

Compare making advance preparations to buying insurance - we do it just in case, and hope we never need it. The advance preparations you make now may save you heartache and frustration in the days to come. Prepare now so you can put your mind at ease!

Sources:

*The Disaster Handbook; Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences,
University of Florida*

*Are You Ready? An In-depth Guide to Citizen Preparedness; FEMA (Federal
Emergency Management Agency)*

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Hurricane Preparation for Your Important Documents



Hurricanes and other disasters often occur with little warning.

In the panic that ensues, would you be able to reach for your important documents immediately?



What should you be sure to take? Ask yourself which papers will be needed immediately, which will create a hardship if you don't have them readily available, and which would be difficult to replace if destroyed. Valuable documents to keep in fire and waterproof containers or another secure location during a disaster include:

- Health, dental and prescription insurance cards; health records; list of medications
- Insurance policies and agent or company contact information
- Drivers license or photo ID, Social Security card; checkbook, credit cards, ATM and debit cards
- Birth certificates, marriage, divorce and death certificates; citizenship papers and passports
- Wills, trust agreements, living wills, and other legal documents; adoption and custody papers

- Pay stub (to apply for unemployment compensation if your workplace is destroyed); proof of government program eligibility; retirement papers; income tax records; employee benefits
- Recent bank statements and investment account statements; stock and bond certificates; debt records
- House deed and vehicle titles; home inventory records; receipts for big-ticket items or jewelry
- Pictures to document the current condition of your property, and a camera for documenting after the disaster

- School records, diploma or transcript, resumes, military service records

- A list of emergency contact numbers in and out of state

It is wise to keep original documents in a safety deposit box at a bank. It's also a smart idea to provide copies of valuable records to a lawyer or trusted relative out of state for safekeeping. What you keep with you during a disaster depends on where you will be staying and how secure your documents will be there or elsewhere.

