

## FINRA Podcast

### Disaster Planning—5 Things to Put in Your Financial Emergency Kit

MR Hello, and welcome to another FINRA investor education podcast. I'm Mike Roat

ML And I'm Mia Lavarada. You rarely have much advanced warning to prepare for most natural disasters. That's why it's important to put a financial emergency kit together now, ahead of a crisis.

MR Before we talk about what to put in your financial emergency kit, here are a couple of general pointers for disaster planning. First, make sure you check out the Department of Homeland Securities *ready.gov* website. It offers helpful resources like checklist for disaster supply kits. You should also discuss with your family what to do if you're separated during a disaster. Figure out a place you can all try to meet or how you will communicate with each other. For instance, through a shared e-mail account or social media.

ML Now for some financial emergency kit essentials. For starters be sure to include cash and keys. Your kit should contain enough ready money to help with daily life for a few days. How much is up to you, but think about what you would need to pay for food, lodging and other necessities. Cash is king in most emergencies since you may not be able to access ATMs or other electronic payments. Also, pack a set of essential keys, including a spare to a safe deposit box, if you have one. You can put a credit card in your kit for good measure, but don't depend on it. You may also want to check your bank or credit union now to see if they offer disaster assistance in the event you need it.

- MR The second thing to keep in your financial emergency kit is a list of important contacts. This list should include phone numbers, e-mails or other information for family members, as well as key medical, financial and business contacts. All this information can be stored electronically with proper security precautions. But also keep paper copy in your emergency kit.
- ML You should also include personal identification in your kit. After a disaster you may have to confirm your identity for disaster relief services, to file insurance claims or to access your property and financial assets. Keep essential documents that help establish who you and your family are, these include extra originals or copies of passports, drivers licenses, birth and marriage certificates, adoption decrees, social security cards and military records.
- MR Next, be sure your financial emergency kit includes paper or electronic copies of important financial records. A short list of these records includes mortgages, property deeds, power of attorney documents and insurance policies. Also include recent statements for bank accounts, credit cards, brokerage accounts and investments that might be held outside a brokerage firm like mutual funds or 529 college savings plans. If you access accounts or documents online include a list of password hints. Also pack recent retirement account statements and your most recent tax return. A password protected flash drive or file might be safer than hard copies as long as you have a way to access the files.
- ML The fifth and final thing to include in your financial emergency kit is an inventory of your valuables and personal belongings. This will help you maximize your insurance policy

benefits and will speed up the claims process. You can put together a paper, photo or video inventory or a combination of these and put it into your emergency kit. Save receipts for major items or appraisals for valuable belongings. For your household items walk through your house and write down what's in every room. For major items record the make and serial numbers. While you're at it, record the cost. Take close up pictures of valuables, including details like serial number tags.

MR Be sure to understand what your insurance covers and what you will need to make a claim if disaster strikes. Your policy may treat disasters differently. For example, the may handle flood damage differently than fire or hurricane damage. Figure out before a disaster if you have the right kind of insurance to cover what you own and if you have enough coverage. If you have completed major modifications to your house or other real estate property see if your present policy covers them.

ML We hope you found this podcast helpful for understanding how to put a financial emergency kit together. To learn more about protecting your financial security go to our website *FINRA.org* and be sure to share this podcast with friends and family.

MR For all of us at FINRA, thanks for listening.