



Important Documents for Emergency Preparedness

This handout provides a checklist of essential documents to have handy in the event of an emergency evacuation. Keeping these records accessible, protected, and backed up digitally can help ensure a smoother transition during a crisis. Use this guide to prepare documents for a go-bag or stay-box so that you and your loved ones can quickly access important information when needed.

Checklist:

Here are some documents that are important to have at the ready should you ever have to evacuate on short notice (24 Hour Home Care, n.d.; Huntsberry-Lett, n.d.):

- ☐ Physicians Order for Life-Sustaining Treatment (POLST): a medical form that gives patients more autonomy and choice for treatment and wishes at end of life.
- ☐ Advance Healthcare Directive or Medical Power of Attorney (POA): if an individual has appointed you or someone else as their medical power of attorney—the individual that is able to make decisions regarding medical treatment should the principal be unable (Law for Seniors, n.d.)
- ☐ If you have a religious affiliation, information regarding your local religious center and contact person
- ☐ Legal documents such as photo identification, birth certificate, social security, passport, vaccination records, marriage license, wills, deeds, etc.
- ☐ Copies of insurance cards (vehicle, medical, etc.)
- ☐ Copies of credit and debit cards
- ☐ Contact information for family members, caregivers, physicians, etc.
- ☐ List of all medications whether prescribed or over-the-counter (with exact name and dosage), as well as the contact information for the pharmacy and doctor who prescribed the medication
- ☐ List of allergies to food, medications, additives, and preservatives, as well as the severity of the reaction
- ☐ List of information for medical devices that you use such as wheelchairs, walkers, and oxygen machines (including model numbers and vendors)
- ☐ General description of medical conditions and medical history



Things to Keep in Mind:

- In addition to supplies, you should also have copies of important documents sealed and stored somewhere that is easily accessible, such as a go-bag, stay-box, or folder.
- Laminate these files so that they are protected from wear and tear.
- If possible, take photos of these pieces of information with your phone or digital camera in case you lose access to the hardcopies.
- Consider electing to receive your benefits and pay your bills electronically, as a disaster can disrupt mail service. According to the U.S. Department of the Treasury, signing up to receive federal benefits via direct deposit to a checking or savings account or a Direct Express® prepaid debit card are two safe methods (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, n.d.).

Sources

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