

WHAT RECORDS SHOULD BE COMPILED?

Personal Profile

Important personal information and records should be gathered and organized, including any of the following that apply:

- Name, address, and telephone number for you and your spouse.
- Dates of birth for you and your spouse.
- Social Security numbers for you and your spouse.
- Parents' names of you and your spouse.
- Your marital status.
- Divorce, alimony, and child support information for you and/or your current spouse.
- Information regarding children from your current marriage (names, addresses, telephone numbers, dates of birth, Social Security numbers).
- Information regarding children from prior marriage(s) - same as above.
- Information regarding other heirs or beneficiaries - same as above.
- Information regarding obligations you or your spouse have (or *will* have upon death) to individuals other than to your spouse or children.
- Driver's license information for you and your spouse.
- Medicare or health care card information for you and your spouse.
- Emergency contact information for you and your spouse.
- Professional service provider information (for example, physician, dentist, attorney, banker, investment advisor, CPA/tax advisor, mortgage company or landlord, employer, pension administrator, health insurance agent, life insurance agent, casualty insurance agent, clergy, real estate broker, veterinarian).
- Utility and household service providers, including account numbers and customer service phone numbers.
- Birth certificates for you and your spouse.
- Marriage license.
- Adoption records.
- Spouse's death certificate.
- Military discharge papers.
- Passport/Visa/Green cards.
- Naturalization papers.

Legal Documents

Certain legal documents for you and your spouse should be included in the organizer, including any of the following that apply:

- Safe deposit box information.
- Durable power of attorney.
- Durable power of attorney for health care.
- Living will/medical directive.
- Organ donation information.
- Will.
- Living trust.
- Testamentary letter.
- Information regarding personal property to be distributed upon death.
- Memorandum disposing of personal property upon death.
- Pre-nuptial, Post-nuptial, and Relationship Agreements.
- Divorce, separation, alimony, maintenance, and child support obligation agreements.

Financial Information

Your organizer should include essential information about the assets you own, including any of the following that apply to you and/or your spouse:

- Bank and brokerage accounts (checking and savings accounts, money market accounts and certificates of deposit, brokerage accounts, and any other liquid assets), including the account number, type of ownership, how the account was obtained (invested, gift, inherited, etc.), its cost basis (for other than checking and savings accounts), estimated current value, and a copy of the most recent statement for each account.
- Real estate owned, including the property description, address, who it is owned by, the location of deeds, title, and title insurance policies, the location of purchase and improvement records, who holds any mortgages, liens, and encumbrances for the property, and the current estimated property value.
- Retirement accounts, including the type of account (traditional IRA, Roth IRA, SEP-IRA, 401(k) plan, Keogh plan, or other company retirement plan or tax-deferred annuity), where the account is held, account number, names of designated beneficiaries, current market value, tax basis (generally zero unless you have made nondeductible contributions or converted your traditional IRAs to Roth IRAs), and a copy of the most recent statements for each account.
- Annuity contracts, including the name of the owner, policy number, company name and address, beneficiary information, estimated current value, and location of relevant statements.
- Business interests (partnerships, LLCs, joint ventures, closely held C or S corporations, and sole proprietorships), including approximate percentage of ownership, estimated current value, and location of supporting documents.
- Trusts that you or your spouse created for which either of you is a beneficiary of the trust income or principal, including the name of trust, type of trust, name of beneficiary, estimated current value, and the location of supporting documents.
- Trusts created by someone else for which you (or your spouse) are a beneficiary of either the trust income or principal (provide the same information as described above).
- Other financial assets (for example, nonbusiness contracts and notes receivable, cash value of life insurance policies, deferred compensation, stock options), including cost basis, estimated current value, and the location of supporting documents.
- Motor vehicles owned, including the make, model, year, vehicle identification number, lender, and estimated current value.
- Motor vehicles leased, including the make, model, and lessor name, address, and phone number.
- Other personal property (for example, jewelry, furs, collections, antiques), including a description, the estimated current value, and the location of supporting documents.
- Summary of liabilities (real estate mortgages, bank loans, credit cards and charge accounts, investment loans, and any other liabilities), including the institution or individual holding the loan, the approximate current amount owed, and a copy of a recent supporting statement.
- Detailed credit card information, including the type of credit card (for example, MasterCard, Visa, American Express, Discover, gasoline, department store, etc.), the card issuer, account number, and the customer service telephone number.
- Monthly or annual income information (for example, gross salary and bonus, Social Security, retirement/pension/annuity, dividends and interest, earnings from business interests, income from trusts, alimony and child support, installment contract income, and net rent or royalty income), including the source of the income and the estimated monthly or annual income amount.
- Copy of the most recent annual employer benefits statements.
- Copy of the most recent annual Social Security statement.

Insurance Information

Keeping all insurance policy information available in one central location is very helpful, including any of the following that apply to you and/or your spouse:

- Life insurance, including the name of the insured, policy number, policy owner if different than the insured, policy type (for example, whole life, universal, variable, term, or other), death benefit amount, estimated cash value, the agent/company's name and address, annual premium amount, outstanding loans, beneficiaries, policy anniversary date, term of coverage, any special policy provisions, date of any change in policy ownership, and where the contract is located.
- Accidental death and dismemberment insurance, including the name of the insured, the agent/company's name and address, policy number, coverage amount, and beneficiaries.
- Business travel accident insurance (same information as above).
- Health care insurance, including the agent/company's name and address, policy number, Medicare number, the primary insured's name, name of the primary insured, name of the secondary insured, names of covered family members, deductible amount, co-pay amount, prescription co-pay amount, and maximum annual and lifetime out-of-pocket expense amounts.
- Medicare supplemental insurance (same information as above).
- Special illness insurance, including the name of the covered person, type of covered illness, agent/company's name and address, policy number, deductible amount, co-pay amount, prescription co-pay amount, and maximum annual and lifetime out-of-pocket expense amounts.
- Long-term care insurance, including the name of the covered person, agent/company's name and address, policy number, coverage daily limits, policy deductible, benefit amount, and number of activities of daily living that must be impaired to qualify for benefits.
- Short-term disability insurance, including the name of the covered person, policy number, agent/company's name and address, benefit amount, length of benefit, and any conditions or restrictions.
- Long-term disability insurance, including the name of the covered person, policy number, benefit percentage, agent/company's name and address, the length of time before coverage begins, and any conditions or restrictions.
- Homeowner's insurance, including the property address/description, policy number, policy type, agent/company's name and address, coverage amount, deductible amount, and policy provisions.
- Homeowner's insurance riders for miscellaneous casualties (same information as above).
- Auto and boat insurance, including the agent/company's name and address, policy number, persons named as covered drivers, their driver's license numbers, and any restrictions or exclusions.

Tax Returns

A copy of the following tax returns should be kept in your organizer (or a notation as to where these tax returns are kept):

- Federal individual income tax return (Form 1040, 1040A or 1040EZ - most recently filed).
- State individual income tax return - most recently filed.
- Estate (and generation-skipping transfer) tax return (Form 706) if filed for predeceased spouse.
- Gift (and generation-skipping transfer) tax return (Form 709 - most recently filed).

Funeral, Burial, and Other Information

Include the following information for which you and/or your spouse would like to make advance planning:

- Funeral and burial information, including funeral home and contact name, cemetery, location of plot, instructions for remains (if cremated), church name and address, instructions for services, clothing to be worn, pallbearers, preferences for donations in lieu of flowers.
- Obituary information.
- Photo to be used for obituary.
- Burial policy and deed information.
- Pet information (who you or your spouse wish to take care of your pet in the event of your disability or death and any special care requirements).