Governor's Office of Homeland Security & Emergency Preparedness

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Storm Prep: Protect tax records and financial documents during emergencies

BATON ROUGE -- The Louisiana Department of Revenue advises taxpayers to protect their tax records and financial documents from storms, floods and other weather-related emergencies.

"There is no substitute for early preparation when it comes to making sure your family, property and important records are safe," said Secretary of Revenue Jane Smith.

Keep Documents Secure

Paper records are at particular risk from water damage. Protect these documents by placing them in airtight containers such as zip closure bags and moving them out of harm's way.

Use Paperless Media

Bank statements and other financial documents are available as electronic records from your financial institution. Preserve these records by burning them to CDs or saving them to portable memory drives. Store them in airtight containers.

Scan important paper records such as W-2s, payroll records and tax returns into an electronic format. Many commercially available home printers include scanning features.

Web-based email services such as Google's Gmail and Microsoft's Hotmail offer account holders access to free online document storage. You can upload electronic records directly from your home computer and retrieve them later from any machine with Internet access. This can be helpful if you are forced to evacuate your home.

Document Valuables and Business Equipment

Compile a room-by-room list of your belongings or business equipment. Photograph or videotape the contents of your home or business, especially items of high value. Having a visual record of your valuables can provide proof for an insurance claim. It can also help to verify a loss claim on state and federal tax returns.

In case of a disaster, the Department of Revenue can provide information on potential tax deductions or credits, filing extensions, and other tax-related matters. Bookmark www.revenue.louisiana.gov as the source for state tax-related information.

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