

# Disaster Preparedness

No one can control where or when a natural disaster might occur. But good emergency planning can help reduce a disaster's impact on your family's health and safety. Taking simple steps can make a big difference in ensuring your safety and well-being and that of your loved ones.

## Get A Kit

Having your own food, water, and other supplies in sufficient quantity to last for at least three days. Local officials and relief workers will be on the scene after a disaster, but they cannot reach everyone immediately. You could get help in hours, or it might take days. In addition, basic services such as electricity, gas, water, sewage treatment, and telephones may be cut off for days, or even a week or longer. Recommended Items to Include in a Basic Emergency Supply Kit:

- Drinking water in nonbreakable containers
- Nonperishable food and related utensils, such as a can opener
- First-aid kit, including necessary prescription medications
- Portable radio and flashlight, including replacement batteries
- Tool kit
- Maps
- Cell phone with charger
- Extra clothing
- Blankets or sleeping bags
- Your insurance policy numbers
- Pet supplies, if necessary

Find out how to keep food safe during and after an emergency by visiting [FoodSafety.gov](http://FoodSafety.gov).

It's also a good idea to create a complete inventory of your possessions and keep it in a bank safe deposit box or other safe place away from your home.



## Make A Plan

Thinking ahead about how to evacuate your home and community safely can save valuable time during an emergency. For a home evacuation plan, determine the best escape routes from your dwelling and choose a meeting place nearby. Hold drills periodically and update the plan as family members' needs and abilities change.

Find out what kinds of disasters, both natural and man-made, are most likely to occur in your area and how you will be notified. Methods of getting your attention vary from community to community. One common method is to broadcast via emergency radio and TV broadcast. You might hear a special sirens, or get a telephone call, or emergency workers may go door-to-door.

To prepare for a community evacuation, designate an out-of-town point of contact for family members to call if they become separated. Then, record emergency contacts and other important information on wallet cards from [Ready.gov](http://Ready.gov).

Community evacuations may be voluntary or involuntary, depending on the situation. When an evacuation order is given, leave immediately in accordance with official instructions. To prepare for a voluntary evacuation, plan routes ahead of time, taking into consideration traffic patterns and possible hazards, such as impassable bridges. When conditions become threatening, collect all family members in a single location and fill up your vehicle's gas tank. Remember to keep your emergency kit close by, including maps, in case you need to leave quickly.

You will be better prepared to safely reunite your family and loved ones during an emergency if you think ahead and communicate with others in advance.

## Stay Informed

Learn more about the potential emergencies that could happen where you live and the appropriate way to respond to them.

In addition, learn about the emergency plans that have been established in your area by your state and local government.

A key part of disaster preparedness is knowing where to find the best, most current information. For immediate needs, keep a battery-powered AM/FM radio or National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio receiver in your home. When hazardous conditions occur, tune in for the latest information and instructions.

It's also a good idea to learn more about emergency programs in your community. The Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) can direct you to national and state programs. Contact your local police or fire department to find out about programs in your immediate area.

For longer-term planning, the Federal Alliance of Safe Homes (FLASH) is a good place to start. There you can learn about the most likely disaster risks in your state, and ways to safeguard your home against them.

Knowing what to do during an emergency is an important part of being prepared and may make all the difference when seconds count.



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