

Help Others Prepare for an Emergency

Create The GoodSM encourages you to make these suggested advance preparations and to share these tools with family, close friends and neighbors. Keep in mind that emergencies and disasters are especially trying for older community members who may have physical limitations — so please consider them first as you plan to share the Emergency Prepare tools.

By following a few simple steps, you can help prepare those you care about with basic information and tools to endure a crisis and get your lives back on track afterward.

Let's get started!

1. Choose three people you would like to assist:
(Of course, you can help as many as you like, but three is a great starting point.)
 - A. _____
 - B. _____
 - C. _____
2. Ask if they have made advance preparations for emergencies or disasters — most people haven't.
3. Set up a time to cover all or part of the information in this guide.

Activities

Help others in your neighborhood prepare for an emergency or disaster — it's easier than you think. Whether you have a few minutes, a few hours or more — these activities can help those you care about:

1. **Vital Document Checklist** — Help family, friends and neighbors collect, copy and store their most important documents.
2. **Basic Emergency Supply Kit Checklist** — In the event of a crisis, be prepared by gathering a few basic supplies.
3. **Evacuation Plan Checklists** — Help family, friends and neighbors map out what to do if required to evacuate.
4. **Basic Tips for Emergency Planning** — Distribute copies of the Emergency Prepare Checklists and Basic Tips to protect those you care about during and after a disaster.

AARP Create The GoodSM encourages everyone to make a difference in the lives of others. Share your experiences with this activity and find other ways to help in your community at [CreateTheGood.org](https://www.CreateTheGood.org).



Vital Document Checklist

An emergency or disaster can erase the vital documents and records of our lives instantly if we haven't prepared in advance. Using the Vital Document Checklist, collect all the important papers that apply to you. Make copies and store them in a weatherproof tote — even a large, plastic, zip-top bag works. Keep your packet of documents someplace easily accessible, so that you can get to it quickly in the event you need to evacuate in a hurry.

Vital Document Checklist

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personal identification | <input type="checkbox"/> Family records birth and marriage certificates |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personal Medication Record and medical and immunization records | <input type="checkbox"/> Important phone numbers of family members, friends, doctors, insurers — anyone who needs to know where you are |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social Security and Health insurance cards | <input type="checkbox"/> Video and photo inventory documenting your valuables and the interior and exterior of your home |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bank statements, retirement accounts and credit card numbers | <input type="checkbox"/> Cash and/or traveler's checks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wills, insurance policies, contracts, deeds, stocks/bonds | <input type="checkbox"/> "Basic Tips for Emergency Planning" handout |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Recent tax returns | |

List your other valuable documents here:

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Basic Emergency Supply Kit Checklist

Be prepared for an emergency or disaster by gathering basic supplies you'll need to endure a crisis that leaves you without utilities, telephone or Internet, and will provide nourishment for several days. A good rule of thumb is to have enough supplies to last at least three days for each person. Make sure to include any items for those with special needs, including babies or pets. Rotate food and water to ensure nothing has expired, and check or replace batteries as needed to keep your kit up-to-date. For a complete list of supply-kit items and more information on creating a kit, visit [ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov).

The right container will vary in a number of ways, depending on size, weight, and the storage space available. Ideally, the container you use should be portable, durable and waterproof.

Essentials

- Water (one gallon per day per person)
- Food (canned and dry goods, high-calorie food bars)
- Personal first-aid kit
- Battery-powered flashlight (with extra batteries)
- Battery-powered radio (with extra batteries)
- Personal Medication Record
- Prescriptions

Extras

- Hygienic items (toothbrush/hand sanitizer/etc.)
- Extra clothing
- Blankets
- Rain poncho
- 12-hour light sticks
- Whistle (to alert rescue parties)
- Face mask (to avoid dangerous bacteria)

Other essential items:

Following are important Web sites and phone numbers to have on hand:

FEMA (toll-free): 1-800-621-FEMA (3362); [fema.gov](https://www.fema.gov)

American Red Cross (toll-free): 1-800-RED CROSS (733-2767); [redcross.org](https://www.redcross.org)

For more information on preparing for an Emergency, Visit [ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov).

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Evacuation Plan Checklists

An evacuation plan provides a sense of control in what will likely be a chaotic and frightening time. In the event of a disaster, listen to local news reports for status updates and evacuation instructions. Follow instructions for evacuation procedures and do not wait until the last minute to leave. Before you head out, make sure to check on family, friends, and neighbors to ensure that they are taking the appropriate steps for their own safety and security.

Planned Checklist

Essential items you need to take:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vital Document Packet — Ensures you have all your important papers | <input type="checkbox"/> Maps: The official evacuation route, alternate routes and a list of shelters |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency Supply Kit — Provides basic-living necessities for a few days | <input type="checkbox"/> Car keys and keys to the place you are going (if applicable) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cash and traveler's checks | |

Grab and Go Checklist

If you have only moments before evacuating and haven't prepared a Vital Document Packet or any emergency supplies, grab these items quickly and go!

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Driver's license or personal identification | <input type="checkbox"/> Car keys and keys to the place you are going (if applicable) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Basic supplies: Water, food, first-aid kit, hygiene items | <input type="checkbox"/> Maps: The official evacuation route, alternate routes, and a list of shelters |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prescription medications, glasses or contact lenses | <input type="checkbox"/> Cash and traveler's checks |

Note: Use travel routes specified by local authorities. Shortcuts could be impassable or dangerous.

Other essentials:

Shelter Realities:

- Provisions are likely to be limited, so plan on using your own supplies.
- Most public shelters do not accept pets.
- Smoking, alcoholic beverages, and weapons are prohibited.
- Expect and plan for confined and uncomfortable conditions.

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Basic Tips for Emergency Planning

The following provides some general tips for staying safe and fortifying your home. To be completely prepared, visit [ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov) to view more thorough tip lists that give special instructions about the disasters that are likely to happen in your area.

Ahead of Time

- Inventory the contents of your home and take photos or videos of both the exterior and interior. Be sure to record contents of closets, cabinets and drawers. Keep copies in a safe, separate location if possible.
- Arrange with family or neighbors to have a contact number or location where you can check in to report on your safety or new whereabouts.*
- Gather your vital documents and records and make duplicate copies to be stored in a weatherproof container.*

*Visit [CreateTheGood.org](https://www.createthegood.org) for evacuation plan tips and information on duplicating vital documents.

Just Before and During an Emergency

- Close and lock all windows and doors.
- Stay tuned to local news stations via battery-operated radio, and be prepared to evacuate if ordered.
- Cover windows and doors with shutters or plywood if high winds are expected.
- Move electronics or valuable objects away from windows and wrap in plastic garbage bags to keep dry.
- Have a supply of bottled water on hand; fill sinks and bathtubs with water to use for bathing, washing clothes or flushing the toilet.
- Shut off water at the main valve and electricity at the main fuse or breaker box.
- Bring indoors outdoor objects that may fly around, such as trash cans and patio furniture.

Getting Back on Track After an Emergency or Disaster

Insurance Matters

- Understand exactly what your insurance company covers in the event of a disaster.
- Do not endorse and cash any payment from an insurance company that says “final” unless you are sure it is an adequate payment under your policy’s coverage.
- Call your mortgage company to see how reimbursements from your home insurance company will be handled.
- Consider mediation if you are not satisfied with negotiations with your insurance company. In many areas, there is a free public service offered by your state’s insurance commissioner.
- Consult an attorney; local bar associations working with FEMA often set-up volunteer attorney sites.

Fraud and Scams

- Don’t pay cash to a contractor for home repairs, and never give your credit card number unless you are paying the bill with it.
- Be sure you have a signed contract detailing the work you want to have done, and don’t make a final payment until the work has been done to your satisfaction.
- Make sure that any contractors, plumbers, electricians, or roofers are bonded, licensed, or registered in your state. You can check their license status with your state or Better Business Bureau.
- Try to get several bids before agreeing to any work; a one-third down payment is considered appropriate.
- Beware of home repair loan brokers who guarantee you a loan if you first pay a fee.
- If you suspect you have been taken advantage of, call your state attorney general’s office.

Important websites and phone numbers to have on hand

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For more information on preparing for an emergency, visit [ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov).

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