



EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS STARTS HERE!

Stay Safe: Be Prepared for Emergencies



Information on Emergency Kits

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AT HOME – EMERGENCY KIT CHECKLIST

After a major disaster the usual services we take for granted, such as running water, refrigeration, and telephones, may be unavailable. Experts recommend that you should be prepared to be self-sufficient for at least three days. Store your household disaster kit in an easily accessible location. Put contents in a large, watertight container (e.g. a large plastic garbage can with a lid and wheels) that you can move easily.

Your basic emergency kit should include:

- _____ **Water** – one gallon per person per day (at least three days)
- _____ **Water Filtration System** - In addition to water storage, portable water filtration (like a Lifestraw or Sawyer water filter) can be a critical backup for longer-term water needs.
- _____ **Unscented liquid household bleach and an eyedropper for water purification** (When diluted nine parts water to one part bleach, bleach can be used as a disinfectant. Or in an emergency, you can use it to treat water by using 16 drops of regular household liquid bleach per gallon of water. Do not use scented, color safe or bleaches with added cleaners.)
- _____ **Food** – ready to eat or requiring minimal water for three days
- _____ **Flashlight with Extra Batteries or Solar/Crank Flashlight** -
- _____ **Solar-Powered Items** - Consider adding solar-powered/crank powered phone chargers, lanterns, and flashlights. This eliminates the need to rely solely on batteries.
- _____ **Manual can opener and other cooking supplies** Plates, utensils and other feeding supplies and paper towels
- _____ **First Aid kit & instructions**
- _____ **Portable Power Bank** - Include a fully charged portable power bank for electronic devices.
- _____ **N95 Masks** - Dust masks are good, but N95 or KN95 masks are more effective for air filtration, especially in case of poor air quality from fires or chemical releases.
- _____ **A copy of important documents & phone numbers** (insurance policies, identification cards and bank account records in a waterproof, portable container)
- _____ **Heavy work gloves**
- _____ **Disposable camera**
- _____ **Personal hygiene items** including toilet paper, feminine supplies, hand sanitizer and soap
- _____ **Materials for broken windows** - Plastic sheeting, duct tape and utility knife for covering broken windows
- _____ **Tools** - Crowbar, hammer & nails, staple gun, adjustable wrench and bungee cords
- _____ **Sleeping** - Blanket or sleeping bag
- _____ **Waste and sanitation** - Large heavy-duty plastic bags and a plastic bucket
- _____ **Special-Needs Items** - For children, seniors or people with disabilities
- _____ **Prescriptions** - Medications for at least a week and glasses
- _____ **Infant formula and diapers**
- _____ **Currency** - Cash or traveler's checks and change. ATM's will be down if there is no power
- _____ **Emergency reference material** - First aid book or information from this packet
- _____ **Complete change of clothing** - A long-sleeved shirt, long pants, sturdy shoes, and jackets for cold-weather climate
- _____ **Fire Extinguisher**
- _____ **Matches in a waterproof container**
- _____ **Entertainment** - Paper, pencils, pens, markers, books, games, cards, puzzles, or other activities for children
- _____ **COVID-19 Considerations** - Add a small supply of face masks, hand sanitizer, and disposable gloves for hygiene and protection.
- _____ **Pet Supplies** - In addition to water and food for pets, add any medications, copies of vaccination records, and a photo of your pet in case you become separated.
- _____ **Personal Locator Beacon (PLB)** - If you live in remote areas, consider including a PLB, which can send distress signals to emergency services when activated.
- _____ **Multi-tool** - Instead of just a pocket knife, a multi-tool can cover more needs (screwdrivers, pliers, etc.).
- _____ **Portable Toilet or Waste Bags** - For sanitation in longer-term emergencies, portable toilets (or a kit for setting one up) are more comfortable than just plastic bags and buckets.

ON THE GO - EMERGENCY KIT CHECKLIST

A component of your disaster kit is your Go-bag. Put the following items together in a backpack or another easy to carry container in case you must evacuate quickly.

Prepare one Go-bag for each family member and make sure each has an I.D. tag. You may not be at home when an emergency strikes so keep some additional supplies in your car and at work, considering what you would need for your immediate safety.

- _____ **Flashlight** (with extra batteries or solar/crank flashlight)
- _____ **Bandages and first aid supplies**
- _____ **N95 or KN95 mask**
- _____ **Rubbing alcohol or antiseptic wipes**
- _____ **Water** - (in bottles) and a portable water filter
- _____ **Toothbrush and toothpaste**
- _____ **Whistle** - to signal for help
- _____ **Rubber gloves**
- _____ **Matches** - in a waterproof container and a fire starter tool
- _____ **Radio** - Battery-powered or solar/crank radio
- _____ **Solar Powered Chargers**
- _____ **Food** - enough for three days
- _____ **Soap or hand sanitizer**
- _____ **Multi-tool** - (instead of just a pocket knife)
- _____ **Blanket or emergency Mylar blanket**
- _____ **Emergency cash** - (small denominations) and quarters for phone calls
- _____ **Sturdy shoes, a change of comfortable clothes, and a warm hat**
- _____ **Local map**
- _____ **Sign materials** - permanent marker, paper, and tape
- _____ **Photos of family members and pets (for identification)**
- _____ **List of emergency contacts and allergies to any drug/food**
- _____ **Important documents** - Copy of health insurance and ID cards (in a waterproof bag or on a USB stick)
- _____ **Prescriptions** - Medications (7-day supply if possible), extra prescription glasses, hearing aids, etc.
- _____ **Extra keys for your home and vehicle**
- _____ **Special-needs items** - for children, seniors, people with disabilities, and pets
- _____ **Water Purification** - Chlorine bleach and medicine dropper for water purification, or portable water filtration systems/straws
- _____ **Fire extinguisher**
- _____ **Feminine supplies and personal hygiene items**
- _____ **Paper Products** - Mess kits, paper cups, plates, plastic utensils, and paper towels
- _____ **Entertainment** - Paper, pencil, cards, puzzles, books, coloring books and crayons, etc.
- _____ **Waterproof bag** to protect key items
- _____ **Glow sticks for additional light source**

FAMILY COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

In the event of a disaster, your family may be separated. It's essential to plan how to contact one another and ensure every member understands how to communicate in different scenarios.

- Create a contact card for each family member, including children. These cards should include names, phone numbers, emergency contacts, medical information, and be stored in wallets, backpacks, or book bags. Keep a digital copy on smartphones for easy access.
- Plan with your children's school or daycare to ensure they have identification and emergency plans in place. Familiarize yourself with their shelter and reunification processes.

Family Communication Tips:

1. Out-of-Area Emergency Contact:

- Designate a relative or friend who lives out-of-state for household members to notify when they are safe. Long-distance calls may be easier than local ones after a disaster.
- Ensure everyone has the contact's phone number and a way to communicate (cell phone, coins for payphones, or a prepaid phone card).

2. "ICE" (In Case of Emergency) Contact:

- Program an emergency contact in each family member's cell phone under "ICE" for first responders to contact in case of an accident.
- Inform your ICE contacts that they have been designated, so they are prepared to respond if contacted.

3. Text Messaging (SMS) for Emergencies:

- Teach family members how to send text messages. Texts are often more reliable than phone calls during network disruptions, allowing messages to get through even when calls fail.

4. Emergency Alerts and Notifications:

- Subscribe to local alert services that send text or email alerts for emergencies, road closures, severe weather, and evacuation notices. Sign up through your community's Office of Emergency Management website.
- Ensure these alerts are accessible (e.g., for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, ensure alerts come through in an accessible format like text or email).

5. Social Media Communication:

- Consider using social media platforms to check in as "Safe" during an emergency (e.g., Facebook's Safety Check feature) and stay informed about local events.

MAKE A PLAN FOR SPECIFIC NEEDS

Make a Plan for Specific Needs

Customize your family's emergency plan based on your unique circumstances. Each household should account for factors such as age, responsibilities, dietary needs, disabilities, and access to transportation or medical equipment. Consider the following:

- **Age and Responsibilities:**
 - Consider different ages and needs of family members. Children, seniors, and individuals with disabilities may require special support.
 - Assign specific roles to help one another during emergencies, especially if some members may need assistance.
- **Locations and Frequented Areas:**
 - Plan for how family members will communicate and reunite if disaster strikes while separated, such as during work, school, or daycare. Know the emergency plans for these locations.
- **Dietary and Medical Needs:**
 - Have adequate food supplies that meet dietary restrictions.
 - Ensure there is a sufficient supply of prescription medications and medical equipment, along with copies of prescriptions in case of emergency.
- **Language Barriers:**
 - Ensure everyone in your family can access emergency alerts and warnings in their preferred language. Identify local emergency resources that provide multilingual communication.
- **Disability and Accessibility Needs:**
 - For individuals with disabilities, such as those requiring accessible transportation, work with local paratransit and disability services to arrange emergency plans.
 - Ensure individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing can access emergency alerts via text or alternative formats.
- **Pets and Service Animals:**
 - Include pets and service animals in your emergency plans. Stock food, medications, and supplies for them.
 - Service animals are legally required to be admitted to shelters with their owners. Confirm local shelter policies and pack supplies in your emergency kit for service animals.
- **Power-Dependent Devices:**
 - If anyone in your household relies on power for medical devices (e.g., oxygen, mobility devices, CPAP machines), plan for power outages. Keep extra batteries, and consider portable power options such as a generator or portable power bank.
 - Carry portable chargers when away from home, especially if loss of power could jeopardize health or safety.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS FOR SPECIAL NEEDS KIDS AND ADULTS

Planning for individuals with special needs—whether physical, cognitive, developmental, or sensory—requires additional considerations in emergencies. Having a tailored plan for children and adults with disabilities will ensure their safety and well-being during a disaster.

Special Needs Planning Tips:

- **Create a Personalized Emergency Plan:**

- Tailor your emergency plan to meet the unique needs of the individual. Consider their mobility, communication abilities, medical equipment, and personal care requirements.
- Practice the emergency plan regularly with your family so that special needs individuals are familiar with the steps to take.

- **Develop a Support Network:**

- Identify neighbors, friends, or caregivers who can assist with specific needs during an emergency. Ensure they know how to help with mobility, medical devices, and communication needs.
- Share copies of the emergency plan with your support network, including instructions on how to operate medical equipment or administer medication.

- **Medical and Assistive Devices:**

- If the individual requires medical devices (e.g., oxygen concentrators, ventilators, or mobility aids), have extra batteries or a generator on hand. Store backups of essential medical equipment.
- Ensure devices are portable and can be quickly accessed or transported if evacuation becomes necessary.

- **Medications:**

- Keep an extra supply of all medications needed by special needs individuals, along with a copy of their prescriptions. This should be stored in an easily accessible and waterproof container.
- If any medications require refrigeration, make alternative plans in the event of a power outage, such as cool packs or portable coolers.

- **Communication Needs:**

- For individuals with communication challenges (e.g., non-verbal or speech difficulties), ensure they have a way to express their needs in an emergency. Use communication boards, picture cards, or speech-generating devices if necessary.
- If the individual uses assistive communication technology, make sure devices are charged and that backups are available.

- **Sensory Processing and Behavioral Needs:**

- For individuals with autism or sensory processing disorders, prepare sensory-friendly items such as noise-canceling headphones, calming toys, or weighted blankets to reduce anxiety during chaotic or noisy situations.
- Prepare a familiar item (e.g., a favorite toy, blanket, or comfort object) to help ease stress and maintain routines during evacuations or sheltering.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS FOR SPECIAL NEEDS KIDS AND ADULTS CONTINUED...

- **Evacuation and Shelter Considerations:**
 - Plan for accessible transportation if the individual uses a wheelchair or mobility aid. Work with local authorities or paratransit services to ensure transportation is available during an emergency.
 - Contact local shelters ahead of time to confirm they can accommodate individuals with special needs, including medical or sensory requirements, and whether they allow service animals.
- **Special Dietary Needs:**
 - Pack enough specialized food and beverages to meet dietary needs for at least three days. Consider allergies, feeding tubes, and other special dietary conditions.
 - Include supplies for any feeding equipment (e.g., syringes or feeding bags), if applicable.
- **Caregiver Information:**
 - If a caregiver provides daily assistance, make plans in case they are unavailable. Share detailed care instructions with your emergency contacts or support network.
 - Ensure medical and care instructions are documented clearly and included in the emergency kit.
- **Comfort and Routine:**
 - Disruptions in routine can be especially challenging for individuals with special needs. Try to maintain as much consistency as possible by bringing familiar objects, following daily routines, and preparing visual schedules.
- **Emergency Contact Cards:**
 - For non-verbal individuals or those who may have difficulty communicating in an emergency, create a card listing their diagnosis, specific needs, medications, allergies, and emergency contact information. Store the card in their backpack or Go-bag.

By considering the specific needs of individuals with disabilities or developmental challenges, you can help ensure that they remain safe, comfortable, and well-cared for during an emergency. Preparing in advance and involving them in the planning process can reduce stress and improve outcomes during disasters.

BE PREPARED – EARTHQUAKE

BEFORE AN EARTHQUAKE:

ASSEMBLING EMERGENCY SUPPLIES

Take the time now to gather the emergency supplies you would need if the power was out, water supplies were cut off, and grocery stores were inaccessible. You can build your supplies over time, adding a few items as your budget permits. Basic emergency supplies should include the following:

- **Water:** Ensure you have at least 1 gallon of water per person per day for at least 3 days. Ideally, store a longer supply. An average person needs to drink about $\frac{3}{4}$ gallon daily, though individual needs may vary based on factors such as age, health, and climate. Consider additional water for food preparation.
- **Food:** Store at least a 3-day supply of non-perishable food for household members, including pets. Remember special dietary needs (e.g., baby formula or gluten-free items) and include a non-electric can opener for canned goods.
- **Flashlight, Radio, and Phone Charger:** Ensure these are either hand-cranked or battery-powered and have extra batteries. For cell phones, use solar or car chargers.
- **Medical:** Include a well-stocked first aid kit, prescription and over-the-counter medications, and necessary medical supplies.
- **Sanitation:** Pack sanitation supplies such as hand sanitizer, towelettes, toilet paper, and plastic bags for situations when water is scarce.
- **Assistive Technology:** Include backup batteries for power-dependent mobility devices, oxygen, or other assistive technology needs.
- **Clothing and Blankets:** Keep clothing with long sleeves and pants, thick-soled shoes, work gloves, and sleeping bags or warm blankets (especially in colder climates).
- **Whistle:** To signal for help, especially if trapped or injured.
- **Cash:** Store cash in case ATMs or card systems are not functioning after an earthquake.
- **Fire Extinguisher:** Earthquakes can cause fires. Ensure you have a fire extinguisher and only use it if you are capable.
- **Gas:** Always have at least half a tank of gas at all times. Having gas in your car during an emergency allows you to evacuate quickly and safely if needed,

Consider storing supplies in multiple locations, such as your workplace, vehicle, or other places where household members spend time.

PREPARING YOUR HOME AND FAMILY:

- Fasten shelves securely to walls.
- Place heavy objects on lower shelves.
- Store breakable items in low, closed cabinets with latches.
- Secure heavy items like pictures, mirrors, and overhead light fixtures away from sleeping and sitting areas.
- Repair faulty electrical wiring and leaky gas lines.
- Install flexible pipe fittings to prevent gas or water leaks.
- Secure appliances (water heater, refrigerator, gas appliances) to wall studs. Consider installing automatic gas shut-off valves.
- Repair structural damage, such as cracks in the foundation or ceiling.
- Hold family earthquake drills, practicing “Drop, Cover, and Hold On.”

DURING AN EARTHQUAKE:

INDOORS:

- **DROP, COVER, AND HOLD ON:** Take cover under sturdy furniture, cover your head and neck, and hold on until the shaking stops. If no furniture is nearby, crouch in an interior corner.
- Stay away from windows, doors, and walls, and avoid moving around until the shaking stops.
- Stay in bed if you're there, using a pillow to protect your head, unless under a heavy object.
- Avoid doorways unless they are load-bearing and close to you.
- DO NOT use elevators.
- Prepare for possible power outages or alarms to go off.

OUTDOORS:

- Stay in an open space away from buildings, trees, and power lines until the shaking stops.

IN A VEHICLE:

- Pull over safely, avoiding overpasses and utility wires. Stay inside the vehicle until the shaking stops.

IF TRAPPED UNDER DEBRIS:

- Avoid moving and stirring up dust.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a cloth.
- Tap on a surface to signal rescuers. Use a whistle if available.

AFTER AN EARTHQUAKE:

When the shaking stops, look around to make sure it is safe to move. Then exit the building.

- Expect aftershocks that may continue for days or even months.
- Assist injured or trapped people but avoid moving those with serious injuries.
- Extinguish small fires promptly; fire is a common hazard after earthquakes.
- Listen to emergency broadcasts for instructions and updates.
- If in coastal areas, watch for tsunami warnings and evacuate if necessary.
- Use phones only for emergencies.
- Open cabinets cautiously. Beware of objects that can fall off shelves.
- Find out how to keep food safe during and after an emergency by visiting: <http://www.foodsafety.gov/keep/emergency/index.html>
- Text or make noise (e.g., tapping) if trapped. Use whistles instead of shouting to avoid dust inhalation.
- Go to a public shelter if your home is unsafe. Text SHELTER + ZIP code to 43362 (FEMA) for assistance.

RETURNING HOME AND SAFETY AFTER AN EARTHQUAKE:

- Avoid damaged areas unless asked to help.
- Drive cautiously and expect signal outages.
- Upon returning home, prioritize safety. Wear protective clothing and check for structural damage.
- Safely clean up hazardous spills like gasoline or bleach.
- Inspect chimneys, utilities, and gas lines for damage. Shut off utilities as needed, calling professionals to restore them.

BE PREPARED – TORNADO

PREPARING YOUR HOME AND PROPERTY

Tornadoes can form rapidly with little warning, making it crucial to prepare ahead of time. Here's what to do:

- **Identify a Safe Room** – The safest place to take cover is in a storm cellar or a small, windowless room on the lowest level of your home (like a bathroom, basement, or closet). Ensure everyone in your household knows where this is.
- **Strengthen Your Shelter** – Consider reinforcing your home's safe room with extra support or using FEMA guidelines to construct a storm shelter.
- **Anchor Furniture** – Secure heavy furniture like bookshelves to the walls to prevent them from tipping over during high winds.
- **Clear Outdoor Hazards** – Just as with hurricanes, remove or secure any outdoor items that could be thrown around by strong winds.

FAMILY COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Prepare and practice a family communication plan so that everyone knows what to do in case you get separated during a tornado.

- **Establish a Meeting Place** – Identify a safe, centralized location where family members will meet after the storm, especially if evacuating.
- **Emergency Contacts** – Write down important phone numbers, including out-of-state contacts who can help communicate your status to others.
- **Communication Devices** – Have phones, radios, or walkie-talkies ready, but understand that communication networks may be down. Consider keeping emergency messages ready (such as "I'm safe" or "Need help").
- **Emergency Alerts** – Sign up for weather alerts from the National Weather Service (NWS) or a reliable local source to receive warnings as early as possible.

EVACUATION AND SHELTER PLANNING

If local authorities issue evacuation orders, you may need to leave quickly.

- **Know the Evacuation Zones** – Check if your home is located in a flood or storm surge evacuation zone. Evacuate early to avoid being caught in heavy traffic or dangerous conditions.
- **Pack a Go-Bag** – Prepare an emergency kit with essential supplies (food, water, medications, etc.) that can be quickly grabbed if you need to evacuate.
- **Pet Evacuation Plan** – Ensure you have pet carriers and food ready if you need to bring your pets with you.
- **Locate Shelters** – Know where local shelters are and if they accommodate pets or people with disabilities. Keep in mind that shelter capacity may be limited.

BEFORE A TORNADO:

Tornadoes can strike with little warning, and acting quickly is essential to protect yourself and others. Whether you are indoors, outdoors, or in a vehicle, there are key steps you can take to stay safe during a tornado.

ASSEMBLING EMERGENCY SUPPLIES

You'll need to gather essential emergency supplies, and the following items should be included to ensure you're ready if utilities are disrupted, roads are closed, or stores are inaccessible.

- **Water:** Ensure you have at least 1 gallon of water per person per day for at least 3 days. Ideally, store a longer supply. An average person needs to drink about $\frac{3}{4}$ gallon daily, though individual needs may vary based on factors such as age, health, and climate. Consider additional water for food preparation.
- **Food:** Store at least a 3-day supply of non-perishable food for household members, including pets. Remember special dietary needs (e.g., baby formula or gluten-free items) and include a non-electric can opener for canned goods.
- **Flashlight, Radio, and Phone Charger:** Ensure these are either hand-cranked or battery-powered and have extra batteries. For cell phones, use solar or car chargers.
- **Medical:** Include a well-stocked first aid kit, prescription and over-the-counter medications, and necessary medical supplies.
- **Sanitation:** Pack sanitation supplies such as hand sanitizer, towelettes, toilet paper, and plastic bags for situations when water is scarce.
- **Assistive Technology:** Include backup batteries for power-dependent mobility devices, oxygen, or other assistive technology needs.
- **Clothing and Blankets:** Keep clothing with long sleeves and pants, thick-soled shoes, work gloves, and sleeping bags or warm blankets (especially in colder climates).
- **Whistle:** To signal for help, especially if trapped or injured.
- **Cash:** Store cash in case ATMs or card systems are not functioning after a Tornado.
- **Fire Extinguisher:** Tornadoes can cause fires. Ensure you have a fire extinguisher and only use it if you are capable.
- **Gas:** Always have at least half a tank of gas in your car. Having gas in your car during an emergency allows you to evacuate quickly and safely if needed.

Consider storing your supplies in multiple locations (your home, car, workplace) to ensure they are easily accessible regardless of where you are when the storm strikes.

DURING A TORNADO:

IF YOU ARE UNDER A TORNADO WARNING:

- **Immediately Seek Shelter** – If a tornado warning is issued for your area, seek shelter immediately. Tornado warnings indicate that a tornado has been spotted or indicated by radar.
- **Stay Tuned to Emergency Alerts** – Monitor local news, weather radios, or your phone for updates and instructions.

IF YOU ARE INDOORS:

- **Go to a Safe Room** – The safest place is an interior room on the lowest floor of your home or building. Basements, storm cellars, or specially-built storm shelters are ideal.
 - If there is no basement, go to an interior room with no windows, such as a bathroom, closet, or hallway.
 - If possible, get under a sturdy piece of furniture, like a heavy table or workbench, to protect yourself from falling debris.
- **Stay Away from Windows** - Flying glass and debris can cause serious injuries, so stay away from windows, doors, and outside walls.
- **Crouch Low and Cover Your Head** – If you don't have a shelter or sturdy furniture to hide under, crouch down in a corner, cover your head and neck with your arms, and use pillows, blankets, or even a mattress for additional protection.

IF YOU ARE IN A MOBILE HOME:

- **Leave Immediately** – Mobile homes are not safe during tornadoes, even if they are tied down. Move to a nearby building or shelter as quickly as possible. If no shelter is available, lie flat in a nearby ditch or low-lying area, covering your head with your arms.

IF YOU ARE OUTDOORS:

- **Seek Low Ground** – If you are caught outside with no shelter, lie flat in a low area or ditch, covering your head and neck with your arms. Avoid areas with trees, power lines, or other structures that could fall on you.
- **Stay Away from Bridges and Overpasses** – Do not seek shelter under bridges or overpasses. Wind speeds can actually increase beneath them, making them more dangerous.
- **Protect Yourself from Debris** – Use anything you have to shield your head and neck from flying debris, such as a backpack, coat, or even your arms.

IF YOU ARE IN A VEHICLE:

- **Do Not Try to Outrun a Tornado** – Tornadoes can move faster than vehicles, and their paths are unpredictable. Trying to outrun one puts you at greater risk.
- **Safely Exit the Vehicle** – If possible, abandon your vehicle and move to a sturdy building. If no building is available, find a low-lying area such as a ditch and lie flat, covering your head and neck.
- **Stay Put if There's No Time to Exit** – If you cannot leave your vehicle, keep your seatbelt fastened, put your head below the windows, and cover yourself with a blanket, coat, or any soft materials available to protect from debris.

AFTER THE TORNADO PASSES:

- **Remain Sheltered Until Safe** – Continue to monitor weather reports and remain in shelter until you are certain the tornado threat has passed.
- **Watch Out for Hazards** – Be cautious of broken glass, downed power lines, and unstable structures. Avoid damaged areas unless authorities say it's safe.
- **Check for Injuries** – If someone is injured, provide first aid until emergency responders arrive. Do not move seriously injured individuals unless necessary.
- **Stay Informed** – Listen to local authorities for official updates and instructions on rescue, recovery, and relief efforts.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES OR SPECIAL NEEDS:

- **Communicate Your Needs** – If you rely on a caregiver, be sure they are aware of your sheltering plan. Text or call them once you are safe.
- **Backup Power** – If you use power-dependent medical devices, make sure you have a backup plan for power loss.
- **Assistive Devices** – Ensure your mobility aids (wheelchairs, crutches, etc.) are within reach and part of your emergency plan. Store extra hearing aids, glasses, or other essential devices in your safe room.

KEY REMINDERS:

- Always have a plan for where to go when a tornado strikes.
- Keep emergency supplies (water, food, medical kits) in your safe room or shelter area.
- Practice tornado drills with family or housemates to ensure everyone knows where to go and what to do.

By following these guidelines, you can reduce the risk of injury and increase your chances of staying safe during a tornado.

BE PREPARED – HURRICANE

BEFORE A HURRICANE:

When it comes to hurricanes, preparation is key to ensuring safety. Unlike earthquakes, hurricanes usually provide some advance warning, hopefully giving you time to get ready. Here's what you need to do before the storm hits.

ASSEMBLING EMERGENCY SUPPLIES

You'll need to gather essential emergency supplies, and the following items should be included to ensure you're ready if utilities are disrupted, roads are closed, or stores are inaccessible.

- **Water:** Ensure you have at least 1 gallon of water per person per day for at least 3 days. Ideally, store a longer supply. An average person needs to drink about $\frac{3}{4}$ gallon daily, though individual needs may vary based on factors such as age, health, and climate. Consider additional water for food preparation.
- **Food:** Store at least a 3-day supply of non-perishable food for household members, including pets. Remember special dietary needs (e.g., baby formula or gluten-free items) and include a non-electric can opener for canned goods.
- **Flashlight, Radio, and Phone Charger:** Ensure these are either hand-cranked or battery-powered and have extra batteries. For cell phones, use solar or car chargers.
- **Medical:** Include a well-stocked first aid kit, prescription and over-the-counter medications, and necessary medical supplies.
- **Sanitation:** Pack sanitation supplies such as hand sanitizer, towelettes, toilet paper, and plastic bags for situations when water is scarce.
- **Assistive Technology:** Include backup batteries for power-dependent mobility devices, oxygen, or other assistive technology needs.
- **Clothing and Blankets:** Keep clothing with long sleeves and pants, thick-soled shoes, work gloves, and sleeping bags or warm blankets (especially in colder climates).
- **Whistle:** To signal for help, especially if trapped or injured.
- **Cash:** Store cash in case ATMs or card systems are not functioning after a hurricane.
- **Fire Extinguisher:** Natural disasters can cause fires. Ensure you have a fire extinguisher and only use it if you are capable.
- **Gas:** Always have at least half a tank of gas in your car. Having gas in your car during an emergency allows you to evacuate quickly and safely if needed.

Consider storing your supplies in multiple locations (your home, car, workplace) to ensure they are easily accessible regardless of where you are when the storm strikes.

PREPARING YOUR HOME AND PROPERTY

Hurricanes bring heavy rain, strong winds, and flooding. Follow these steps to safeguard your home before a hurricane hits:

- **Install Hurricane Shutters or Board Windows** – Use storm shutters or plywood to protect windows and glass doors.
- **Secure Outdoor Items** – Bring in outdoor furniture, bikes, and other loose items that could become dangerous projectiles in high winds.
- **Trim Trees and Shrubs** – Prune branches that could break off and damage your property.
- **Reinforce Garage Doors** – Use braces or supports to secure garage doors, as they are particularly vulnerable in high winds.
- **Elevate Utilities** – If you live in a flood-prone area, raise electrical panels, water heaters, and HVAC units to protect them from rising water.
- **Install a Backup Generator** – Consider installing a generator to provide power during outages. Make sure it's in a well-ventilated area to avoid carbon monoxide buildup.
- **Know Your Evacuation Route** – In case of evacuation, be familiar with local routes and shelters. Have a plan in place for where to go and how to get there.

FAMILY COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Prepare and practice a family communication plan so that everyone knows what to do in case you get separated during a storm.

- **Establish a Meeting Place** – Identify a safe, centralized location where family members will meet after the storm, especially if evacuating.
- **Emergency Contacts** – Write down important phone numbers, including out-of-state contacts who can help communicate your status to others.
- **Communication Devices** – Have phones, radios, or walkie-talkies ready, but understand that communication networks may be down. Consider keeping emergency messages ready (such as "I'm safe" or "Need help").
- **Emergency Alerts** – Sign up for weather alerts from the National Weather Service (NWS) or a reliable local source to receive warnings as early as possible.

EVACUATION AND SHELTER PLANNING

If local authorities issue evacuation orders, you may need to leave quickly.

- **Know the Evacuation Zones** – Check if your home is located in a flood or storm surge evacuation zone. Evacuate early to avoid being caught in heavy traffic or dangerous conditions.
- **Pack a Go-Bag** – Prepare an emergency kit with essential supplies (food, water, medications, etc.) that can be quickly grabbed if you need to evacuate.
- **Pet Evacuation Plan** – Ensure you have pet carriers and food ready if you need to bring your pets with you.
- **Locate Shelters** – Know where local shelters are and if they accommodate pets or people with disabilities. Keep in mind that shelter capacity may be limited.

DURING A HURRICANE:

Once a hurricane has made landfall, it's crucial to follow safety guidelines to protect yourself, your family, and your property. Conditions can change rapidly, so staying alert and prepared is key.

IF YOU ARE UNDER A HURRICANE WARNING:

- **Stay Indoors** – Stay inside and away from windows. Hurricanes can cause extreme winds, heavy rain, and flying debris that can break through glass.
- **Monitor Weather Reports** – Keep your radio or phone tuned to emergency weather updates. Local authorities will provide guidance about when it's safe to move or evacuate.
- **Keep Devices Charged** – If the power is still on, make sure your cell phone and portable chargers are fully charged in case of a power outage.

IF YOU ARE TOLD TO EVACUATE:

- **Leave Immediately** – Follow the evacuation order and leave as quickly and safely as possible. Be sure to take your emergency kit, including medications, identification, and important documents.
- **Follow Designated Routes** – Use evacuation routes designated by local authorities. Avoid shortcuts, which may be blocked by flooding or debris.
- **Tell Someone** – If possible, inform someone outside the storm area where you're going.

IF YOU MUST SHELTER IN PLACE:

If you've been advised to shelter in place or didn't have time to evacuate before the storm hits, take the following precautions:

During the Storm:

- **Stay on the Lowest Level** – Avoid upper floors if there's a risk of high winds or tornadoes. However, if flooding is a concern, move to a higher floor, but do not shelter in an attic.
- **Stay in an Interior Room** – The safest place is a small, windowless interior room, like a bathroom or closet. Bring pillows, mattresses, or heavy blankets to protect yourself from debris.
- **Turn Off Utilities** – If instructed by local officials or if you suspect damage, turn off gas, electricity, and water to prevent fires and electrical shock.
- **Keep Emergency Supplies Nearby** – Have your emergency kit with food, water, first aid, and other essentials in your safe room.

IF YOU ARE OUTSIDE OR CAUGHT IN THE STORM:

- **Move to Higher Ground** – If you're outside and flooding begins, get to higher ground immediately. Avoid low-lying areas, storm drains, or underpasses, which can fill with water quickly.
- **Stay Away from Water** – Avoid walking or driving through floodwaters. Just six inches of moving water can knock over an adult, and two feet can sweep away a vehicle.
- **Watch for Tornadoes** – Hurricanes can produce tornadoes. If you hear a tornado warning, seek shelter in the lowest, most central part of your home. Protect your head and neck.

POWER OUTAGES DURING A HURRICANE:

- **Use Flashlights, Not Candles** – To reduce the risk of fires, rely on battery-powered flashlights or lanterns instead of candles.
- **Unplug Electronics** – Unplug electrical appliances and equipment to prevent damage from power surges when power is restored.
- **Keep Refrigerators Closed** – If the power goes out, keep the refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible. A full freezer will keep its temperature for about 48 hours.
- **Conserve Battery Power** – Limit the use of your phone to critical calls or text messages to preserve battery life. Consider using a hand-crank or solar charger.

FLOODING SAFETY:

- **Avoid Flooded Areas** – Do not walk or drive through flooded streets or intersections. Water may be deeper than it appears, and the road underneath could be washed away.
- **Stay Out of Floodwaters** – Floodwater may be contaminated with sewage, chemicals, or other hazardous materials, and can also hide sharp objects or downed power lines.
- **Turn Around, Don't Drown** – If you encounter a flooded road while driving, turn back. It only takes a few inches of water to lose control of your vehicle.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU LOSE COMMUNICATION:

- **Use Text Messages** – In times of disaster, texting is more reliable than calling since cell networks can be overloaded.
- **Stay Calm and Wait for Rescue** – If you are trapped or lose contact with family members, stay calm and sheltered. Rescuers will prioritize areas based on emergency calls and known damage.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES OR SPECIAL NEEDS:

- **Backup Power** – If you rely on powered medical devices (e.g., oxygen, mobility devices), ensure you have backup batteries or an alternative power source. If possible, shelter in a facility that has power backups for these essential services.
- **Assistive Devices** – Keep assistive devices like hearing aids, glasses, or communication devices accessible at all times. Make sure to have backups in your emergency kit.
- **Alert Family or Caregivers** – If you have mobility challenges or specific medical needs, make sure caregivers or emergency contacts are aware of your location and needs.

By staying indoors, monitoring the situation, and following instructions from local authorities, you can significantly increase your chances of staying safe during a hurricane. Prepare ahead of time and take all necessary precautions to protect yourself and your loved ones.

FAMILY COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Prepare and practice a family communication plan so that everyone knows what to do in case you get separated during a storm.

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OTHER IMPORTANT THINGS TO KNOW

WHAT TO DO IN A FIRE:

If your smoke alarm goes off or you see a fire:

- Remain calm and get out.
- If you see smoke under the door, find another way out.
- Feel the door with the back of your hand before you open it. If it is hot, find another way out.
- Drop to the floor to avoid smoke and fumes. Crawl to safety.
- If your clothes catch on fire, STOP where you are, DROP to the ground, and ROLL over and over to smother the flames.
- Call 9-1-1 from a safe location. Stay on the line until the operator hangs up.
- If you are trapped in a burning building, stay near a window and close to the floor. If possible, signal for help.
- Do not go back inside the building unless instructed that it is safe to do so.

FIRST AID KIT:

In any emergency, you or a family member may be cut, burned, or suffer other injuries. Keep the following basic first aid supplies so you are prepared to help when someone is hurt.

- Two pairs of disposable gloves
- Sterile dressings to stop bleeding
- Cleansing agent/soap and antibiotic towelettes to disinfect
- Antibiotic ointment to prevent infection
- Burn ointment
- Adhesive bandages in a variety of sizes
- Eye wash solution to flush the eyes or as a general decontaminant
- Scissors
- Over-the-counter medicines such as Aspirin or other pain reliever, laxative, anti-diarrhea medication
- Prescription medications you take every day, such as insulin, heart medicine, or asthma inhaler
- Prescribed medical supplies such as glucose monitoring equipment or blood pressure monitors

CHECKLIST FOR COMMUNICATION AND EMERGENCY PLANNING:

- Checklist for Communication and Emergency Planning:
- Complete contact cards for all family members and keep them easily accessible.
- Ensure everyone understands how to reach your out-of-area emergency contact.
- Program "ICE" contacts into all cell phones.
- Teach family members how to use text messaging during emergencies.
- Sign up for local emergency alert systems, ensuring they are accessible.
- Identify individual needs and make sure your emergency plan accounts for disabilities, medical needs, pets, and other household-specific considerations.

Most information came from www.redcross.org and www.ready.gov

Disclaimer: The information provided here is intended for general preparedness and safety ideas. It is not professional advice, and individual needs and circumstances may vary. Please consult local authorities or emergency professionals for specific recommendations tailored to your situation.