

MetroWest

June 2014

Drayton Dossier: 7 Ways to Keep Important Documents Protected

We live in a digital world, but that doesn't mean paper has disappeared. Social security cards, birth certificates, wills and other important documents still need to be protected.

What to Protect — Not sure which documents are the "important" ones? Experts recommend safekeeping insurance policies, passports, family photos and other indispensable records.

Keep It Together — Store important documents in a portable, lockable home safe—preferably fire and water resistant—that can be easily located in an emergency.

Fire Prevention — Fireproof boxes are a great backup plan. But preventing house fires in the first place can bring peace of mind to every homeowner.

Burglarproof Your Home — Make sure all windows and doors are locked when you leave. A dog's bark (large or small!) is an excellent deterrent. Security systems and surveillance cameras, along with a warning sign, can deter would-be criminals.

Offsite Storage — Keep important documents at your attorney's office or with a trusted relative. Just remember that a bank safe-deposit box may not always be the best option.

Create Digital Backups — Scan everything. A CD, flash drive or an external hard drive can be kept in a separate location, or you can use an online storage service that can be accessed from any computer.

Get Rid of It — Identity theft is a concern for many consumers. One way to protect yourself is to shred documents that you don't need anymore. Old bank statements, credit card offers and pay stubs are great candidates for the crosscut shredder.