Budgeting & Getting Organized

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======= Things to Download =======

- **"Budget Smart" Educational Booklet Series -**
  http://martin.ifas.ufl.edu/family_and_consumers.shtml
  1 - Your Financial Fitness 2 - Designing Your Budget
  3 - Banking Basics 4 - Establishing Credit
  5 - Identity Theft 6 - Controlling Debt
  7 - Tips for Daily Savings 8 - Saving for the Future
- **Resume Kit** - http://martin.ifas.ufl.edu/docs/FCS/ResumeKit.pdf
- **Personal Budgeting Kit** -
  http://martin.ifas.ufl.edu/familyServices/BudgetingDIL309.pdf
- **Funeral Planning** - http://martin.ifas.ufl.edu/docs/FCS/funeral.pdf
- **Money Matters** - http://solutionsforyourlife.ufl.edu/families_and_consumers/money_matters/

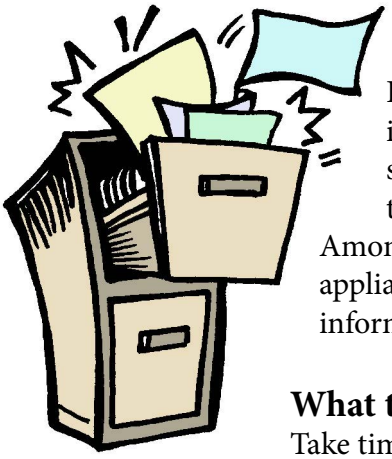
======= In case of Emergency =======

- **Taking Charge: What to do if your identity is stolen** -
  http://www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/pdf-0009-taking-charge.pdf
- **Hurricane Recovery: Cleaning Up the Mess** - http://martin.ifas.ufl.edu/docs/FCS/CleanMess.pdf
- **The Disaster Handbook** - http://disaster.ifas.ufl.edu/default.htm
- **Recovery After Disaster: The Family Financial Toolkit -**
  http://www1.extension.umn.edu/family/tough-times/disaster-recovery/docs/financial-tookit-all.pdf
- **Household and Personal Property Inventory Book -**
  http://web.aces.uiuc.edu/vista/pdf_pubs/houseinv.pdf

- **Guidelines for Shredding and Saving Personal Documents**
  Dept. of Consumer Protection: http://www.ct.gov/dcp/cwp/view.asp?q=410714
- **IRS Publication 552: Recordkeeping for Individuals** - http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p552.pdf

======= Things to Gather Together for your "Emergency Book" =======

- **3-Ring Binder Notebook** - 3 inches or greater
- **Sheet Protectors** (one example) - Office Depot® Brand Top-Loading Sheet Protectors, Standard Weight, Clear, Box Of 100 • Item # 498811 • $12.79 • http://www.officedepot.com/
- **Travel Box** (one example) • Stackable File Tote Box, Letter/Legal Size, 10 13/16"H x 14 1/8"W x 18"D, Blue/Clear Item # 656368 • $14
- **Bills** - paper version, one of each company, include companies paid by bank transfers
- **Passwords** - type each company, website, email used, UserID & Password, locked phone or notebook (ex. iPad), where the bank deposit key is stored
- **Emergency Contacts page** - family, doctors & medicines, legal counsel, homeowners & auto insurance info
- **CD** - make a CD of all your information and date it.



How to organize your financial paperwork

Home-entertainment centers are all the rage, but maybe what your family needs is a "home-information center" — a place and a system for organizing all the stray bits of paper that get tucked into the first convenient spot and then seem to take up permanent residence.

Among the missing-in-action paperwork: bank statements, warranties for household appliances, manuals for all the electronic gear your family got at Christmas, financial information you need for taxes, credit card statements, bills and so on.

What to keep

Take time to read through documents to figure out what they mean. Then ask yourself, "What's the worst thing that can happen if I throw it out? Can I get another copy? Is it something that I'll need later on?"

Keep the most up-to-date copy of information. For example, when you get a new homeowner's insurance policy, toss out the old one, or when you get a new stereo, discard the manual for the one you've just given to the thrift store.

Consider going electronic

Generally it's easier to search for a document on a hard disk drive than by combing through file folders by hand, and it takes up less space. Much of what you get in paper form — mail-order catalogs, owner's manuals, credit card statements — can be found online. So, while you'll want to keep your passport or your birth certificate, you may want to toss all those mail-order catalogs. Scan important documents, and save to a CD backup.

Long-term or short-term storage?

For immediate access storage, most experts recommend folders in a filing cabinet or, if space limitations apply, a spare drawer. However, some people can get along with a binder system or an accordion file.

For long-term storage for important legal and business papers, such as wills, insurance policies, stock certificates and the like, consider paying for a **safe-deposit box or buy a fire-proof box** where these important records can be safely stored. If you choose the fire-proof box option, also consider keeping the papers in waterproof bags to protect against flooding.

Simple solutions work best

Mark due dates for bills on your calendar.

Make a filing framework that can be sorted by month, topic or another method, then possibly subcategories.

Sorting out filing systems

Month-by-month. If you don't have a lot of different suppliers and vendors to pay and don't own a lot of credit cards, setting things up month by month can be a great way to organize your paper files. If you find you have too many bills and statements to sort through each month, you can set up such subcategories as bank, utility, credit card.

Subject or category

Choose topics such as "insurance," "bills to pay," "auto," to file your different papers, file alphabetically. Break things into "his" and "hers" if need be, like medical and autos.

Action - hold onto - reference

Put bills and other items that require a timely response in an "action" file. Legal documents, such as wills or insurance policies, go in a safe place. A separate folder could be for current items that you may need to refer to, such as warranties, receipts for bills paid, etc.

Staying organized

Set achievable goals. Before you know it, you'll be back to being organized.

~ By Jenny McCune • http://www.bankrate.com

••• How long to keep financial records •••

Type of record	Length of time to keep and why
Taxes Returns Canceled checks/receipts (alimony, charitable contributions, mortgage interest and retirement plan contributions) Records for tax deductions taken	**Seven years** • The IRS has three years from your filing date to audit your return if it suspects good-faith errors. • The three-year deadline also applies if you discover a mistake in your return and decide to file an amended return to claim a refund. • The IRS has six years to challenge your return if it thinks you underreported your gross income by 25 percent or more. • There is no time limit if you failed to file your return or filed a fraudulent return.
IRA contribution records	**Permanently** If you made a nondeductible contribution to an IRA, keep the records indefinitely to prove that you already paid tax on this money when the time comes to withdraw.
Retirement/savings plan statements	**From one year to permanently** • Keep the quarterly statements from your 401(k) or other plans until you receive the annual summary; if everything matches up, then shred the quarterlies. • Keep the annual summaries until you retire or close the account.
Bank records	**From one year to permanently** • Go through your checks each year and keep those related to your taxes, business expenses, home improvements and mortgage payments. • Shred those that have no long-term importance.
Brokerage statements	**Until you sell the securities** You need the purchase or sales slips from your brokerage or mutual fund to prove whether you have capital gains or losses at tax time.
Bills	**From one year to permanently** • Go through your bills once a year. • In most cases, when the canceled check from a paid bill has been returned, you can shred the bill. • However, bills for big purchases — such as jewelry, rugs, appliances, antiques, cars, collectibles, furniture, computers, etc. — should be kept in an insurance file for proof of their value in the event of loss or damage.
Credit card receipts and statements	**From 45 days to seven years** • Keep your original receipts until you get your monthly statement; shred the receipts if the two match up. • Keep the statements for seven years if tax-related expenses are documented.

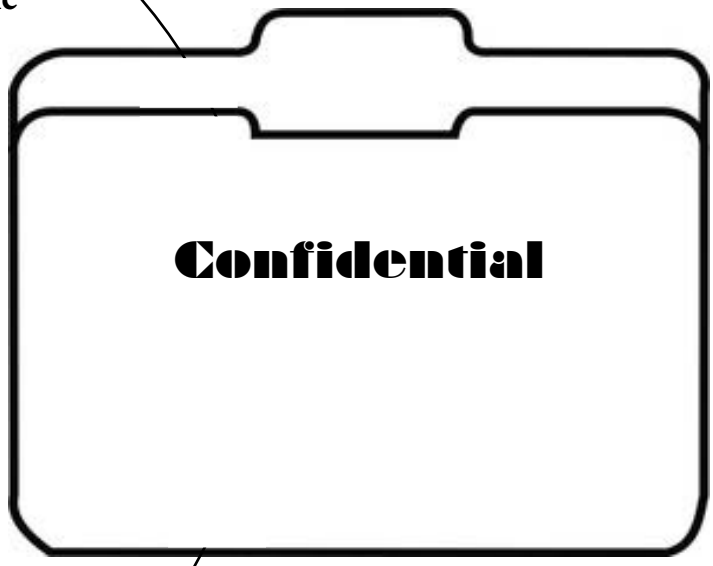
Paycheck stubs	**One year** • When you receive your annual W-2 form from your employer, make sure the information on your stubs matches. • If it does, shred the stubs. • If it doesn't, demand a corrected form, known as a W-2c.
House/condominium records	**From six years to permanently** • Keep all records documenting the purchase price and the cost of all permanent improvements — such as remodeling, additions and installations. • Keep records of expenses incurred in selling and buying the property, such as legal fees and your real estate agent's commission, for six years after you sell your home. • Holding on to these records is important because any improvements you make on your house, as well as expenses in selling it, are added to the original purchase price or cost basis. This adds up to a greater profit (also known as capital gains) when you sell your house. Therefore, you lower your capital gains tax.

Source: Marquette National Bank and Catherine Williams,
President of Consumer Credit Counseling Services of Greater Chicago
http://www.bankrate.com/finance/personal-finance/how-long-to-keep-financial-records.aspx

Documents that should be kept permanently in a fireproof box or home safe

- birth certificate, marriage certificate
- college transcript, diploma
- credit card agreements, loan agreements
- divorce decree and property agreements
- home inventory
- insurance policies
- mortgage documents
- passport (current)
- pension and retirement plan documents
- Social Security cards
- stock purchase agreements
- tax returns
- will and living will

http://www.ct.gov/dcp/cwp/view.asp?q=410714



Remember - Organize, Don't Agonize!

Flyer design: University of Florida - Martin County Cooperative Extension Service