

Tax Tips

Keeping Documents Secure Yet Accessible

(NAPSA)—Whether you prepare your own returns or have someone else do them, you can make tax season a little less taxing by getting organized.

Make Use Of Your Resources

Utilize the Internet's free services. There are countless articles on organization as well as free downloadable tax organizers that will guide you through the beginning stages of preparing tax papers. Also, there is a wealth of information on the IRS Web site.

While gathering all the documents necessary to file tax work, make notes of which steps are the most time consuming. Pay close attention to organizing those areas to make filing next year a breeze.

Copy And Secure

As soon as your paperwork is prepared and ready to be filed, make a copy along with all the supporting documentation. According to the IRS, most records only need to be kept for three years, but some documents (such as records relating to a home purchase or sale and stock transactions) should be kept longer.

After copies have been made, place all documents in a central location that is safe and secure, such as a fire-resistant security safe or filing chest. For example, the SentrySafe HD4100 allows consumers to keep hanging files neatly organized and accessible while protecting important information from floods, fires and prying eyes. Plus, the purchase price is tax deductible.

Moving Forward

To prevent tax organization from being an annual chore, start by designating a place to put bills, receipts and other vital documents. Then, once a month, go through papers,



A fire-resistant, waterproof safe can be an effective way to protect legal papers and tax records while keeping them readily accessible.

pay the bills and file the rest. At year's end, take out what you need and throw away everything else.

Keep important family documents (birth and marriage certificates, Social Security cards, insurance policies, etc.) in a safety-deposit box or a fire-resistant safe. A fire-resistant SentrySafe will secure these documents, especially in the case of fire and/or water damage.

Finally, create a family binder for papers that you use regularly—take-out menus, season passes to museums or sports games, frequently used phone numbers, etc.—and keep the binder in an easily accessible place.

For more tax-time tips, visit www.irs.gov. SentrySafe products are available in-store or online at Wal-Mart, Target, Costco, Sam's Club, Lowe's, The Home Depot, Office Depot, Staples, Sears and more. For additional information, visit www.sentrysafe.com.