

Be prepared for an emergency



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Disasters and emergencies can happen at any time. Preparing for them can reduce anxiety, fear and losses. A disaster can be natural—hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, earthquakes—or manmade, like a bioterrorist attack or chemical spill. You should know the risks and danger signs of each.

You should also have a plan. Be ready to evacuate your home, and know how to treat basic medical problems. Make sure you have the insurance you need, including

specific types such as flood/flood content.

The below information can help you build an emergency supply kit. Once you have planned for the safety of yourself, your family and your possessions, you will have peace of mind and will be able to help others.

Make sure your emergency kit is stocked with the items on the checklist below. As you prepare, consider any special needs, including mobility, disability and medical issues. It is also important to have plans for communication, important records, each family member and pets.

After a disaster, you may need to survive on your own for several days. Being prepared means having 72 hours' worth of food, water, and other crucial supplies.

A basic emergency supply kit could include the following recommended items (not limited to):

- Water—one gallon of water per person per day for at least three days, for drinking and sanitation
- Food—at least a three-day supply of nonperishable 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

Store items in airtight plastic bags and put your entire kit in one or two easy-to-carry containers, such as a plastic bin or a duffel bag.

You may also want to add these additional emergency supplies to your kit based on your individual needs:

- Prescription medications
- Non-prescription medications such as pain relievers, anti-

- diarrhea medication, antacids or laxatives
- Glasses and contact lens solution
- Infant formula, bottles, diapers, wipes, rash cream
- Pet food and extra water for your pet
- Cash or travelers checks
- Important documents such as copies of insurance policies, identification and bank 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
- Household chlorine bleach and medicine dropper to disinfect water
- Fire extinguisher
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Feminine supplies and personal hygiene items
- Mess kits, paper cups, plates, paper towels and utensils
- Paper and pencils
- Books, games, puzzles or other activities for children

Maintain your kit and store it in a cool, dry place. Also make sure boxed food is in a tightly closed plastic or metal container. Remember to replace items that are expired as needed. As disasters come and go, you may want to re-think and update your kit per your family needs.

Remember: Your disaster kit and plan should include scenarios for different types of disasters. Become educated on methods to support personal disaster and emergency readiness.

Natural or manmade, disasters cause emotional distress. Recovery can take time. Stay connected to your family and friends during this period.

Finally, I suggest everyone get set up for weather and emergency alerts:

- Get emergency information from the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) mobile app, including weather warnings for up to five locations plus disaster, aid and shelter information.
- Sign up for National Weather Service alerts to receive SMS text and email alerts, and use their suggested weather apps to stay informed.
- Receive emergency alerts by enabling your smartphone with the Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) public safety system. This includes automatic emergency alerts for severe weather, disasters and national emergencies.
- Find government information and services to help you or a family member deal with a disaster or crisis while traveling or living outside the United States.

Brothers and sisters, thank you for allowing me to serve you!