

12.0 REPLACING LOST DOCUMENTS

This outline provides information on how to go about replacing documents lost, destroyed, or damaged during a disaster.

12.1 U.S. Mail Service

Evacuees can call 800-ASK-USPS (275-8777) for assistance, which is also the number to call for mail or identity theft.

TDD/TTY Relay: Call 1-800-877-8339. Ask for 1-800-275-8777.

12.2 Bank and Investments Accounts

If you don't have an ATM card or your bank has been destroyed, the first step should be to contact a branch of your bank. For additional information, visit <http://www.fdic.gov>.

12.3 Credit Cards

If you find that your credit cards were lost or left behind, your best option is to call the bank that issued the card and get a new one as soon as possible. Many issuers are bending the rules and waiving payments, late fees, and over limit fees. When personal documents and credit cards are floating around, authorities suggest that people should be on guard against identity theft. One of the steps people can take is to put a fraud alert on their credit report. Call TransUnion: 800-680-7289 (<https://www.transunion.com/fraud-victim-resource/place-fraud-alert>), Experian: 888-397-3742 (<https://www.experian.com/fraud/center.html>), or Equifax: 800-525-6285 (<https://www.alerts.equifax.com>).

See also <https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0275-place-fraud-alert>.

12.4 Children's Immunization Records (Texas)

The statewide immunization registry, known as ImmTrac2, will keep an electronic immunization record for those children that have registered. Information contained in the registry includes the child's name, date-of-birth, address, the name of the parent or guardian, information on the shots given, and who gave them. Optional information stored in ImmTrac2 is the child's Social Security number and mother's maiden name. This optional information helps prevent duplicate records from being created.

Immunization information is available only to persons authorized by law to see it. Only doctors, schools, childcare centers, and public health providers with ImmTrac2-issued identification numbers and passwords may view the information. More information can be found at:

Texas Department of State Health Services
DSHS Immunization Unit
MC1946, P.O. Box 149347
Austin, TX 78714-9347

Phone: 800.252.9152
<http://www.dshs.texas.gov/immunize/immtrac>

See also FAQs: <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/immunize/parents.shtm> and <http://www.dshs.texas.gov/immunize/immtrac/FAQs.shtm>.

12.5 Deeds and Mortgages

These records are maintained by the clerk of court for the county where the property is located. If the deed or mortgage was filed for record, it will be accessible here.

For example, for Houston (Harris County), see <http://www.hcdistrictclerk.com/Common/Default.aspx>.

12.6 Driver's License

To replace your Texas driver's license, you must—

1. visit any Texas Driver License office;
2. submit a completed Application for Renewal/Replacement/Change (Form DL-43: <http://www.dps.texas.gov/internetforms/Forms/DL-43.pdf>);
3. present proof of identity (one primary document (e.g., passport, military ID) and one secondary form (e.g., birth certificate issued by Department of Health, see <http://www.dps.texas.gov/DriverLicense/identificationrequirements.htm>); and
4. pay the required fee (\$11).

If you have not previously provided the following documentation you will also need to present proof of lawful presence in the U.S., if not a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident and your Social Security number. Information on replacing your Texas driver's license can be found on the following website: <http://www.dmv.org/tx-texas/replace-license.php>.

12.7 Food Stamps/SNAP Benefits, ATP Card, and EBT Card

The Federal Food Stamp Program is the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). See <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap>.

USDA can authorize the issuance of emergency SNAP benefits when there is a presidentially declared emergency or when grocery stores or other regular commercial food supply channels have been restored following a disaster. The D-SNAP (Disaster SNAP) system operates under a different set of eligibility and benefit delivery requirements than the regular SNAP. People who might not ordinarily qualify for SNAP benefits may be eligible under the disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program if they have had disaster damage to their homes, or expenses related to protecting their homes, or if they have lost income as a result of the disaster, or do not have access to bank accounts or other resources.

For further information regarding the SNAP program as administered in Texas, visit <http://yourtexasbenefits.hhsc.texas.gov/programs/snap/> or call 2-1-1 or 1-877-541-7905. For Texas D-SNAP information, visit <https://hhs.texas.gov/services/financial/disaster-assistance/disaster-snap>.

12.8 Immigration Documents

If you are a permanent resident who needs to replace your (green) card, or a conditional resident who needs to replace your two-year card that has been lost or destroyed, you may apply for a replacement card by filing a USCIS Form I-90 (<https://www.uscis.gov/i-90>, or for e-filing, <https://www.uscis.gov/file-online/file-form-i-90-online>). For further assistance, visit <https://www.uscis.gov/green-card/after-green-card-granted/replace-green-card> and click on the “Forms” tab.

12.9 Insurance Documents

Contact your insurance agency. For information regarding flood insurance issued by the National Flood Insurance Program, see <https://www.fema.gov/national-flood-insurance-program>.

12.10 Medicare/Medicaid Cards

For Medicare cards, visit the Social Security Administration office and request a replacement card or access the Social Security website at <https://www.hhs.gov/answers/medicare-and-medicaid/how-do-i-replace-my-medicare-card/index.html>, or <https://faq.ssa.gov/en-us/Topic/article/KA-01735>.

You may also call the National Social Security Hotline at 1-800-772-1213.

For Medicaid cards, contact the state Medicaid office by visiting <https://hhs.texas.gov/services/health/medicaid-chip/programs/your-texas-benefits-medicaid-id-card> or calling toll-free 1-855-827-3748.

12.11 Social Security Cards and Payments

If you depend on Social Security benefits, you will need to contact the Social Security Administration to verify your Social Security number. It’s not always necessary to have your Social Security card with you to verify your identity. There’s a form that people must fill out with their background information.

Social Security checks should be direct deposited or put on your SSA issued credit card. If you have a payment problem, go to the nearest office of the Social Security Administration. To find those locations, call 800-772-1213 (TTY 800-325-0778) or <https://secure.ssa.gov/ICON/main.jsp>. You will be able to get emergency payments if necessary. The Houston offices are located at: 8989 Lakes at 610 Dr, Houston TX 77054, 5414 Aldine Mail Rte Rd, Houston TX 77039, and 10703 Stancliff Rd, Houston, TX 77099. For more information, log onto www.socialsecurity.gov/emergency.

12.12 Passports

Passports may be obtained by calling 1-877-487-2778 (TTY 1-888-874-7793) or through <https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/passports.html>.

12.13 Wills or Other Estate Planning Documents

In Texas, if a testator has lost his original will, he should execute a new will, even when copies are available, because Texas law imposes many burdens on those trying to probate a lost original will. If someone has lost the original will, a copy can be submitted to probate. To probate a lost will, three things must be proved: (1) due execution (e.g., witness testifies that testator appropriately executed the will), (2) cause of the will's nonproduction, which overcomes the presumption of revocation (e.g., witness testifies that the will was last seen in the house that was destroyed), and (3) contents of the will, either with a copy or by a witness who is familiar with the contents. If there are no originals or copies now in existence, then a new will should be executed. Under Texas law, if a person dies and his/her will cannot be proved, the person is considered to have died intestate.

As a practical matter, it may be necessary to draft a new will due to the dramatic change in property value/ownership due to a disaster. Specific bequests may fail if property has been destroyed. The prior will may not adequately deal with insurance proceeds as replacement for specific bequests.