

Ready, Set, Prepare

September is National Preparedness Month. This awareness campaign is sponsored by FEMA in partnership with Citizen Corps and the Ad Council. It is designed to encourage Americans to take simple steps to prepare for emergencies in their homes, workplaces and communities.

The need to prepare is real: disasters disrupt hundreds of thousand of lives every year. Knowing what to do before, during and after an emergency can help you—and your family, coworkers and neighbors—to “weather the storm.”

What You Should Know

There are three fundamental components to dealing with potential disasters:

- Prepare
- Plan
- Stay Informed

Learn which hazards and emergencies are most likely to affect your area, the risks from these hazards, and your community’s plans for warning and evacuation. You can get this information from your local emergency management office or American Red Cross chapter. You can also go to the National Weather



Service website (www.nws.noaa.gov) for information on severe weather emergencies and to www.fema.gov for hazard maps of your area.

Should I Stay or Should I Go?

Disasters can either force you to evacuate or shelter-in-place. When community evacuations become necessary, don’t hesitate: Go. The amount of time you have to leave will depend on the hazard. If the event is a weather condition, like a hurricane or blizzard, you might have a day or two to get ready. But many disasters,

such as earthquakes, transportation and industrial accidents, or terrorist attacks, allow no time for people to gather even the most basic necessities, which is why planning ahead is essential.

Other hazards might confine you to your home, workplace, or another building that is safe. The safest locations to seek shelter vary by hazard; that is why it is important for you to know how to respond correctly to multiple hazards that might affect your local area.

Disaster Supplies Kit

If a disaster occurs in your community, local government and disaster-relief organizations will try to help you, but they may not be able to reach you immediately, or they may need to focus their efforts elsewhere. So, you should be ready to be self-sufficient for at least three days.

When preparing for a possible emergency situation, think first about the basics of survival: fresh water, food, clean air and warmth. To meet these fundamental needs every emergency supply kit should start with:

- One gallon of water per person per day (minimum three days)
- Three-day supply of non-perishable food per person (and a manual can-opener, if needed)
- Dust masks to help filter contaminated air
- Sleeping bag or blanket for each person and a complete change of clothes including a long-sleeved shirt, long pants and sturdy shoes

Since you do not now where you will be when an emergency occurs, prepare supply kits for home, work and vehicles. You can get complete disaster supply kit checklists and other emergency planning tools and strategies at these websites:

www.ready.gov

www.citizencorps.gov/ready

www.redcross.org

www.ready.adcouncil.org/beprepared/

Now is the time to prepare. As we head into flu, wildfire and hurricane season—with potential winter storms and extreme cold weather to follow in the months thereafter—are you ready?

Get a Kit, Make a Plan

Taking simple steps to prepare for potential hazards can make a big difference in ensuring the safety and well-being of yourself and your family. Here are a few things you can do right now to be safer in the event of an emergency:

- Prepare a three-day disaster supply kit.
- Establish a communication plan. Pick a long-distance contact person to relay information among family members.
- Create an emergency plan for your household. Recognize special planning issues—caring for pets and assisting people with special needs. Establish safe meeting spots in your home, outside your home and outside your neighborhood.
- Prepare to take important papers with you — driver's license or ID, Social Security card, insurance policies, deed or lease. Or scan and save documents onto a portable device that you can pack with your disaster kit.
- Sign up for basic First Aid and CPR courses.

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