The Important Documents *Checklist*

Every paper your household needs, in six folders. Tick what you have, write down where the original lives, and mark it once it's scanned. When you're done, one page tells you (and your family) where everything is.

Identification

HAVE	DOCUMENT	WHERE IT'S KEPT	SCANNED
☐	Birth certificates		☐
☐	Social security cards		☐
☐	Passports		☐
☐	Driver's licenses or state IDs		☐
☐	Citizenship or naturalization papers		☐
☐	Marriage certificate		☐

Health

HAVE	DOCUMENT	WHERE IT'S KEPT	SCANNED
☐	Insurance cards (copies)		☐
☐	Health care directives		☐
☐	Vaccination records		☐
☐	Medical records summary		☐
☐	Prescription list (copy)		☐
☐	Dental and vision records		☐

Home and Car

HAVE	DOCUMENT	WHERE IT'S KEPT	SCANNED
☐	Deed or lease		☐
☐	Mortgage papers		☐
☐	Homeowner's or renter's insurance		☐
☐	Car titles and registrations		☐
☐	Auto insurance		☐
☐	Home inventory		☐

Money and Taxes

HAVE	DOCUMENT	WHERE IT'S KEPT	SCANNED
☐	Last seven years of tax returns		☐
☐	Retirement account statements		☐
☐	Investment statements		☐
☐	Life insurance policies		☐
☐	Loan papers		☐
☐	Pension or benefit records		☐

Legal

HAVE	DOCUMENT	WHERE IT'S KEPT	SCANNED
☐	Wills and living wills		☐
☐	Trusts		☐
☐	Power of attorney		☐
☐	Divorce decree		☐
☐	Military discharge		☐
☐	Safe deposit box inventory		☐

Family Records

HAVE	DOCUMENT	WHERE IT'S KEPT	SCANNED
☐	Adoption records		☐
☐	Diplomas and transcripts		☐
☐	Professional certifications		☐
☐	Death certificates		☐
☐	Family history papers		☐
☐	Photo and keepsake list		☐

Where it's kept: write **FB** for the fire and water resistant box, **HF** for the home file, **SD** for the safe deposit box, or the name of the person or office that holds it. Never write account or ID numbers on this page; it only records where things are.

How Long to *Keep It*

The question I'm asked most when we sort paper. This is the general rule of thumb I use, not legal or tax advice; check with your accountant before you shred anything tax-related.

UNTIL IT'S REPLACED

A year or so

- Receipts, until they match the statement
- Bank statements that aren't tax-related
- Insurance policies, until the new one arrives
- Investment statements, until the next one
- Warranties, until they expire
- Loan papers, until the loan is paid off
- Car title, until you sell the car

SEVEN YEARS

Taxes

- Tax returns
- W-2s, 1099s and other income forms
- Receipts and statements behind deductions
- Records for any home office or business
- Prefer less paper? Scan and keep the digital copy

KEEP FOREVER

Vital records

- Birth and death certificates
- Social security cards and passports
- Marriage certificate, divorce decree
- Citizenship or naturalization papers
- Military discharge, adoption records
- Will, trusts, power of attorney
- Life insurance, pension records
- Deed and home sale papers, while you own it

The once-a-year *check*

- ☐ Add this year's tax documents; shred the year that's past seven
- ☐ Swap in new insurance policies and statements
- ☐ Check passport and ID expiration dates
- ☐ Scan anything new and back up the digital folder
- ☐ Update page 1 if anything moved
- ☐ Remind one family member where it all is

My dates

Last checked

Next check

Who else knows where it is

What took me years to figure out: the categories matter less than putting things back. A simple system you keep up beats a detailed one you abandon.

This list tells you where the papers are.

What it doesn't hold is what your family would need in a hard week: who to call, medical details, how the accounts and bills run, and the plan. That's what the Family Emergency Binder is for. Find it at apersonalorganizer.com.

General information only, not legal, tax or financial advice. © A Personal Organizer. For personal use.