



IRS Special Edition Tax Tip 2016-12: IRS Offers Tips to Help You Prepare for Hurricanes, Natural Disasters

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IRS Tax Tips

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Issue Number: IRS Special Edition Tax Tip 2016-12
Inside This Issue

IRS Offers Tips to Help You Prepare for Hurricanes, Natural Disasters

With hurricane season underway, the IRS offers advice to those impacted by storms and other natural disasters. Here are some tips to help you prepare for such events:

- Use Electronic Records.** You may have access to bank and other financial statements online. If so, your statements are already securely stored there. You can also keep an additional set of records electronically. One way is to scan tax records and insurance policies onto an electronic format. You may want to download important records to an external hard drive, USB flash drive or burn them onto CD or DVD. Be sure you keep duplicates of your records in a safe place. For example, store them in a waterproof container away from the originals. If a disaster strikes your home, it may also affect a wide area. If that happens, you may not be able to retrieve the records that are stored in that area.
- Document Valuables.** Take photos or videos of the contents of your home or business. These visual records can help you prove the value of your lost items. They may help with insurance claims or casualty loss deductions on your

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tax return. You should also store these in a safe place. For example, you might store them with a friend or relative who lives out of the area.

- **Count on the IRS for Help.** If you fall victim to a disaster, know that the IRS stands ready to help. You can call the IRS disaster hotline at 866-562-5227 for special help with disaster-related tax issues.
- **Get Copies of Prior Year Tax Records.** If you need a copy of your tax return, you should file [Form 4506](#), Request for Copy of Tax Return. The usual fee per copy is \$50. However, the IRS will waive this fee if you are a victim of a federally declared disaster. If you just need information that shows most line items from your tax return, you can request a free transcript. The quickest way to get a copy of your tax transcript is to use the [Get Transcript](#) application. You can also get it if you call 1-800-908-9946. Two other options are to file [Form 4506T-EZ](#), Short Form Request for Individual Tax Return Transcript, or [Form 4506-T](#), Request for Transcript of Tax Return.

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[IRS Tax Tips](#) provide valuable information throughout the year. IRS.gov offers tax help and info on various topics including common [tax scams](#), [taxpayer rights](#) and more.

Additional IRS Resources:

- [Preparing for a Disaster](#)
- [Publication 584](#), Casualty, Disaster, and Theft Loss Workbook (Personal-Use Property)
- [Publication 584-B](#), Business Casualty, Disaster, and Theft Loss Workbook
- [Publication 547](#), Casualties, Disasters, and Thefts
- [Publication 583](#), Starting a Business and Keeping Records
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