

Checklist: Getting Organized

Whether you are trying to organize your finances, or you are starting to make estate planning decisions, it is important that you compile the information contained in this checklist, in addition to any other information that you feel is important. Some potential places to store these records include a fireproof safe in your home, a bank safe deposit box, or electronically in an online drive. One benefit to keeping a copy of these records online, is that they are accessible from anywhere, which can be useful if you are traveling or if there is a natural disaster.

Wherever you decide to store these records, it is crucial that someone you trust knows where they are located and has access. For example, if you have named a friend you're a financial power of attorney, your friend needs to have access to your bank accounts, etc. If you have name your sister the executor of your will, then your sister needs to be able to access a copy of the will.

Personal & Family Records

- Social Security card, drivers' license or state ID, passport, & military discharge papers (DD-214)
- Birth certificates for yourself, spouse, and children
- Marriage license and/or proof of divorce, if applicable
- Contact information for your current employer and/or supervisor
- Health, dental, vision, personal property, and/or homeowner's or renter's insurance with contact information of insurance agent(s)
- Usernames and passwords for computers, tablets, phones, online accounts, music sharing sites, etc.
- List of close relatives, friends, neighbors, etc. with their contact information
- Instructions or other messages for surviving spouse or children

Financial Accounts & Property Records

- Account information for checking, savings, credit cards, loans, stocks, bonds, other securities, other assets, and accounts receivable, etc.
- Safe-deposit box bank information, key, and box number
- Proof of car (and/or motorcycle, boat, etc.) ownership, registration, and insurance
- Real estate deed, title policies, mortgages, record of payments, tax receipts, receipts for improvements, etc.
- Income tax returns for last three years, and contact information for tax preparer
- Receipts and appraisals for any personal property of substantial value (e.g., furniture, silver, art, jewelry, etc.)
- Any business ownership and financial records (e.g., for sole proprietors or partnerships)

Estate Planning Documents

- Will, trust, financial power of attorney, and advance directive, with contact information of attorney
- Account information for retirement or pension plans (e.g., IRA, 401k, 403b, etc.)
 - Life insurance policies
 - Funeral or memorial instructions