

Staying Prepared

Security by being Prepared. Because you don't know enough to know you don't know enough.

Digital Bugout Preps: SCAN YOUR WALLET

This is a great article By Rich at the [survivalring](#).

One of my yearly New Year chores is to scan and update the contents of my wallet and keep a digital copy in a secure location.

Personally, I own three scanners, each for a different purpose. Depending on the type of item to scan, these allow me to make multiple scans and save it as one PDF file. With your own scanner, once you've digitized your own important documents, you can then either print a copy for a safe deposit box, encrypt the file and keep it with your valuables, or hide it where only YOU will know the location. Hopefully you will never need this backup, but there's always a chance, (never say NEVER) and then you will be really happy you have this backup.

Now, WHY would you want to do this? One very simply reason. **BACKUP**.

Like an extra hidden key for your car or home entrance, jumper cables in your trunk, an ankle holster and weapon to back up your main holstered firearm, or regular backups of ALL your most important computer data, you need a full backup set of your financial and identification easily and quickly accessible to you should you be the victim of robbery, burglary, and stupidity.

Ever misplaced your wallet, or some card or cards within it? Ever had your wallet STOLEN? Do you have a phone list of all your credit card company customer services anywhere, just in case your wallet, with all your credit cards and contact info for each one, somehow...vanishes?

I've lost a total of 2 credit cards in my life, realized it, canceled the card, and later found the card fallen between the front seat of my truck and the center console, or washed and damaged. Not too bad a thing, but the sheer panic of realizing your money...your income...is waiting for someone to find your card and pick you clean with one swipe in the wrong place...is a very good way to practice and re-examine, your personal "pucker factor". I've misplaced my wallet a number of times, but never had it stolen.

Years ago, on a trip to SoCal in general, and Santa Monica and it's famous Pier in particular, with my daughter with me on a trucking trip layover, I found a full wallet on top of one of those "park your own car and put your parking fee in the numbered collection slot box" thingies, right next to the pier.

I had put my parking fee in my slot, and there it was... a fat, full, and complete wallet...just at eye level. Couldn't have been there very long. Wow. Lots of cash...many credit cards...and a military ID right in the front when you opened it up. What do to? The right thing, obviously...a teaching moment for my teenage daughter, in a strange place, after dark, in one of the most liberal, left wing states in the nation.

I put the wallet in my jacket pocket, thinking in a busy place like this pier, I'd find law enforcement folks somewhere soon. Within minutes, we saw a manned police car on the shore end of the pier and walked over to it, explaining to the officer eating a burrito what we found and where, and then handing it over to him. I've never had a cop look at me like I was a complete lunatic like that...but that was the immediate response I saw in his eyes.

Having taken care of that, we enjoyed the rest of the evening on the pier, than drove around the area, saw some movie grand opening red carpet affair, and headed back to our hotel in Lancaster for the evening. We enjoyed the evening, and hopefully the gentleman who left his wallet got it back fairly quickly. I felt really good for having the first thought to do the right thing, and especially for having my daughter see that for herself. Still, at the time, it got me thinking. Which is why you are now reading this article.

So why digitize your wallet? It's probably the most important personal carry item you may ever have. Both women and men usually have some leather or other kind of folding container for pants, suits, or purse pocket storage. You know what's found in most of these...credit cards, ID cards, passes, certification cards, training cards, cash, business cards, and more. Cash doesn't need to be copied, because counterfeiting is wrong. Anything else that is your personal ID, credit info, or anything else with needed numbers, accounts, or so forth SHOULD be digitized. Doing this gives proof of ownership, proof of possession, and needed info in case that day occurs where you wallet IS stolen or lost.

Making digital copies is literally child's play these days, with thousands of different models of scanners and software available to create a snapshot of your wallet contents. You'll find a massive amount of YouTube videos on the actual concept and how to do this rather easy job. The key is actually DOING it.

Get it Done...

So, you've made a digital copy of your wallet contents, and using your scanner and software, you now have a PDF file with all the pertinent information at your disposal at any time. Now comes the important question...where are you going to store that VERY personal set of information that resides in your computer? And, how are you going to lock it up, so only you or your closest family can access it when and as needed?

You have multiple choices, locations, and formats to choose from. Here's the best way to handle this step with finesse, practicality, and ease of use. Starting with your freshly cooked PDF file, do the following.

1. Create a short list of at least 3 places to keep the info in digital format. These could be a) your computer, in a nondescript folder, b) on a pen drive or SD Ram card, and c) emailed to yourself as a password protected ZIP archive file.
2. Yes, an archive. You'll only have one file in it, and you can always add more, but you need the data encrypted. Any archive tool will do, but I normally use WinRar or 7-Zip, the latter of which is free, and VERY good.
3. While creating your new archive, save it with that password you've chosen, that only YOU can remember, and make sure to click the "encrypt" check box in your archive software.
4. Hit "Go", and within seconds, you are done.

Now, move the file to at least TWO physical devices, such as an SR Ram card, a micro-SD Ram card, a thumb/pen USB drive, or any of a thousand possibilities, as well as send a copy to yourself via your favorite online email service. A reminder here that your file MUST be encrypted and password protected to maintain its lock on your most precious life information.

Personally, I go with a 16 gig pen drive, and a 32 gig SD Ram card, with backup on my 4 gig micro-SD Ram chip. Any of these three devices can be located literally ANYWHERE, in your clothing, your car, your home, briefcase, or even jewelry. Do some searches on Amazon for "creating hiding places" and look for any and every idea you can think of as possible stowaway locations for your digital life.

The most practical, for me, is the pen drive, with for secondary backup my 32 gig chip which I use in both my digital 16 megapixel digital camera, and my Canon HD video camera, both of which use SD Ram for storing new images and videos. The files on these chips can be accessed like any other storage device, using your standard My Computer or similar file manager and nearly every laptop or computer these days has a SD RAM slot built in for moving your data from your cameras to your work computer. Heck, even most tablets have this tech as well.

When that inevitable day occurs that your wallet goes missing, forever...you'll look back at this moment...right now...and say one of two things...“no problemo” or “oh shit”. To get to the correct answer, act now, and get started in backing up your wallet.