

## Organizing Your Retirement

By Jennie L. Phipps • Bankrate.com

Certified Estate Planner Jean Dorrell's 85-year-old mother left her pocketbook in the car, parked 50 feet from the hairdresser. During the few minutes while she had her mind on other things, a thief broke the car window and stole her pocketbook, taking all of her credit cards and identification, including her passport.

Getting things reissued was no fun. Dorrell says it took her mother months to get everything replaced. Watching her mother go through this frustration motivated Dorrell, founder of Senior Financial Security in Florida, to create a service for her clients that helps protect them from this experience. She scans in all their records and creates either a computer flash drive or a small black notebook -- or both -- for them to keep in a convenient place. In case of an emergency, they can grab it and go. Or they can let a family member know where it is.

Dorrell provides this service for her financial planning clients, but the idea is something that anyone could do for themselves. Among the documents that she urges clients to copy and include are:

- Driver's licenses
- Passports.
- Social Security cards.
- Marriage license.
- Medicare or other health care identification cards.
- Living wills and powers of attorney.
- Pre-made funeral arrangements.
- Bank statements.
- Insurance policy declaration pages.
- Mortgage statement.
- Pension contacts.
- Investment information, including CDs, IRAs, annuities and mutual fund accounts.
- Names and phone numbers for attorneys and insurance agents.

Everybody's retirement information package is different, but you get the idea. Giving this kind of thing a little thought before you or your loved ones need it is worth the effort. It can make everyone's experience better when the inevitable happens.



If you need more help identifying the items that should be on this retirement planning list, there are many organizers available that will help you do this. My favorite is *"The Beneficiary Book"* by Martin Kuritz. It's an e-book available from Active-Insights. Because you can copy and paste from other computer sources, it makes gathering the information simple.

Kuritz recommends buying two copies - one to fill out yourself and one to give to your parents. "Show them your completed copy and explain that if you predecease them, you want to make sure they have the information in your book. Then present your parents with the gift copy and ask them to do the same for you," he says.

