

Be Prepared for Emergencies

As climate change increases the risk of catastrophic wildfires and Berkeley's location near the Hayward fault creates an ever-present risk of earthquakes, it is always important to be prepared for evacuation if disaster strikes. September is National Preparedness Month, which is a great reminder to take steps now to be ready for emergencies. One way to prepare is to create a **Financial First Aid Kit** that contains some of the critical information you will need to begin the recovery process after an emergency evacuation or other incident. This guide compiles information from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and other sources to help you prepare a Financial First Aid Kit for your household.

How to Create a Financial First Aid Kit

1. **Assemble** your documents and information. When using copies of original documents, make sure to scan both sides of each page.
2. **Verify** that the information is correct and up-to-date.
3. **Store** your completed Financial First Aid Kit in a safe location. It's best to save multiple electronic copies on secure devices, in addition to any physical copies.
4. **Update** this file at least once per year.

While the documents in the checklist to the right are a good starting point, keep in mind that this list is not comprehensive. You may need to customize or add to your Financial First Aid Kit based on the needs of your household. See the sources below for more details.

If you believe your Financial First Aid Kit has been stolen or illegally accessed, you should immediately contact all relevant financial and insurance institutions to report the concern.

Sources

(1) FEMA. 2019. *Emergency Financial First Aid Kit (EFFAK): Strengthen Your Financial Preparedness for Disasters and Emergencies*. https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema_effak-toolkit.pdf.

(2) LA City Controller. 2020. "How to Build a Financial First Aid Kit." <https://lacontroller.org/data-stories-and-maps/financialfirstaidkit/>.

(3) Ready Campaign. 2021. National Preparedness Month Information. <https://www.ready.gov/september>.

Document and Information Checklist

Identification Documents

- Driver's license(s) or other photo ID(s)
- Birth certificate(s), adoption/custody papers
- Marriage license or divorce decree
- Social Security card(s)
- Child ID card(s) with photograph, fingerprints/DNA swabs
- Passport(s)/Green Card(s)
- Naturalization papers
- Military ID or discharge papers
- Pet ID(s), proof of ownership or adoption, emotional support letter/service animal certification, microchip information,

Medical Information

- Physician, pediatrician, dentist, medical specialist contacts
- Health insurance, pharmacy card(s)
- Medicare/Medicaid cards
- Immunization, allergy, and dental records
- List of prescriptions/medications
- Disability documents
- Caregiver agency contract or service agreement, living will/power of attorney
- Medical information for pet(s), e.g., veterinarian information, immunization records, prescriptions/medications
- Models, serial numbers, and suppliers for medical equipment

Contacts, Passwords, and Cash

- List of emergency contacts
- List of usernames and passwords
- Cash for daily expenses (physical file only)

Legal and Financial Documents

- Bank/financial institution, investment, and retirement account statements
- Lease/rental agreements
- Mortgage papers/real estate deed of trust
- Home equity line of credit
- Utility bills (e.g., electric, gas, water)
- Other financial obligations (e.g., vehicle loans, credit cards, student loans, alimony/child support payments, elder care facilities, automatic payments)
- Vehicle registration/proof of ownership
- Insurance papers for medical, life, property, renters, auto, pet, flood, funeral, etc.
- Photographs/appraisals of property
- Pay stubs, alimony/child support income
- Contracts to which you are a party
- Government benefit statements (e.g., CalFresh)
- Estate planning papers, wills and trusts, power(s) of attorney
- Rewards accounts (e.g., frequent flyer programs, hotels)



To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
From: Jenny Wong, City Auditor *JW*
Subject: Financial First Aid Kit: A Guide to Emergency Financial Preparedness for Berkeley Residents

INTRODUCTION

To promote Berkeley's financial fitness, my office created a guide to assist residents in preparing a Financial First Aid Kit for their households.

FISCAL IMPACTS

A Financial First Aid Kit can reduce the financial burden on residents in recovering from disasters or emergencies.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

As climate change increases the risk of catastrophic wildfires and Berkeley's location near the Hayward fault creates an ever-present risk of earthquakes, it is always important to be prepared for evacuation if disaster strikes. One way to prepare is to create a Financial First Aid Kit that contains the critical information needed to begin the recovery process after an emergency evacuation or other incident. My office compiled information from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and other sources to create a guide for Berkeley residents to prepare a Financial First Aid Kit for their household.

FEMA recommends that a Financial First Aid kit include key records and contact information that you will need to recover from disasters or emergencies, including identification documents, financial and legal documentation, medical information for all family members and pets, contact information, passwords, and cash. FEMA also recommends that Financial First Aid Kits are stored in a safe location and to save multiple electronic copies on secure devices.

BACKGROUND

Emergencies can lead to unexpected expenses and may also require residents to evacuate their homes with little notice. It is important to be able to access financial information needed to meet basic needs during an emergency situation and to recover after the initial threat of harm has passed.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

There are no identifiable environmental effects or opportunities associated with this item.

CONTACT PERSON

Jenny Wong, City Auditor, City Auditor's Office, 510-981-6750

Attachments:

1: Financial First Aid Kit: A Guide to Emergency Financial Preparedness for Berkeley Residents