



## **Inventory Your Belongings**

One of the most important things you can do to protect your belongings is to know what you have. You probably have a homeowners or renters insurance policy that will pay to have your household items replaced if they are stolen, lost, or damaged. However, few individuals take the time to adequately prepare a listing of those items. If there is a fire, flood, or theft, having an inventory is essential in making a complete and accurate insurance claim.

One of the easiest ways to prepare a record of your belongings is to take a video camera and just slowly walk through your home and describe each item you see. You can also prepare a written listing. Be sure to include items in your closets, basement and garage. You will probably be surprised to learn just how many items you have.

You should also include items that are covered under your insurance policy but may be located outside of your home. This could include items kept in storage or items that a child has while at college.

If you are going to prepare a video listing, describe each item including information on when you bought the item, how much it cost, and maybe even where you bought it. For appliances or electronic equipment, you should note the model number and any serial numbers. Having that information can help justify your claim.

Preparing a written listing may take more time and effort, but can be just as valuable. Just write down all the information and for special items, you may want to take photographs.

Be sure to store the record of your belongings somewhere that is safe and accessible if disaster strikes. Keeping the record in a safe deposit box, at work, or with a trusted relative can provide assurance that that the records will be available if your home is destroyed.

Make sure to update your inventory on a regular basis. Hopefully you will never have to use your inventory, but if disaster strikes, you will be glad you took the time to make a record of your possessions.