

Preparing You for Emergencies: Emergency Financial First Aid



We live in a vulnerable world where it is likely that ourselves, or someone close to us will be impacted by a disaster. Whether it is an act of terrorism, a natural disaster or some other kind of manmade disaster, we need to be prepared to take care of ourselves. In planning, we have discussed preparing you and your family by keeping 72 hours worth of food, medicine and water on hand. (As a matter of fact, the latest recommendation is to prepare for 3-4 weeks.) This month's *Preparing You for Emergencies* extends beyond 72 hours and delves into your financial recovery.

The Operation Hope Coalition of America, Citizen's Corps and the Federal Emergency Management Agency have teamed together to create the Emergency Financial First Aid Kit (EFFAK). This kit does not cost you any money and is not some get rich scheme. It is a planning tool for you to use to ensure that you have your financial information if flooding, a tornado or fire destroys your house, or a loved one dies as a result of a manmade or natural disaster.

The Emergency Financial First Aid Kit is a simple tool to help Americans minimize the financial impact of a natural disaster or national emergency. It helps users identify and organize key financial records and serves as a quick reference to their most important financial documents. The EFFAK process involves gathering all of your financial information and placing it on a number of forms so that in the event of an emergency you will be able to recover the information to continue your life. The forms guide you through all the information you should have on hand after the emergency. [The forms are provided in a pdf format.](#)



A second product that Operation Hope offers is the companion piece to the EFFAK, [the Personal Disaster Preparedness Guide \(PDPG\)](#) which guides individuals through the survival and recovery steps to be taken prior to an emergency. This guide can be downloaded at the above address.



Once the forms have been completed, you can place a copy of the form in a fire resistant lockbox that can be kept in your home. These lockboxes cost \$50-\$100. This will ensure the information's survival from either structural collapse or fire. To further ensure that you have access to these financial records, you could scan the forms into a computer and create a password protected CD with all the information on it. This CD could be sent to a close relative or trusted friend. In the event of a disaster they would be able to return the CD to you or print the forms out for you. If you rent a safety deposit box, you might want to place a copy of the CD or the forms in the box. Finally, a copy of the CD or the forms could be kept by your attorney or accountant

and returned to you after the emergency or provided to your spouse or family in the event of your death.

Initially completing these forms will take some time, but it will benefit you immensely in the event of a major disaster. Annual updates will not take as much time, but are absolutely needed to ensure the information is up-to-date.