



Getting Your Records in Order Taking Inventory: Valuable Records

Joyce E. Jones, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Personal Finance Specialist



The family is a small business unit, and it deserves to be operated just as efficiently as any other business. Many papers are necessary for managing personal and financial affairs. Some are more important than others, but all need to

be accessible when needed and stored in a safe place.

Receipts, documentation, proofs of ownership, and pieces of identification may be needed to collect insurance or other benefits, complete income tax returns, and settle the estate of a family member. Do you know where all your important records are located? Would someone else know in the event of your injury or death?

Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Fact Sheets are also available on our website at:
<http://osufacts.okstate.edu>

You may wish to keep two copies of this listing of valuable records. One copy needs to be kept in a very safe location, such as in a safe deposit box. A fireproof and burglarproof home safe is another option, although it may not be "tornado proof." The second copy should be kept in a convenient location at home. For security reasons (because of the nature of the information), even the copy kept at home should be stored in as safe a location as possible.

For More Information

Refer to T-4150 and T-4152 in this series.

Name/Family: _____

Date: _____

Copy 1 Stored: _____

Copy 2 Stored: _____

Safe Deposit Box #: _____ At: _____ Key: _____

Personal Information

Family Member Name	Birth Date	Where Birth Certificate Kept*	Social Security Number	Where Social Security Card Kept*

* While adults and responsible youth can carry Social Security cards in their purses or wallets, it may be advisable to keep them in a safer location until they are needed. Birth certificates should be kept in a safe deposit box or fireproof and burglarproof home safe.

Oklahoma State University, in compliance with Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Executive Order 11246 as amended, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and other federal laws and regulations, does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, age, religion, disability, or status as a veteran in any of its policies, practices, or procedures. This includes but is not limited to admissions, employment, financial aid, and educational services.

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Robert E. Whitson, Director of Cooperative Extension Service, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma. This publication is printed and issued by Oklahoma State University as authorized by the Vice President, Dean, and Director of the Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources and has been prepared and distributed at a cost of 20 cents per copy. 0606 GH.

Important Advisers

Type	Name	Address	Telephone
Accountant or Tax Adviser			
Agents (Powers of Attorney)			
Attorney			
Bank or Trust Officer			
Employer, Personnel Officer, or Business Manager			
Executors (Wills)			
Insurance Agents			
Physicians			
Religious Adviser			
Stockbroker, Financial Planner, or Investment Adviser			
Trustees (Trusts)			
Veterinarian			
Other			

Property

Type	Owners	Type of Ownership	Date Acquired	Location and Description	Where Title and Ownership Information Kept*	Additional Information
Real Estate:						
Residences						
Business						
Vacation						
Motor Vehicles						
Other						

* Titles, deeds, leases, and other important ownership information (including documentation of tax basis) should be kept in a safe deposit box or fireproof and burglarproof home safe.

Banking, Savings, and Investments

Type	Financial Institution or Company	Address and Telephone	Owners	Where Records Kept*	Additional Information (if appropriate)			
					Identification Number	Beneficiary	Prices and Values	Dates (Purchase, Maturity, etc.)
Checking Accounts								
Savings Accounts								
Certificates of Deposit								
Money Market Accounts								
Bonds, Treasury Bills, etc.								

* Some savings and investment information (proofs of ownership and other financial records that would be difficult and/or costly to replace, or that could be transferred or accessed illegally in the case of loss or theft) should be kept in a safe deposit box or fireproof and burglarproof home safe. Monthly, quarterly, or annual statements and canceled checks, which generally can be replaced, can be kept in a home business center, file drawer, desk, etc.

Banking, Savings, and Investments (continued)

Type	Financial Institution or Company	Address and Telephone	Owners	Where Records Kept*	Additional Information (if appropriate)			
					Identification Number	Beneficiary	Prices and Values	Dates (Purchase, Maturity, etc.)
Stocks, Mutual Funds, Investment Trusts, etc.								
Individual Retirement Accounts, KEOGH Accounts, Retirement Plans, Pensions, etc.								
Other								

* Some savings and investment information (proofs of ownership and other financial records that would be difficult and/or costly to replace, or that could be transferred or accessed illegally in the case of loss or theft) should be kept in a safe deposit box or fireproof and burglarproof home safe. Monthly, quarterly, or annual statements and canceled checks, which generally can be replaced, can be kept in a home business center, file drawer, desk, etc.

Other Important Records

Group	Record Type	Where Kept*	Additional Information
A	Adoption and Custody Papers		
	Baptismal Records		
	Bills of Sale		
	Citizenship and Naturalization Papers		
	Death Certificates		
	Diplomas		
	Divorce and Separation Papers		
	Easements and Rights-of-Way		
	Household Inventory		
	Irreplaceable Proofs of Income and Tax Deductions		
	Marriage Certificate		
	Military Records		
	Passport (copy of main page)		
	Patents and Copyrights		
	Powers of Attorney (copy)		
	Professional Licenses		
	Property Agreements		
	Wills or Trusts		
B	Education Records		
	Employment Records		
	Family History		
	Funeral and Burial Records		
	Household Inventory (copy)		
	Income and Expense Records		
	Income Tax Returns; Replaceable Proofs of Income and Tax Deductions		
	Medical Records		
	Net Worth Statements		
	Passport		
	Powers of Attorney		
	Safe Deposit Box Inventory		
	Warranties and Care Manuals		
	Wills or Trusts (copy)		
C	Identification Cards		
	Insurance and Medical Information Cards		
	Whom to Notify in Emergency		

* Guideline: The more important the record — and the more expensive, time consuming, or difficult it is to replace — the safer the storage location should be. For some records (will, trust, family history, tax returns, household inventory), you may wish to keep copies in more than one location. **Group A** items generally should be kept in a safe deposit box or fireproof and burglarproof home safe. **Group B** items can generally be kept in a home file or business center, file drawer, desk, etc. **Group C** items should be carried in a purse or wallet.