



Van Percy, MBA, RFC
Branch Manager & Financial
Advisor
2020 West Cuthbert Avenue
Midland, TX 79701-5728
432-683-0000
800-575-9220
van.pearcy@raymondjames.com
www.vanpearcy.com

Organizing Important Records and Documents

RAYMOND JAMES®
FINANCIAL SERVICES, INC.
Member FINRA/SIPC

October 05, 2010

RAYMOND JAMES®

Organizing Important Records and Documents

What is it?

Organize important records and documents using a record-keeping system

A record-keeping system is a systematic approach to retaining and filing documents in a way that makes them easy to find when needed, even if it's several years later. Record-keeping systems range from simple to elaborate and from basic to comprehensive. The ideal system is designed to fit your personal and family situation and lifestyle.

Some record keeping is mandatory; good record keeping is important

The most important thing to know about record keeping is that doing it well will save you a lot of time and money during your lifetime. Conversely, poor record keeping is sure to cost you in terms of money, time, and aggravation, perhaps dearly. For instance, assuming that you've been generally honest with the IRS, the only reason to fear a tax audit is that your records are incomplete or in disarray. If so, the IRS could find that you owe more tax than you paid. Insurance and legal claims frequently require supporting documents as well.

Record keeping is also important for estate planning purposes. After you pass away, your family and the executor of your estate will be grateful to find your records complete and in a meaningful order.

It is up to you to decide what your record-keeping system will include

The items you decide to retain in your record-keeping system will depend on several factors, including:

- Your personal and family situation
- The nature of your assets and investments
- Your household's number and type of income sources
- Your tolerance for risk
- The time you'll realistically devote to keeping records systematically

In addition to financial documents, you'll probably want your system to retain other types of important documents, such as insurance policies; health and employment records; property titles; certificates of birth, death, and citizenship; and product and service guarantees. Today, it is also common to videotape personal property for potential use as evidence in an insurance claim.

Create a record-keeping system that works best for you

If throwing all your receipts, bills, and paycheck stubs into the proverbial shoe box until tax time is the best you can manage, then it will have to do. However, devising a systematic approach to retaining and filing your important documents will bring rewards you will appreciate in the future. If you can find little time for record keeping, then a simple system may be the answer. On the other hand, a more complex system that retains and files all potentially necessary documents on a weekly or monthly basis assures that when a need arises, you'll be able to retrieve whatever you need promptly and without fuss. You might view this as pay now or pay later.

For information on setting up a record-keeping system, see *Gathering the Data: Use of Record-Keeping Systems*.

Accessibility and security should determine where you store records

It is usually best to store original documents that you must or want to protect from harm in a safety-deposit box, typically rented at your local bank. This provides important protection against fire and theft. Keep a reference copy of the documents in your more readily accessible files and note on them the location of the originals.

Older files that will likely require infrequent access can be stored in any relatively secure place provided that they will not be prone to damage or destruction. Files pertaining to the last 6 to 12 months should be readily accessible.

Caution: Never store your will in a safety-deposit box unless you've left a copy elsewhere or you lease the box jointly. Otherwise, the box may be sealed at the time of your death, leaving your spouse or executor searching for another copy.



Van Pearcy, MBA, RFC
Branch Manager & Financial
Advisor
2020 West Cuthbert Avenue
Midland, TX 79701-5728
432-683-0000
800-575-9220
van.pearcy@raymondjames.com
www.vanpearcy.com

This information, developed by an independent third party, has been obtained from sources considered to be reliable, but Raymond James Financial Services, Inc. does not guarantee that the foregoing material is accurate or complete. This information is not a complete summary or statement of all available data necessary for making an investment decision and does not constitute a recommendation. The information contained in this report does not purport to be a complete description of the securities, markets, or developments referred to in this material. This information is not intended as a solicitation or an offer to buy or sell any security referred to herein. Investments mentioned may not be suitable for all investors. The material is general in nature. Past performance may not be indicative of future results. Raymond James Financial Services, Inc. does not provide advice on tax, legal or mortgage issues. These matters should be discussed with the appropriate professional.

Securities offered through Raymond James Financial Services, Inc., member FINRA/SIPC, an independent broker/dealer, and are not insured by FDIC, NCUA or any other government agency, are not deposits or obligations of the financial institution, are not guaranteed by the financial institution, and are subject to risks, including the possible loss of principal.

VAN PEARCY'S
★
WEALTH SERVICES TEAM
An Independent Firm

Prepared by Forefield Inc. Copyright 2010 Forefield Inc.