

# SAFEGUARDING YOUR VALUABLES

## PROTECTING VALUABLES: CHECKLIST HANDOUT



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You may have little or no time to protect your valuables in a flood, earthquake, or other disaster. By taking simple steps now, you can safeguard your treasured belongings and information from damage or loss.

The first step is to identify what you have. Go through your home to find your treasures. Use the list below to check off your valuables.

- Vital records (birth, marriage, divorce, adoption, child custody, death certificates)
- Passport, driver's license, or other identification documents
- Social Security cards
- Property leases, deeds, mortgages, and records
- Financial documents including copies of pay stubs, bank accounts, etc.
- Legal titles (auto, home)
- Insurance policies
- Wills, living wills, trusts, and powers of attorney
- Recent tax returns
- Medical records including lists of prescription medicines, medical conditions, medical provider contact information, copies of health insurance/Medicare/Medicaid cards, etc.
- Debit/credit card numbers
- Home/bank safe deposit information/keys
- Records of passwords and personal identification numbers (PINs)
- Family photos, keepsakes, jewelry, or other mementos
- Photographic or data inventory of valuables (photos, videos, CD/flash drive)
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

The Protecting Valuables: Tips handout suggests ways to protect these valuables.

# SAFEGUARDING YOUR VALUABLES

## PROTECTING VALUABLES: TIPS HANDOUT



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You can take simple no-cost or low-cost steps to protect your valuables.

- Create a photographic record or inventory of your valuables and store it in a safe deposit box or other off-site location. Consider keeping a copy on a CD or flash drive in your disaster kit, so that you can provide it to your insurance company following a loss; this will allow you to start the insurance/recovery process more quickly.
- Scan important records such as vital records, medical records, and financial documents, and save the files on disk or flash drives. You may also want to password-protect the data you have stored in case of loss or theft. Store the backup records in a safe deposit box or other off-site location.
- If you have too many records or no way to scan/copy them, store them in a flood/fireproof home safe or a safe deposit box. Also consider giving backup copies of important documentation to family members to store for you.
- If you have valuable items stored in a basement, move them to a higher location to avoid water damage.
- Include any readily accessible records, such as medical records, medical contact information, etc., in your disaster kit.
- In some cases, you may be able to protect valuables such as keepsakes in waterproof containers available in sporting goods or hardware stores. For smaller items, a flood/fireproof home safe may provide temporary protection.
- Take precautions to protect yourself from identity theft when you create backup systems to store critical information.

For more ideas on protecting valuables or cleaning them after a flood, consult the following information from FEMA: <http://www.fema.gov/news/newsrelease.fema?id=8495>