



5 Steps to Ready

Prepare for emergencies now, when there is time. During a disaster, you might have only minutes to make decisions. Act now so you and your family can stay safe.

1. Make a plan

- Identify meet-up locations and people you will need to contact.
- Put the list of contacts in your wallet, on your phone and somewhere visible in your house.

2. Build a kit

- Store enough food and water for at least three days. Be sure to include the needs of pets and those with special diets.
- Consider buying a pre-made kit if it will meet your needs.

3. Keep at least seven days of medication on hand

- Work with your pharmacist and insurance company to secure the extra doses.

4. Make copies of important documents

- You'll need your health insurance and prescription information.
- Keep these on your phone, in the cloud or on a USB memory stick.

5. Stay informed

- Learn about local hazards unique to your local geography.
- Take courses such as CPR and First Aid.
- Sign up for your county, city or local police alert system. An early warning can give you the minutes you need to prepare for a fast-moving disaster.
- Learn more at **ready.gov**

Tips for putting your plan into action

Disasters can change everything.

Communication could be difficult

- Texting is the best form of communication. When phone networks are overwhelmed, texts will send slowly but are more likely to get through.
- If you have school-age children, know the school's response plan, including where they will evacuate and how they will communicate with caregivers.
- Identify a contact out of state to communicate through; often messages out of state will travel faster than local ones.

You may need to shelter in place or leave your home

- Locate and mark the gas, water and power shut-offs to your house. Tape a wrench in a bag to the gas shutoff for easy access in an emergency.
- When making a kit, pack non-perishable food your family will actually enjoy, and don't forget a can opener. Have an annual 'disaster dinner' to keep the emergency food fresh and restock as needed.
- Make your kit portable, so you can move easily if you need to. A small kit might fit in a backpack; for a larger kit, you might need a container with wheels.
- Store the batteries of electronics (such as phones and radios) separate from the devices to prevent them from being drained in storage.
- Know evacuation routes. Understand local hazards such as flood zones.
- Keep paper maps in your kit, as neighborhoods look very different when they have been damaged, and landmarks you rely on may be gone.

Disasters can happen anywhere

- Look up potential hazards when going on vacation and be aware of how to respond to unfamiliar environments.

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