

Preparing Your Family for an Emergency



Why Make a Plan?

Do you know how your family would cope in an emergency? Does each person know what to do? Do you have what you need close at hand?

An emergency could be any one of the following:

- Fire
- Natural disaster (such as an earthquake, flood, or tornado)
- Power outage
- Disease outbreak

What You Can Do

Taking steps to prepare now could help your family survive and thrive in an emergency.

- **Learn how you will be notified.** Ask your local emergency management agency (<https://www.fema.gov/emergency-management-agencies>) what methods they use. These might include radio and TV, sirens, digital road signs, phone calls, or text messages. Ask your mobile service provider if your device can receive free alerts. For more information, visit <https://www.ready.gov/alerts>.
- **Make an emergency supplies kit.** This collection of basic items should be gathered in advance so that it's ready when you need it. You should have nonperishable food, water, clothing, supplies, and medicine to last at least 3 days. Keep a kit at home, at work, and in your car. Find a list of what to include on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at <https://www.cdc.gov/childrenindisasters/checklists/kids-and-families.html>.
- **Be prepared to evacuate or shelter in place.**
 - **Evacuation.** In situations like a fire or flood, it will be necessary to leave your home and go somewhere safer. Keep your gas tank full and an emergency kit in your car if evacuation seems likely. Identify several places you could go, and identify different routes.

- **Shelter in place.** In cases like tornadoes and winter storms, it will be safest to stay where you are (“shelter in place”) until authorities say it is safe to go outside. Choose a safe room in your home and watch TV, listen to the radio, or check the internet often for instructions.
- **Plan for how your family will communicate.** Your family may not be together when a disaster strikes.
 - Make sure all family members can receive alerts and carry family contact information.
 - Agree on meeting locations (in your neighborhood, in case of a fire; and outside of your neighborhood, in case you must evacuate).
 - Identify a family or friend out of the local area that everyone can contact to confirm that they are safe. Have everyone memorize their number.
 - Remember that in an emergency, it may be easier to text than call.
- **Practice your plan regularly.** Review how you would evacuate, where you will meet if separated, and other safety plans.
- **Ask about school plans.** Make sure your children's schools and daycare providers have emergency communication plans and supply kits. If they do not, encourage them to develop one.

Remember: Children feel better when they are involved in planning. The following websites provide ideas to help plan with your children:

<https://www.ready.gov/kids>

<https://www.cdc.gov/cpr/readywrigley/index.htm>

For more information about the specific disasters that are most likely to occur where you live, visit the Red Cross at <https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies.html> or Ready.gov at <https://www.ready.gov/be-informed>.