

Disaster Planning

Good preparation can save lives



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The Benefits of Disaster Planning

Being prepared can reduce fear, anxiety, and losses that accompany disasters. Communities, families, and individuals should know what to do in the event of a fire and where to seek shelter during a tornado or hurricane. They should be ready to evacuate their homes and take refuge in public shelters and know how to care for their basic medical needs. People also can reduce the impact of disasters, (for instance, securing items that could become airborne in a tornado), and sometimes avoid the danger completely.

- Disasters disrupt hundreds of thousands of lives every year. Disasters can have lasting effects to people and property.
- If a disaster occurs in your community, local government and disaster-relief organizations will try to help you, but you need to be ready as well. Local responders may not be able to reach you immediately.
- You should know how to respond to severe weather or any disaster that could occur in your area - hurricanes, earthquakes, extreme cold, flooding, or terrorism.
- You should also be ready to be self-sufficient for at least three days. This may mean providing for your own shelter, first aid, food, water, and sanitation.

People With Disabilities

Persons with disabilities, or those who may have mobility problems (such as elderly persons), should prepare as anyone else. Visually impaired persons or persons with speech, language, or hearing disabilities need special attention during disaster events. In addition, consider the following steps:

- Create a network of relatives, friends, or coworkers to assist in an emergency. If you or a loved one may need assistance in a disaster, discuss your disability with relatives, friends, or coworkers and ask for their help. Give a key to a neighbor or friend who may be able to assist you in a disaster.
- Contact your local emergency management office now. Many local emergency management offices maintain registers of people with disabilities and their needs so they can be located and assisted quickly in a disaster.

- Wear medical alert tags or bracelets to identify your disability in case of an emergency. These may save your life if you are in need of medical attention and unable to communicate.
- Know the location and availability of more than one facility if you are dependent on a dialysis machine or other life-sustaining equipment or treatment. There may be several people requiring equipment, or facilities may have been affected by the disaster.

Make An Emergency Checklist

Maintain a list of important items and procedures, and store it with your emergency supplies. Give a copy to another family member and a friend or neighbor.

Important items might include:

- Special equipment and supplies, for example, hearing aid batteries.
- Current prescription names and dosages.
- Names, addresses, and telephone numbers of doctors and pharmacists.
- Detailed information about the specifications of your medication regime.

For more information, and to download disaster plan checklists:

Federal Emergency Management Agency
800-462-7585
www.fema.gov/areyouready

The American Red Cross
202-303-5000 (National HQ)
www.redcross.org

The Disaster Center
www.disastercenter.com/guide/family