

Emergency Preparedness Pointers

Keeping It All Together In The New Year

It's a New Year and you have just got done rotating the stock in your 72 Hour Kit. You paid attention to detail and made sure that the kit has all the food, water, personal items and medicines your household will need in case of an evacuation. But what about your important documents? Below are some of the documents or copies of these documents that should be with your kit:

- ** Will and Insurance Policies
- ** Passports and Social Security Cards
- ** Bank Account (s) Information
- ** Contracts, Deeds, Stocks and Bonds
- ** Immunization and Other Critical Medical Records
- ** Credit Card(s) Information



Many people choose to store these items in a safe deposit box outside their home. This is a very secure choice and will protect these critical documents if a disastrous event occurs to the home. But what if the disastrous event is community wide? What if the event destroys the building that houses the safe deposit box? It is best to have a backup and one way is to keep electronic copies of all your records.

"A good plan implemented today is better than a perfect plan implemented tomorrow."

— Gen. George Patton



While electronic versions of critical documents may not be the perfect answer, they are a relatively inexpensive way to manage documents in a compact form that will easily fit in your 72 hour kit. The question that remains is do you use a DVD or thumb drive back up? The answer is use both, but store them in different locations.

DVD Storage

If you have a recordable DVD drive in your computer you can back up electronic copies to a DVD. Some of the scanned images of documents might be fairly large, but a DVD can store 4.3 GB or more, depending on the type you use. Store the DVD(s) in a hard plastic case away from heat. The DVD(s) should be sent to a friend or relative out of state as an out-of-area back up.

Thumb Drive Storage

Keep a copy of your records with you on a thumb drive. Make sure it is in a safe location in your 72 hour kit where it won't get crushed if your kit gets jostled around during a quick evacuation. Your kit should be stored in a temperature controlled environment so there won't be heat issues for the drive.

Securing The Information

There are a variety of software programs available that allow you to password protect and encrypt files. You can individually lock specific files or place a single password on the thumb drive or DVD for access to all the documents. It is highly recommended that you take this extra security step.

