

Emergency Preparedness

Emergency Preparedness TIPS

Senior citizens

As an older adult, you may have specific needs after a disaster. Use the information on this page to assess your needs and take simple, low-cost steps that help you get better prepared.

- Older adult couple sitting on a couch looking at a laptop
- Know what disasters could affect your area, which could call for an evacuation, and when to shelter in place, and plan what you need to do in both cases.
- Keep a NOAA Weather Radio tuned to your local emergency station and monitor TV and radio for warnings about severe weather in your area.
- Download the FEMA app and get weather alerts from the National Weather Service for up to five different locations anywhere in the United States.

Plan Ahead

- Plan how you will communicate if you have a communication need.
- Plan for food, water, and essentials for you and pets or service animals.
- Plan for your transportation if you need help evacuating.
- First aid kit with medication, flashlight and water.
- Include items that meet your individual needs, such as medicines, medical supplies, batteries and chargers, in your emergency supply kit.
- Plan how you will have your assistive devices with you during an evacuation.
- Make copies of Medicaid, Medicare, and other insurance cards.

Make a Plan

Determine any special assistance you may need and include plans for that assistance in your emergency plan. For more detailed information, visit our page on planning for people with disabilities.

- Create a support network of family, friends and others who can assist you during an emergency. Make an emergency plan and practice it with them.
- Make sure at least one person in your support network has an extra key to your home, knows where you keep your emergency supplies, and knows how to use lifesaving equipment or administer medicine.
- If you undergo routine treatments administered by a clinic or hospital, find out their emergency plans and work with them to identify back-up service providers.
- Don't forget your pets or service animals. Not all shelters accept pets, so plan for alternatives. Consider asking loved ones or friends outside of your immediate area if they can help with your animals.
- Get Your Benefits Electronically
- A disaster can disrupt mail service for days or weeks. If you depend on Social Security or other regular benefits, switching to electronic payments is a simple, important way to protect yourself financially before disaster strikes. It also eliminates the risk of stolen checks. The U.S. Department of the Treasury recommends two safer ways to get federal benefits:
 - Direct deposit to a checking or savings account. If you get federal benefits you can sign up by calling 800-333-1795 or sign up online.
 - The Direct Express® prepaid debit card is designed as a safe and easy alternative to paper.

Home

After an emergency, you may need to survive on your own for several days. Being prepared means having your own food, water and other supplies to last for several days. A disaster supplies kit is a collection of basic items your household may need in the event of an emergency. Make sure your emergency kit is stocked with the items on the checklist below. Download a printable version to take with you to the store. Once you take a look at the basic items consider what unique needs your family might have, such as supplies for pets or seniors.

Emergency Supply List

PDF Link Icon

Basic Disaster Supplies Kit

To assemble your kit, store items in airtight plastic bags and put your entire disaster supplies kit in one or two easy-to-carry containers such as plastic bins or a duffel bag. A basic emergency supply kit could include the following recommended items:

- Water (one gallon per person per day for several days, for drinking and sanitation)
- Food (at least a several-day supply of non-perishable food)
- Battery-powered or hand crank radio and a NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert
- Flashlight
- First aid kit
- Extra batteries
- Whistle (to signal for help)
- Dust mask (to help filter contaminated air)
- Plastic sheeting and duct tape (to shelter in place)
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties (for personal sanitation)
- Wrench or pliers (to turn off utilities)
- Manual can opener (for food)
- Local maps
- Cell phone with chargers and a backup battery
- Additional Emergency Supplies

alert - warning

Since Spring of 2020, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has recommended people include additional items in their kits to help prevent the spread of coronavirus or other viruses and the flu.

Consider adding the following items to your emergency supply kit based on your individual needs:

- Masks (for everyone ages 2 and above), soap, hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes to disinfect surfaces
- Prescription medications. About half of all Americans take prescription medicine every day. An emergency can make it difficult for them to refill their prescription or to find an open pharmacy. Organize and protect your prescriptions, over-the-counter drugs, and vitamins to prepare for an emergency.
- Non-prescription medications such as pain relievers, anti-diarrhea medication, antacids or laxatives
- Prescription eyeglasses and contact lens solution
- Infant formula, bottles, diapers, wipes and diaper rash cream
- Pet food and extra water for your pet
- Cash or traveler's checks
- Important family documents such as copies of insurance policies, identification and bank account records saved electronically or in a waterproof, portable container
- Sleeping bag or warm blanket for each person
- Complete change of clothing appropriate for your climate and sturdy shoes
- Fire extinguisher
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Feminine supplies and personal hygiene items
- Mess kits, paper cups, plates, paper towels and plastic utensils
- Paper and pencil
- Books, games, puzzles or other activities for children

Maintaining Your Kit

After assembling your kit remember to maintain it so it's ready when needed:

Keep canned food in a cool, dry place.

Store boxed food in tightly closed plastic or metal containers.

Replace expired items as needed.

Re-think your needs every year and update your kit as your family's needs change.

Kit Storage Locations

Since you do not know where you will be when an emergency occurs, prepare supplies for home, work and cars.

- Home: Keep this kit in a designated place and have it ready in case you have to leave your home quickly. Make sure all family members know where the kit is kept.
- Work: Be prepared to shelter at work for at least 24 hours. Your work kit should include food, water and other necessities like medicines, as well as comfortable walking shoes, stored in a “grab and go” case.
- Car: In case you are stranded, keep a kit of emergency supplies in your car.