

Emergency Binder Starter Checklist

A simple printable checklist to help your household find important documents, passwords, family photos, accounts, and emergency information before anything goes wrong.

The Starter Checklist

Tick off what you already have, and note what to gather — you don't have to finish it in one sitting.

Start here: Begin with three things — IDs, emergency contacts, and photo backup. You can add the rest later.

1. Personal IDs & Records

- Copy/location of birth certificates
- Copy/location of passports
- Copy/location of driver's licenses or photo IDs
- Social Security card / number location
- Copy/location of marriage, name-change, or custody records

3. Insurance

- Home or renter's policy location
- Auto policy location
- Health / life policy locations
- Provider names and policy numbers noted
- Claims phone numbers listed

5. Home & Vehicle Records

- Lease, mortgage, or deed location
- Vehicle title / registration location
- Utility account info noted
- Warranties and manuals collected
- Spare keys and access notes

7. Family Photos & Digital Files

- Main photo library location identified
- Backup location for photos noted
- Important documents scanned or saved
- Sentimental files gathered in one place
- Old phones / drives checked for files

9. Storage Locations

- Where the binder itself is kept
- Where digital copies live
- Who has a spare key or access
- Safe / lockbox location noted
- One off-site copy considered

2. Medical Information

- List of medications and dosages
- Allergies and key conditions noted
- Doctor and pharmacy contact info
- Health card / insurance card locations
- Vaccination or immunization records

4. Financial Accounts

- List of bank accounts (where, not balances)
- Credit cards and lenders noted
- Recurring bills and autopay listed
- Investment / retirement account locations
- Tax document storage location

6. Passwords & Digital Access

- Where passwords are stored — not the passwords themselves
- Password manager name noted, if used
- Primary email account identified
- Two-factor / recovery method location noted
- Trusted person knows where this is kept

8. Emergency Contacts

- Family and next-of-kin contacts listed
- Neighbour or nearby friend noted
- Family doctor and pharmacy listed
- Workplace or school contacts noted
- Pet care / vet contact, if relevant

Where to Find It Worksheet

Use this page to record locations, not sensitive details. Do not write passwords on this worksheet. Record where your password manager or password record is stored.

Item / Document / Account	Where the physical copy is	Where the digital copy is	Who knows where it is	Last reviewed
Passports				
Birth certificates				
Home insurance policy				
Auto registration & title				
Bank account list				
Medication & medical list				
Family photo library				
Password storage location				
Will or estate documents				
Tax records				
Lease / mortgage / deed				
Emergency contact list				

Tip: A location can be as simple as “top drawer, home office” or “cloud photo account.” Keep this sheet with the binder, not loose.

Digital Safety Mini-Checklist

A short, plain-language list to help your household's photos, files, and accounts stay findable. Use whatever tools you already have — there's no single right product.

- Family photos are backed up in more than one place

- At least one backup is not only on your phone

- Phone backup is turned on

- Computer backup is turned on

- Your main cloud photo account is identified

- Where passwords are stored is documented (a manager or another method)

- Important digital files are collected in one place

- Subscriptions and recurring accounts are listed

- Shared or emergency access is noted where it makes sense

- Old devices have been checked for photos and files

- One trusted person knows where the digital emergency info is kept

Why two places? If a phone is lost or a drive fails, a second copy means your photos and files are still there. That's the whole idea — keep things findable.

A Simple Update Routine

Keeping this current takes only a few minutes. Pick a rhythm that fits your household.

1. First setup — 30–60 minutes

Do this once to get started.

- Print this checklist and the worksheet
- Gather what's easy to find first
- Note locations on the worksheet
- Tell one trusted person where it's kept

2. Monthly — 10 minutes

A quick glance to stay current.

- Add anything new (account, document, contact)
- Confirm a backup ran recently
- Cross off anything no longer needed

3. Twice yearly — 20 minutes

A slightly deeper check-in.

- Review each section for changes
- Confirm photo and file backups are working
- Update insurance, financial, and contact info
- Refresh the “last reviewed” dates

4. After major life changes

Update soon after any of these:

- Moving • new phone or computer • new bank or insurance account
- Birth or adoption • marriage or divorce • death in the family
- Major medical change • new home, car, or job

This checklist is meant to make household information easier to find. It is not legal, financial, medical, tax, estate planning, or cybersecurity advice. For decisions in those areas, consult a qualified professional.