

**Abstract:** When one reads the phrase “disaster prep,” bottled water and boarded-up windows may come to mind. But information is also a critical asset to have following a natural or manmade catastrophe. This article describes four specific types of information that everyone needs to keep on hand.

## **4 types of information you need to prepare for disaster**

When you read the phrase “disaster prep,” you may envision bottled water and boarded-up windows. But information is also a critical asset to have following a natural or manmade catastrophe. Here are four specific types of information you need:

- 1. *Personal identification records.*** These documents will enable you to prove the identity of your family members, maintain contact with relatives and employers, and apply for disaster assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (if necessary) after a disaster. These records include driver’s licenses, birth certificates, marriage and divorce licenses, passports, and Social Security cards.
- 2. *Financial and legal documentation.*** This category includes documents related to financial accounts, insurance policies, your estate (for example, your last will and testament), and your tax and ongoing financial obligations, such as your mortgage, car payments and credit cards. You will still be responsible for these obligations after a disaster, so make sure you can access these documents easily.
- 3. *Medical information.*** This includes the names and contact information for your doctors, copies of health insurance policies and identification cards, immunization records, a list of medications you take, and copies of current prescriptions. Such information could be crucial in the immediate aftermath of a disaster.
- 4. *Important financial contacts.*** There may be several different professional advisors you’ll want to contact as soon as possible quickly following a catastrophe. They likely include your insurance agent, attorney, CPA, bank representative and investment advisor. Store their contact information in your mobile phone or, better yet, in a cloud data storage server so you can access it from anywhere.