

Family Emergency Binder:

92K_{SHARES}

Create a Family Emergency Binder or a Grab and Go binder to help your family track and plan for emergencies. Never be without the most important information you have to save your family in an emergency.



Do you have one place where you keep all of your important records/documents handy? If ever you had to make a run for it, would you have all of the important documents you needed to rebuild your life? Hopefully, it's in a fireproof location, and in a organized binder where you can find everything quickly. No? Then let's get you started creating your own Family Emergency Binder!

What is a Family Emergency Binder

Unlike a Home Management Binder which includes all things about running your home from scheduling chores to home warranty repairs to everything under the sun, the Family Emergency Binder is geared specifically to managing your family in the case of an emergency. While some may include more for emergency bag checklists and food storage info, the basic Family Emergency Binder should be lean and mean to grab and go.

Why you need a Family Emergency Binder

Not only is having something handy in your house for day to day use good, but in the event of a quick evacuation for something like a hurricane, flood, fire, tornado, earthquake, etc., you want to have something that is easy to grab that has all of your vital information, documents, and notes for your family.

- Proving who you are when returning to your home after a disaster
- Replacing important documents in the event your home is destroyed
- Getting benefits and help if displaced after a disaster may go faster if you have documents

It does not have to be an elaborate 4 binder system with all of your life's history in it, but simply keeping a few pieces of paper in an emergency backpack or tucked away in a drawer somewhere may not be enough if you've fled in panic.

We keep a vital emergency binder handy with the papers we need, plus a separate binder with all of our planning information in it. It houses home inventories, food storage, home warranty info, shopping lists, plans, and more. Our immediate need emergency binder is a 1" binder with all that we would have to have if we had to leave in an emergency. That is what I'm going to be listing here. You can add more information as you need for your family, or go with one of the systems listed below.

What Do I Need to Include in My Emergency Binder?

Emergency Contacts/Numbers

- Family & Friends addresses and phone numbers
- Phone contact trees – if you have a contact tree for schools, church, friends, and family, etc.
- Kids' schools and day care centers
- Important business associates
- Doctors, Dentists, and local hospitals/clinics
- Business and work numbers and contacts
- Utilities – even if you have left home, you need a list of utilities in case you need to contact them for safe return dates, to report a problem or to inquire about your particular location during an emergency. This would include whoever runs your water, electricity, gas, and propane.
- Local non-emergency numbers for police, fire, ambulance, and city

Financial information

- Credit card numbers and phone numbers (plus websites and passwords)
- Insurance card numbers and phone numbers
- Bank Cards, accounts and phone numbers (plus websites and passwords)
- Investments/401K/safety deposit information
- Last two statements from all of your financial accounts – checking, savings, 401K, investments

Copies of vital documents

- Driver's licenses or State Issued ID Cards
- Social security cards
- Credit cards (front and back)
- Military Records
- Adoption/foster records
- Naturalization/Immigration documents
- Church records

Medical Information

- Advanced Care Directives
- Medical Power of Attorney
- Immunization Records
- Medical history if you have serious illnesses/diseases
- Current Prescription lists
- Insurance information – copies of your cards (front and back)

Donna had a great idea to help save space – If you are worried about carrying a lot of paper for your medical info, word process the basics then use the smallest size font you can and print out the information. The space/ size will be greatly reduced. In the aftermath of a localized emergency, to “read” it put on a copy machine and enlarge.

Legal Documents

- Power of Attorney for you
- Power of Attorney for others – if you’ve been given the POA for someone, it is vital to have it with you. While in most cases a copy isn’t a legally binding document, you may gain some leeway over having a copy in an emergency. Plan on keeping your original here.
- Deed and titles to your home and/or cars
- Birth certificates – you can order duplicate official documents from your state agencies
- Wedding licenses
- Wills – again, original documents are the only ones that are legally binding.
- Death Certificates – it may be important to keep a death certificate from a recently deceased family member – this is a judgment call for you.
- Passports
- Car Titles
- Lease information

Insurance

- Insurance Policy with local agent information
- Insurance cards if needed
- Home inventory – Keep copies of your [home inventory](#) if you have lost your home due to a localized emergency and need to go to a field office for your insurance company. While you should always have a copy of this ([including on video/photos](#)) that stays with your local insurance agent, keeping a copy for you to hand in during an emergency might get you on your way to recovery money faster.

Other

- **List of vital websites and passwords** – whether you run a business online, need to be able to get to an email address used by your family or local network.
- **Your Emergency Plan** – you’ve planned everything out with close family and friends. You’ve got a plan on who to call, options of where to meet, call signs for radios, but when you’re in a panic, it may be hard to keep everything straight. Have a plan printed out to refer to.

- **Keys to your vehicles, house and storage spaces**, plus keys to locations you'll be going to in an evacuation if you have a designated spot (key to your parent's house if you go there to ride out the storm.)
- [Emergency ID cards in 4x6 cards](#) (click that link to print your own free) that can be handy for emergency bags as well, or full-sized sheets like these at Your Own Home Store.com
- **Evacuation Checklist** – your plan of attack for sudden evacuations. Don't leave trying to remember what to take to your memory, especially if you haven't drilled the process. In our moments of panic, we tend to lose our focus and our way. Being able to pull out your checklist will allow you to work with purpose and expediency.
- **Maps** — Local and regional map with [planned escape routes](#). We've printed off maps from Google to include in our binder that have shorted routes out of our city, around our city to other checkpoints. It saves the bulk of a full map which we keep in our emergency gear. We just duplicate the quick, important info here and laminate it to keep it clean and wrinkle-free.
- **Photos** – Because we're in an all-digital world now, folks are less likely to print off their precious family photos. But even if you did, do you want to haul those boxes full of photos and scrapbooks if you have to evacuate? Better yet, [scan them and put them on a thumb drive or two](#), and save all of your photos for a day when you can look again. You can also use photo page protectors to include a section in your binder not only for family memories, but identification, as well. [Click here to learn about all of the options for digital storage I shared recently.](#)
- **Cash** – While I advocate having an emergency bag for each member of your family that should contain cash, while also carrying cash on your person at all times, and having cash stashed in your car for emergencies, I feel it's also important to have cash in your emergency binder. Because lives are uprooted during localized emergencies, you may only have one or two pieces of any of the important binders, bags, etc. to carry with you, so important things need to be duplicated in all of them. I don't advocate keeping your entire life savings in your binder, but having a pencil case meant for a school binder full of some coins (for laundromats, vending machines, etc.) and small bills and larger bills (purchasing food gas and accommodations on the go).

DOWNLOAD YOUR FREE EMERGENCY ID CARDS FROM MOM WITH A PREP

Supplies to Create an Emergency Binder

Your binder can be as unique as you are. You can decorate it up, keep it simple, use something other than a binder, or keep it all on a thumb drive (see below). Here are some basic supplies you might need for your own emergency binder. Start from the list and make it your own.

- **Binder** – whether you do a typical 3-ring binder (I like using the [clear view binders](#) that allows me to put in a spine card to identify the binder since we use more than one) or a waterproof notebook, it's important to have something that is handy and that you will use.
- **Index Sheets** – this is great to keep each of the segments of your binder identifiable. You want to be able to get to a section quickly.
- **Page Protectors** – I love [adding page protectors](#) to my binder because it allows me quick in and out access to important documents we use often, gives a bit of protection to those documents. You can also use a [page protector that is an envelope](#) to make sure smaller items don't fall out.
- **Waterproof Pouch** – Because there are a variety of ways your important documents can get wet (fire in your home and the resulting damage), flood, gear getting wet if you do have to leave your home with your 72-hour kit and binder, keeping it protected is a good idea. You can use

this waterproof pouch to tuck your binder into (or get a pouch that is a good size – they even make [2-gallon zip top bags](#) that might work for you, instead).

- **Firebox** – for some families, binders aren't secure enough, so they put all their documents into [lockable firebox](#) for added protection. Just make sure it's not so big that it isn't easy to grab and go!
- **Laminator** – [Using a laminator](#) can help protect documents from harm such as dirt and water. I would only do this to copies, not originals as any kind of altering may make them invalid (according to the Social Security Agency, [laminating your Social Security card](#) can invalidate some of the security features of the card). But you can certainly use one for other documents you want to keep safe. [Laminating pouches make laminating at home super easy now](#). And the great thing is that a laminator is good for other things, especially if you homeschool or are a teacher! Unitaskers are bad!
- **Vacuum Sealer** – [if you already have a vacuum sealer](#) and don't want to invest in a laminator, put your vacuum sealer to work to seal those documents you want to keep safe from water and dirty. And unlike a laminator, vacuum sealing doesn't ruin the document forever. Simply cut open the sealed pouch and pull out your document if you have a great need to do so. This is when you can seal your Social Security Card since it isn't permanent. Plus, you're on the way to some great food storage with this!

Keeping My Security Binder Private

There is an inherent risk of creating a binder with all of your personal and financial information. It's important to keep your binder in a safe and secure location. I recommend in a fire-proof safe or lockbox. While we've been taught to keep all of our important documents in a bank safe deposit vault, it may not be easily accessible in a state of emergency. So you'll have to determine how best to handle these documents for yourself.

Another issue that will come up from the preparedness community is that you've got all of this vital information available for anyone to pick up from the Red Cross table because you've set it down and turned to pay attention to your toddler for a moment. Then poof. It's gone. Forever. And now they have your information.

Consider, as an alternative, to do codes for things to remind you of what they are, without actually writing them out fully. Granted, coding the copies of your vital documents may be hard, but you can disguise your phone numbers, accounts and passwords to hint at what it should be instead of being outright. But make sure your spouse knows the code, too.

The risks are great, no matter what you decide to do. But you have to do something. Don't sit and be so scared of the what-ifs that you don't do anything.

Cyber Emergency Binder – an alternative to a physical binder

Not every localized emergency means that there will be no electricity, internet access or access to printers, computers, etc. Your local emergency could just mean you need to leave your immediate area and go to another neighborhood or city, but just don't have access to things near your house.

If you are uncomfortable having a binder full of vital information in your house, especially if you cannot keep it secure in your location because you room with other people, etc., consider doing a cyber emergency binder also. Even if you do keep a physical one, having one available in

downloadable format may make its access easy if you lose your binder along the way and need to get to those important documents and have access to a computer.

Or [load that information onto a thumb drive](#) that you can tuck into a pocket on the way out the door. You can store multiple thumb drives in different locations, just in case.

Again, it is vitally important for you to understand that uploading your documents onto a cloud on the web, even if you think it's a private place, does not mean that they will ultimately be safe from hackers and people looking for information. You have to make the decision as to whether or not to do it. You can use places like Dropbox.com or a friend's server or even your own website. Just understand that nothing is completely safe and secure, however, having your documents in more than one place allow you greater ability to get copies regardless of the emergency – weigh your options.

What else can I include in my Family Emergency Binder?

Once you've completed your vital Emergency Binder with those documents that are necessary for you to conduct business, gain access to your community, and begin to rebuild your life after an emergency, you can branch out and expand your Family Emergency Binder to include checklists for creating emergency bags for your family, food storage plans for feeding your family in case it is a stay-at-home emergency, etc.

DOWNLOAD YOUR FREE FAMILY BINDER CHECKLIST HERE

Ready Made Resources for Your Family Emergency Binder

Here are some ready-made resources and free downloadables that you can use. Some of these will have the basic lists to record your information for your Vital Family Emergency Binder and move on to full Emergency Planning Systems.

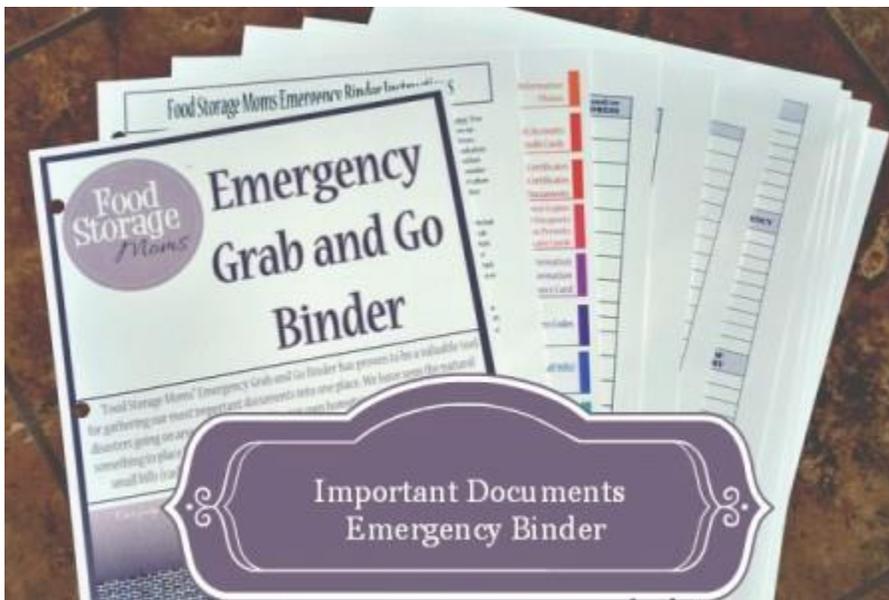
My favorite system is that from Self Reliant School called the **Preparedness Planner and Record Keeper**. It's a great system to track not only the vital information you need in the beginning, but a system to track all of your food storage. You can [read my full review here](#).

The Preparedness Planner and Record Keeper from Self Reliant School



The great benefit to this record keeper is that not only can you track where you've been with what you have, but it helps you create goals of where to move in the future to keep your family more PREPARED.

The Emergency Grab and Go Binder from Food Storage Moms



[A great example of a beefed-up emergency binder + a purchasable e-book with printables from A Bowlful of Lemons](#)



Get a free Family Emergency Binder Starter Kit here

The ever-growing bundle includes:

- Cover sheet and spine printouts
- Index page
- Emergency ID Card printouts (4 up)
- Babysitter's Emergency Worksheet
- Emergency Binder Document checklist

Every newsletter will include another print out to include in your binder, plus you can add more subcategories and your own printouts to watch it grow!

FREE STARTER KIT



Enter your email and click submit to get your FREE Family Emergency Binder Starter kit. Take control of your family's preparedness today!

First Name

Email Address

We use this field to detect spam bots. If you fill this in, you will be marked as a spammer.

SUBMIT We won't send you spam. Unsubscribe at any time. [Powered by ConvertKit](#)

Free Printables:

**PRINT YOUR OWN EMERGENCY ID CARD
FOR YOUR KID'S EMERGENCY BAG**

An emergency ID card for a child named Alex Baldwin. The card is white with a black border and contains the following information: Name: Alex Baldwin; Address: 2390 Pinehurst Austin, TX; Phone: 512-555-6578; Parents' Names: Helene & Frank; Emergency Contact & Phone: Helene - 512-555-2879, Frank - 512-555-2106; Age: 10, Height: 4'8", Weight: 82 lbs; Hair Color: Blonde, Eye Color: Green; Distinguishing marks: Mole on right ear, crescent shaped scar on right knee; Blood Type: A+; Medical Info: Allergic to bees; EpiPen in backpack. The card also features two fingerprint areas labeled 'LEFT THUMB PRINT' and 'RIGHT THUMB PRINT', and a silhouette of a person with a backpack. The website 'www.momwithaprep.com' is printed in the top right corner. At the bottom of the card, there is a logo for 'MOM WITH A PREP' featuring a stylized figure of a person with a backpack.

EMERGENCY ID CARD www.momwithaprep.com

Name: Alex Baldwin
Address: 2390 Pinehurst
Austin, TX
Phone: 512-555-6578
Parents' Names: Helene & Frank
Emergency Contact & Phone
Helene - 512-555-2879
Frank - 512-555-2106
Age: 10 Height: 4'8" Weight: 82 lbs
Hair Color: Blonde Eye Color: Green
Distinguishing marks: Mole on right ear
crescent shaped scar on right knee
Blood Type: A+
Medical Info: Allergic to bees; EpiPen in
backpack

LEFT THUMB PRINT
RIGHT THUMB PRINT
SSN#:

MOM WITH A PREP

[Printable Emergency ID Cards from Mom with a PREP.com](http://www.momwithaprep.com)

