

Storing Your Advance Directives

Where you store your advance directives can be just as critical as preparing one in the first place. There are many places you can keep copies (or originals) of the documents, but there are a few important factors to consider when deciding where to store:

- They must be portable; they can be available wherever you are in the world.
- They must be available in a timely manner.
- They must be in a safe place, protected from theft, fire, flood or other natural disasters.

Here are some suggestions:

- Make several photocopies of the completed documents.
- Keep the original documents in a safe but easily accessible place, and tell others where you put them; you can note on the photocopies the location where the originals are kept.
- **DO NOT KEEP YOUR ADVANCE DIRECTIVES IN A SAFE DEPOSIT BOX.** Other people may need access to them.
- Give photocopies to your agent and alternate agent.
- Be sure your doctors have copies of your advance directives and give copies to everyone who might be involved with your healthcare, such as your family, clergy, or friends. Your local hospital might also be willing to file your advance directives in case you are admitted in the future.
- There are services available that will store copies of your documents and can make them available on your behalf. This is a particularly effective way to store your documents to protect against theft, fire, flood or other natural disasters as well as for people who travel. Below is a list of companies that can provide this type of service:
 - MedicAlert
 - U.S. Living Will Registry