frustration. Use a scanner or your cell phone's camera to take pictures of these important items and then put them on an encrypted flash drive. Password protection is important because you don't want private information to fall into someone's hands by accident.

**QUICK TIP:** Strengthen your financial preparedness for disasters and emergencies by downloading FEMA's Emergency Financial First Aid Kit at <http://bit.ly/EFFAK1>

1. Gather property insurance papers (home, renter's, auto, boat, etc.) and make copies.
2. Gather health insurance papers (medical provider, dental provider, life, extended disability, etc.) and make copies.
3. Gather financial papers (bank, investment, retirement, etc.) and make copies.
4. Gather wills, powers of attorney, and estate papers and make copies.
5. Take photos or videos of all valuables as documentation for insurance claims.

If you have physical copies, store these copies and photos in a safe deposit box, fire proof box or in a zipper storage bag in your freezer.

### Checklist of important documents:

- Household (anything to help identify people in your household, children, pets): marriage/birth/death certificates, passport, social security cards, driver's licenses, green card, pet microchip information.
- Financial (anything to help you request insurance and disaster assistance after a disaster): lease/home ownership, vehicle registration, title, loan, utility bills, proof of address, banking accounts, retirement/investment accounts, insurance policies — home, auto, renter's, life, flood, sources of income-paystubs, proof of employer.
- Medical: health/dental insurance, medicare, medicaid, Veteran's benefits, lists of medications, doctor office phone numbers, medical power of attorney, disabilities documentation.
- Emergency contact info: doctor office, dental office, pediatricians, pet vets, employer, supervisor, schools.
- Valuables: photos of valuables, copies of family photos, photos of home.