

Sample article for organizations to use to reach customers (415 word count)

Post the following article on your websites and/or use in other communication vehicles to help your customers safeguard their tax records.

Safeguard your tax records against natural disasters

Natural disasters can come without warning, leaving you with little time to prepare, so it's important to keep your tax records safe. By taking a few simple steps, you can safeguard your records against natural disasters.

Create an additional set of electronic records

You should keep a duplicate set of records including bank statements, tax returns, identifications and insurance policies in a safe place, such as a waterproof container, and away from the original set.

Keeping an additional set of records is easier now that many financial institutions provide statements and documents electronically, and much financial information is available on the Internet. Even if the original records are only provided on paper, these can be scanned into an electronic format. This way, you can save them to the cloud, download them to a storage device, such as an external hard drive or USB flash drive, or burn them to a CD or DVD.

Document valuables

Another step you can take to prepare for a disaster is photograph or videotape the contents of your home, especially items of higher value. The IRS [Publication 584](#), Casualty, Disaster and Theft Loss Workbook, can help you compile a room-by-room list of belongings.

A photographic record can help prove the fair market value of items for insurance and casualty loss claims. Ideally, photos should be stored with a friend or family member who lives outside the area.

Update emergency plans

You should review your emergency plans annually. Personal and business situations change over time as do preparedness needs. If you own a business, be sure to update your plan when you hire new employees or make changes to your business functions, then share the update with your employees. Make your plans ahead of time and practice them.

IRS ready to help

If disaster strikes, call 1-866-562-5227 to speak with an IRS specialist trained to handle disaster-related issues.

Back copies of previously-filed tax returns and all attachments, including Forms W-2, can be requested by filing [Form 4506, Request for Copy of Tax Return](#). Alternatively, transcripts showing most line items on these returns can be ordered by calling 1-800-908-9946 or by using [Form 4506T-EZ, Short Form Request for Individual Tax Return Transcript](#) or [Form 4506-T, Request for Transcript of Tax Return](#).