

With all the recent devastation from the hurricanes, we along with IRS would like to remind taxpayers to prepare for hurricanes and other natural disasters. By taking a few steps before disaster strikes, taxpayers can reduce their stress when it comes time to file claims or rebuild after the catastrophic event.

Here are some things to consider:

- **Update Emergency Plans** — Because a disaster can strike any time, be sure to review emergency plans annually. Personal and business situations change over time, as do preparedness needs. Make plans ahead of time and be sure to practice them.
- **Create Electronic Copies of Documents** — Taxpayers should keep a duplicate set of key documents. Keep documents including bank statements, tax returns and insurance policies in a safe place. Doing so is easier now that many financial institutions provide statements and documents electronically, available on the Internet. Even if original documents are available only on paper, scan them into an electronic format and store them on DVD, CD or cloud storage.
- **Document Valuables** — It's a good idea to photograph or videotape the contents of any home, especially items of higher value. Documenting these items ahead of time will make it easier to claim insurance and tax benefits after a disaster strikes. The IRS has a disaster loss workbook, [Publication 584](#), which can help taxpayers compile a room-by-room list of belongings. Photographs can help prove the fair market value of items for insurance and casualty loss claims.
- **IRS Ready to Help** — In the case of a federally declared disaster, impacted taxpayers can call 866-562-5227 to speak with an IRS specialist trained to handle disaster-related issues. Taxpayers can request copies of previously filed tax returns and attachments, including Forms W-2, by filing [Form 4506, Request for Copy of Tax Return](#). Alternatively, order transcripts showing most line items through the Get Transcript link on IRS.gov, by calling 800-908-9946 or by using [Form 4506T-EZ, Short Form Request for Individual Tax Return Transcript](#) or [Form 4506-T, Request for Transcript of Tax Return](#).