



GET READY!

BLACKOUTS

Severe weather and storms can cause power outages and restoring power can take time. In some instances, such as during extended periods of hot weather, power companies may schedule periods of power outages to help conserve power across the board.

Before

- Conserve energy to help reduce the threat of a power outage.
- Have flashlights, a battery-powered or hand-cranked radio, and extra batteries on hand.
- Set aside extra water and buy or make extra ice.
- If you have space in your refrigerator or freezer, keep plastic containers filled with water, leaving about an inch of space in each one. The chilled or frozen water will help keep food cool during power outages.
- Be prepared to cook outside.
- If you take any medications that must be refrigerated, check with your doctor or pharmacist to determine how long medications can last.
- Back up computer files regularly.
- Have some form of phone that does not require electricity, either a standard telephone or a cellular phone, rather than a cordless telephone.
- Keep your vehicle's gas tank at least half full.
- If you have any specific needs or disabilities that require electrical equipment, make plans for dealing with a power outage.

During

- Never use candles for emergency lighting, use flashlights.
- Turn off any electrical equipment you were using when the power went out. Leave one light on so you know when the power returns.
- Avoid opening the refrigerator and freezer.
- Use generators safely. Don't run a generator inside a home or garage. Connect the equipment you want to run directly to the generator. Do not connect a generator to a home's electrical system. Keep instructions with the generator and be familiar with its use.
- Use the telephone only for emergencies.
- Listen to the radio for updates.
- Eliminate unnecessary travel.
- If it is hot outside, take steps to remain cool. If it is cold, take steps to remain warm.



- If you are in your car when a power line falls on it, stay in the vehicle and do not touch anything on the outside of the vehicle. Use your horn or cell phone to signal for help.
- Short-term power outages usually occur during peak energy usage times, usually between 4:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. on weekdays, and typically last one hour.

After

- Stay away from downed power lines.
- Do not refreeze any dairy products, seafood, or food that has thawed completely and been above 40° for more than two hours, or anything with a questionable texture or smell. If in doubt, throw it out.



GET READY!

WILDFIRES

According to the national Firewise Communities program, each year, wildland fires threaten hundreds of homes, causing millions of dollars in damage. Areas with an abundance of flammable vegetation and periods of dry, hot, windy weather are particularly vulnerable to wildfires.

Before

- Maintain a Firewise landscape around your home, with nonflammable landscaping materials within 5 feet of the house, and healthy, well-irrigated, well-spaced plants and trees in the area extending 100-200 feet from your home.
- Make sure your roof is made of fire-resistant material. Choose fire-resistant materials for your siding, deck, and porch.
- Sweep gutters, roofs, and eaves regularly. Remove dead branches around chimneys. If fire is approaching, remove combustible materials, including wood piles, lawn furniture, doormats, barbecue grills, and tarps, from around your home.
- Evacuate before the fire approaches your home. Back your car into the driveway and roll up the windows to allow for a quicker getaway. Plan to bring your valuables and your pets.
- Close and protect your home's openings, including attic and basement doors and vents, windows, doors, and pet doors. Remove flammable drapes and curtains and close all shutters, blinds, or heavy non-combustible drapes. Do not lock the doors and windows in case firefighters have to make a quick entry to fight the flames.
- Close all the interior doors in your home and the fireplace screen. Open the fireplace damper.
- Shut off any natural gas, propane, or fuel oil supplies at the source.
- Connect garden hoses and fill any pools, hot tubs, garbage cans, tubs, or other large containers with water.
- Place a ladder against the house in clear view.
- Disconnect garage door openers so the doors will open if there is no power.
- Turn on the outside lights and at least one light in each room to make your house more visible in heavy smoke.

During

- If you are in your car as the fire approaches, roll up the windows and close the air vents. Drive slowly with your headlights on. Watch for other vehicles and pedestrians. Do not drive through heavy smoke.



If you have to stop, park away from the heaviest trees and brush. Turn on the headlights and turn off the ignition. Keep the windows up and the vents closed. Get on the floor and cover up with a blanket or a coat.

- If you are in a building as the fire front approaches, stay inside. The fire will pass before the home burns down.
- If you are outside as the fire approaches, look for an area where vegetation or other fuel for the fire is sparse. On a steep mountainside, the back side is safer. Avoid canyons, natural chimneys, and saddles. If a road is nearby, lie face down along the road cut or in a ditch on the uphill side. Cover yourself with anything that will shield you from the fire's intense heat. If you are in a wooded area, seek a depression with sparse fuel. Clear fuel away from the area while the fire is approaching and then lie face down in the depression and cover yourself. Stay down until the fire passes.

After

- Do not return to your home until authorities say it is safe. If you are at home or able to return to your home, check the roof immediately and put out any roof fires, sparks, or embers. Check the attic for hidden burning sparks.
- Use the water in your pool or tubs. If your power is out, try connecting hoses to the outlet on your water heater.
- Maintain a fire watch for several hours after the fire. Re-check for smoke and sparks throughout the home.



GET READY!

VOLCANOES

In the United States, potentially active volcanoes mostly exist in Hawaii, Alaska, and the Pacific Northwest. When a volcano erupts, lava, poisonous gases, and flying rock and ash can travel hundreds of miles downwind. The intense heat of lava and ash flows causes severe fire hazards. The main danger area around a volcano is approximately a 20-mile radius.

Before

- Know your community's warning systems, disaster plans, and evacuation routes.
- Add extra safety goggles and something to cover your mouth and nose to your emergency supplies kit.

During

- Follow the evacuation order.
- Be aware of landslides or mudflows, which can move faster than you can walk or run. Mudflows are more common near stream channels and with prolonged heavy rain. Look upstream before crossing a bridge and do not cross if a mudflow is approaching.
- Avoid river valleys and low-lying areas.
- Help neighbors who may need assistance.
- If you have a respiratory ailment, avoid breathing any amount of ash.
- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants.
- Use safety goggles and wear eyeglasses instead of contacts.
- Use a dust mask or hold a damp cloth to your face.
- Stay away from areas downwind of the volcano.
- Drive through heavy ash fall only if absolutely necessary. If you have to drive through heavy ash fall, keep your speed to 35 miles per hour or less.
- If you are unable to evacuate, stay inside with windows, doors, and ventilation systems closed until the ash settles.

After

- Clear heavy ash from flat or low-pitched roofs and rain gutters.
- Avoid running car or truck engines, which can stir up volcanic ash, resulting in clogged engines, damaged moving parts, and stalled vehicles.





GET READY!

TORNADOES

Every state has some risk of experiencing a tornado. The risk is increased, however, in the Midwest, Southeast, and Southwest. Tornadoes, which spin off from powerful thunderstorms, can kill people and devastate neighborhoods in seconds. The rotating, funnel-shaped cloud can have whirling winds up to 300 miles per hour. Damage paths can be in excess of 1 mile wide and 50 miles long.

Before

- Stay informed—listen to a NOAA weather radio to check local forecasts and news reports regularly. Keep a battery-powered or hand-cranked radio along with extra batteries.
- Determine in advance where you will take shelter during a tornado. Basements and storm cellars are the best choices. If no underground shelter is available, choose an interior room or hallway on the lowest floor possible.
- Look for the following danger signs: dark, often greenish sky; large hail; a large, dark, low-lying cloud that may be rotating; and a loud roar similar to a freight train.
- If local authorities issue a tornado watch, remain alert for approaching storms, watch the sky, and stay tuned to the radio or television.
- If local authorities issue a tornado warning, take shelter immediately.

- If you are outside with no shelter, lie flat in a nearby ditch or depression and cover your head with your hands. Be aware of the potential for flooding. Do not get under an overpass or a bridge. You are safer in a low, flat location. Watch out for flying debris, which is the cause of most fatalities and injuries during tornadoes.
- Never try to outrun a tornado in an urban or congested area in a car or truck. Instead, leave the vehicle immediately for safer shelter.

After

- Stay out of damaged buildings.
- Stay clear of downed power lines.
- Help injured or trapped people.
- Check on others who may require assistance, such as the older adults, children, and people with disabilities.

During

- If you are in a building, go to a pre-designated shelter area, such as a safe room, basement, storm cellar, or the lowest building level. If there is no basement, go to the center of an interior room on the lowest level. Stay away from corners, windows, doors, and outside walls. Put as many walls as possible between you and the outside. Get under a sturdy table and use your arms to protect your head and neck. Layers of clothes, even a mattress, can be pulled over your head to protect you from flying debris. Do not open windows.
- If you are in a vehicle, trailer, or mobile home, get out immediately and go to the lowest floor of a nearby, sturdy building or storm shelter. Mobile homes, even if tied down, offer little protection from tornadoes.





GET READY!

THUNDERSTORMS

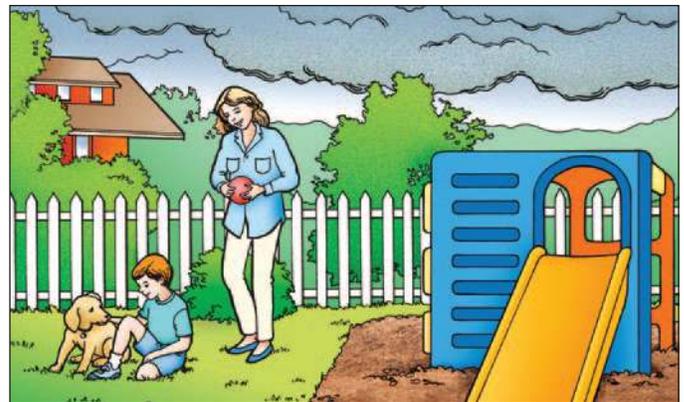
Approximately 10% of thunderstorms are considered severe, which means they produce hail at least three-quarters of an inch in diameter, have winds of at least 58 miles per hour, or produce a tornado. Lightning often strikes outside of heavy rain and may occur as far as 10 miles from any rainfall. Most lightning deaths and injuries occur when people are caught outdoors in the summer months during the evening or afternoon. The chances of being struck by lightning are about 1 in 600,000.

Before

- Stay informed—listen to a NOAA weather radio to check local forecasts and news reports regularly. Keep a battery-powered or hand-cranked radio along with extra batteries.
- Buy ground fault protectors for key electrical equipment.
- Remove dead or rotting trees and branches that could fall.
- If a thunderstorm is likely in your area, postpone outdoor activities.
- Shutter windows and secure outside doors and objects. Secure outdoor objects that could blow away.
- Unplug appliances and other electrical items, such as computers, and turn off air conditioners. If you are unable to unplug them, turn them off.

During

- Follow the 30-30 rule: When you see lightning, count the seconds until you hear thunder. If that time is 30 seconds or less, the thunderstorm is within 6 miles and is dangerous. Seek shelter immediately. The threat of lightning continues longer than most people think. Wait at least 30 minutes after the last thunder before leaving your shelter.
- If you can hear thunder, you are within striking distance for lightning. Seek safe shelter immediately.
- Stop outdoor activities at the first clap of thunder and get inside a large building or an enclosed vehicle. Wait 30 minutes after the thunder to go back outside.
- When inside, stay off corded phones, computers, and other electronic equipment that put you in direct contact with electricity or plumbing. Cordless phones and cell phones are safe to use. Avoid showering or bathing.
- If you are in open water, go to land and seek shelter immediately.



- If you feel your hair stand on end, indicating that lightning is about to strike, squat low to the ground on the balls of your feet. Place your hands over your ears and your head between your knees. Make yourself the smallest target possible and minimize your contact with the ground. Do not lie flat on the ground.

After

- If a person is struck by lightning, call 9-1-1 and get medical care immediately.
- Lightning strike victims carry no electrical charge; attend to them immediately. Check their breathing, heartbeat, and pulse.



GET READY!

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS for Owners of Pets and Service Animals

Every disaster plan must include your pets. If you know disaster is imminent, bring your pet inside immediately. Get your animals under control as quickly as possible, either using a leash or by putting them in a pet carrier.

Disasters often strike suddenly, while you are away from home. You can improve your pet's chances for safety if you leave him/her inside, with collars and identification tags, when you go out. Consider an arrangement with a trusted neighbor who would be willing to evacuate your pets in your absence. Make sure the person knows your animals, can locate your emergency supplies, and has a key to your home. Provide him or her with instructions and phone numbers on how to reach you.

Keep your animal's license and identification current.

Keep up-to-date identification on your pets at all times. Use a properly fitting collar with an identification tag. Consider using a microchip for identification, but make sure local shelters have microchip scanners.

Keep current color photographs of your pet, showing any distinguishing markings, with your emergency supplies.

If you evacuate, take your pet.

Your animal's best protection is to be with you. Remember, taking your pet with you requires special planning.

Locate a safe place for your pets before disaster strikes. Evacuation shelters generally do not accept animals for public health and safety reasons. Service animals, on the other hand, are allowed to accompany their owners to an emergency shelter. Call hotels and motels in your immediate area and a reasonable distance from home to see if they will accept pets and under what conditions. Also, contact local boarding kennels and veterinary



hospitals with boarding facilities. Ask friends and family members whether they will provide foster care for your pets.

NOTE: Animal shelters will provide temporary foster care for owned pets in times of disaster, but this should be considered only as a last resort.

Emergency Supplies Kit

Assemble a portable pet emergency supplies kit to provide for your pet's needs for seven days. Pack the supplies in a carry case, in case you evacuate. Include the following:

- Medications and medical records, including vaccination records (stored in a water proof container) and a first aid kit. Name and telephone number of your veterinarian. List medical conditions and special considerations.
- Sturdy leashes, harnesses, and carriers to transport pets safely and ensure that your animals can't escape.
- Current photos of your pets in case they get lost.
- Food, portable water, bowls, cat litter and pan, and can opener.
- Plastic bags/paper towels for disposing of animal waste.
- Favorite toys and pet beds with kennel or carrying case.
- Maintain a list of emergency contact numbers in the kit.

Even with a disaster plan in place, pets and their owners can sometimes run into trouble, or a disaster can exceed local resources. Visit the Humane Society of the United States for more information, www.hsus.org.



GET READY!

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS for People with Disabilities and Activity Limitations



The best way to deal with disasters is to learn about and think through the challenges you may face if you could not use your home or your personal belongings. Some emergency situations require that you evacuate your home with little or no warning and move to a shelter or a designated site. By planning ahead, you can make sure you are ready to leave home with your most essential items, on a few moments notice.

Create a Personal Support Network

A personal support network, or self-help team, can help you prepare for a disaster. Your network should include people you know and trust and who can check on you within minutes to see if you need help. Neighbors are often the closest and most available contacts in an emergency. At home, work, school, or in the community, your support team should help you identify and secure resources and assess your needs before, during, and after a disaster. To be better prepared to help you, your network members should have copies of your personal disaster preparation plan for your home, your emergency contact list, and your medical information list. Do not rely on just one person, have at least three people trained in your network. Be ready to give brief, clear, specific instructions and directions to rescue personnel or write them down on note cards with supplies. Remember to keep copies of your contact lists with you to assist in your rescue and care following a disaster. Label your vital equipment with your name and contact information, as well as specific operating instructions. Be sure to instruct members of your network on how to operate and maintain your equipment.

Personal Disaster Preparation

Make an emergency information list that includes:

- Medical and emergency contact information;
- Emergency out-of-state contacts, outside the potential disaster area;
- Names and numbers of everyone in your network; and

Make a medical information list that includes:

- Medical provider information, including your doctor's name and number and your insurance policy information and numbers. Attach copies of prescriptions, insurance cards and related information to your medical lists.
- Medications and dosages being taken—remember to update this information.
- Specific medical conditions.
- Physical limitations.
- Adaptive equipment and vendors' phone numbers.
- Allergies or sensitivities.

Emergency Preparedness Kits

Basic Emergency Supplies Kit

Make an emergency supplies kit that contains your basic emergency supplies for your home, as well as your personal needs supplies.

First Aid Kit

Assemble a first aid kit that includes any and all medical supplies you need on a daily basis. Include a first aid textbook.

Disability Related Supplies and Other Equipment

List the specific supplies and equipment you may need. Be sure to note where you store these items and operation and maintenance instructions. Disability related supplies should be part of your basic supplies kit as well as part of your "go kit."

Portable "Go Kit"

Get a drawstring bag, a pouch with lots of pockets, a fanny pack, or a small backpack and keep it within reach, by your chair, wheelchair, scooter, or other assistive device. Your "Go Kit" should include a copy of your emergency and medical information and your support network contact information and doctors. Include a small flashlight; a whistle or noise maker; water; extra medication and copies of your prescriptions; an extra pair of glasses; a hearing aid; a pad and pencil or other writing device; and a pair of heavy work gloves for protection from glass and other debris.

Resources

Emergency Evacuation Preparedness Guide: A Guide for People with Disabilities and Other Activity Limitations. This guide helps people with disabilities better prepare for large or small-scale emergencies. www.cdihp.org/evacuation/toc.html

Emergency Preparedness: Taking Responsibility for Your Safety. Tips for People with Disabilities and Activity Limitations. Tip sheets focus on earthquake safety; however they are useful for all types of disaster preparedness for people with disabilities. www.lacoa.org/PDF/ESP%2006/ESP%20Disabilities%20Guide%20FINAL%202006.pdf

Disaster Preparedness for People with Disabilities. Booklet created by FEMA and the American Red Cross providing information for people with disabilities and activity limitations. www.redcross.org/services/disaster/0,1082,0_603_00.html



GET READY!

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

for Older Adults

Each person's needs and abilities are unique, but with careful planning anyone can prepare for an emergency. A disaster can occur anytime, anywhere, and without warning. Think about how a disaster might affect your individual needs.

Have a Plan

- Plan to make it on your own for at least seven days. You may not have access to a medical facility, pharmacy, or grocery store.
- Think about the resources you use daily and what you would do if they were not available.
- Create your emergency supplies kit.
- Identify local shelters or consider friends and family outside your immediate area with whom you could stay.
- If you have a pet, find out if local shelters or family are willing to accept the pet. If not, plan what you would do with the pet if you need to evacuate.

Create a Support Network

- Talk to family, friends, and others who may be able to help.
- Neighbors helping neighbors is important in an emergency. Make sure you know your neighbors. Introduce yourself and let them know any specific needs you may have.
- Share your emergency plan with everyone in your support network.
- Make sure everyone knows your evacuation plan and where you will go during a disaster.
- Practice your plan with those who have agreed to help you.
- Give an extra key to your home to someone in your support network.

Medications and Medical Supplies

- Make sure medical equipment, such as a cane or wheelchair, is clearly labeled with your name and contact information.
- Keep a list of your medications, dosage, physician, and pharmacy information.

- Be sure to include your eyeglasses, hearing aid and batteries, wheelchair batteries, and oxygen in your emergency supplies kit.
- If you use a battery-powered wheelchair, consider keeping your old un-powered chair for emergency use.

Keep Important Documents Together

- Include copies of important documents in your emergency supplies kit, such as medical records, wills, deeds, social security number, charge and bank account information, and tax records. Keep this information in a place that is secure, yet readily accessible if you need to get it in a hurry.
- Have copies of your medical insurance and Medicare cards available. Include a list of emergency contact numbers.
- If you have any disabilities, especially communication issues, be sure to include a list of them in your emergency information.
- Keep the important documents in a waterproof container.





GET READY!

NUCLEAR POWER PLANT INCIDENTS

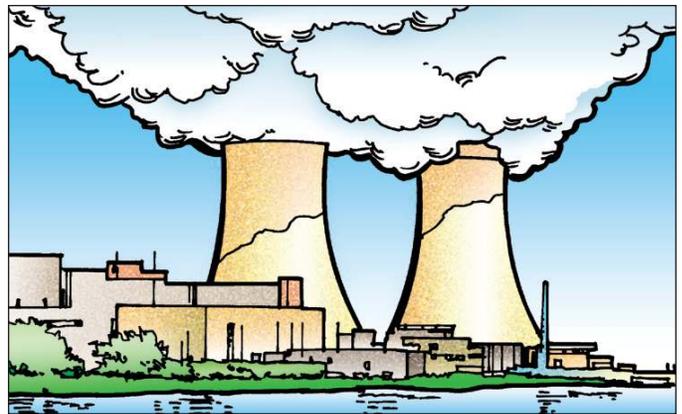
Nuclear power plants operate in most states in the country and produce about 20 percent of the nation's power. Nearly 3 million Americans live within 10 miles of an operating nuclear power plant. An incident at a nuclear power plant can leave people exposed to radiation. Radiation has a cumulative effect, which means the longer a person is exposed, the greater the effect. A high exposure to radiation can cause serious illness or death.

Before

- Prepare your evacuation plan, including pets, transportation routes, and destinations.
- Keep food in covered containers or in the refrigerator.
- Get public emergency information materials from the power company that operates your local nuclear power plant or your local emergency services office. If you live within 10 miles of the power plant, you should receive these materials from the power company or your state or local government annually.

During

- If you are told to evacuate, keep car windows and vents closed. Use re-circulating air.
- If you are told to stay inside, turn off the air conditioner, ventilation fans, furnace, and other air intakes. Go to a basement or other underground area, if possible. Do not use the telephone unless absolutely necessary.
- Use the combination of distance, shielding, and time to protect yourself.
- Minimize your exposure to radiation by putting as much distance between you and the source of radiation as possible. Do this by either evacuating or remaining inside.
- Use the heaviest, densest material possible to shield yourself from the radiation. Cover yourself with anything, even newspapers.



After

- If you think you have been exposed to nuclear radiation, change your clothes and shoes and put them in a plastic bag. Seal the bag and place it out of the way. Take a thorough shower.
- Seek medical treatment for any unusual symptoms, such as nausea.
- Wash any food that was not covered before putting it into containers.



GET READY!

NATIONAL SECURITY

Threats to national security come in many forms and can include explosions, biological threats, chemical threats, nuclear blasts, and radiological dispersion devices (RDDs). In the event of an attack, public health officials may not immediately be able to provide information on what you should do. Determining the exact illness, treatment, and danger will take time.

Before

- Create an emergency communications plan.
- Establish a meeting place away from your home.
- Assemble an emergency supplies kit.
- Check on the school emergency plan of any school-age children in your family.
- Learn basic first aid techniques.

During

- Remain calm and be patient. Follow the advice of local emergency officials.
- If local officials ask you to evacuate, do so immediately. Wear long-sleeved shirts, long pants, and sturdy shoes. Take your emergency supplies kit, take your pets, lock your home, avoid blocked roads, and stay away from downed power lines.
- If local officials ask you to “shelter in place,” remain inside your home or office; close and lock all windows and doors; turn off all fans and ventilation systems; close the fireplace damper; get your emergency supplies kit; and turn on the radio. Go to an interior room without windows that’s above ground level. Be prepared to use duct tape and plastic sheeting to seal all cracks around the door and any vents. Ideally, choose a room with a hard-wired telephone.
- If you are in your car when local officials ask you to shelter in place and you are unable to get to a building quickly, pull over to the side of the road. If it is sunny outside, pick a shady spot. Turn off the engine and close the windows and vents. If possible, seal the vents with duct tape. Listen to the radio for updates and stay where you are until local officials say it is safe to get back on the road.
- Listen to local radio or television for updates.
- Practice good hygiene to avoid spreading germs.



After

- If the disaster happens near you, check for injuries. Give first aid and get help for seriously injured people.
- If the disaster occurs near your home when you are there, check for damage using a flashlight. Do not light matches or candles or turn on electrical switches. Check for fires, fire hazards, and other household hazards.
- If you smell gas or hear a hissing sound, open the windows, get everyone outside, and turn off the main gas valve.
- Shut off any damaged utilities.
- Confine or secure your pets.
- Check on your neighbors who may need assistance.
- Call your emergency contact and then do not use the phone again unless in an emergency.



GET READY!

LANDSLIDES

Landslides, also known as mudslides and debris flow, occur in all U.S. states and territories. A variety of factors, including earthquakes, storms, fires, and heavy rains can cause landslides. Landslides happen quickly and with little notice and can travel several miles from their source, growing in size and picking up trees, cars, boulders, and other objects and materials.

Before

- Follow proper land-use procedures and avoid building near steep slopes or along natural erosion valleys.
- Talk to your insurance agent to find out if flood insurance could cover your property and belongings.
- Plant ground cover on slopes and build retaining walls.
- In mud flow areas, build channels or deflection walls to direct the flow around buildings. Keep in mind, though, that you may be liable for damage if you divert debris flow onto someone else's property.
- Know the signs that a landslide is possible, including: Changes in the landscape, including patterns of storm-water drainage, land movement, small slides, flows, or progressively leaning trees. Doors or windows stick or jam for the first time. New cracks appear in plaster, tile, brick, or foundations. Outside walls, walks, or stairs begin pulling away from the building. Slowly developing, widening cracks appear on the ground or on paved areas, such as streets or driveways. Underground utility lines break. Bulging ground appears at the base of a slope. Water breaks through the ground surface at a new location. Fences, retaining walls, utility poles, or trees tilt or move.
- Know the signs that a landslide may be occurring, including: A faint rumbling sound that increases as the landslide nears. The ground slopes downward in one direction and may begin shifting that way under your feet. Unusual sounds, such as trees cracking or boulders knocking together, might indicate moving debris. Collapsed pavement, mud, fallen rocks, and other indications of possible debris flow can be seen when driving, particularly near embankments along roadsides.
- Contact your local fire, police, or public works department if you suspect imminent landslide danger. Also, let neighbors know of the potential risk.

During

- Consider leaving if it is safe to do so. Driving during an intense storm can be dangerous. Watch for collapsed pavement, mud, fallen rocks, and other indications of possible debris flow.



- Curl into a tight ball and protect your head if you can't get out of the landslide's path.
- Move to a second story, if possible.
- Listen for any unusual sounds that may indicate moving debris, such as trees cracking or boulders knocking together.

After

- Stay away from the slide area. Additional slides may occur.
- Listen to local radio or television stations for the latest emergency information.
- Watch for flooding.
- Check for injured or trapped people near the slide without entering the direct slide area. Show rescuers the locations of anyone trapped.
- Help neighbors who may need assistance.
- Report broken utility lines and damaged roadways and railways.
- Check the building foundation, chimney, and surrounding land for damage.
- Replant damaged ground as soon as possible.
- Seek professional advice for evaluating landslide hazards or designing corrective techniques to reduce landslide risk.
- If you smell gas, get out of the area and only use your phone to call the gas company if you can safely distance yourself from the odor of the gas. Remember not to use any appliance or open flame in areas where you still smell gas.



GET READY!

HURRICANES

The intensity of hurricanes that will hit land is measured in terms of categories that relate wind speeds and potential damage. Even less intense storms can cause damage in areas that have not prepared in advance.

Before

- Prepare your evacuation plan, including pets, transportation routes and destinations.
- Keep all trees and shrubs well trimmed and clear loose and clogged rain gutters and downspouts.
- Determine how and where to secure your boat.
- Consider building a safe room.
- Stay informed! Listen to a NOAA weather radio or check local forecasts and news reports regularly.
- Cover your home's windows with pre-cut plywood or hurricane shutters. Tape does not prevent windows from breaking.
- Bring in all outside furniture, decorations, garbage cans, etc.
- Turn off utilities if instructed to do so.
- Turn off propane tanks.
- Avoid using the phone, except for serious emergencies.
- Fill the bathtub or buckets with water to use for cleaning and flushing toilets.
- Keep your gas tank at least 3/4 full at all times.
- Keep your emergency supplies kit, including water, and copies of important documents, in a waterproof, portable container, in an easily accessible location

Evacuate under the following conditions:

- If local authorities tell you to evacuate, follow their directions.
- If you live in a mobile home or temporary structure, which are particularly hazardous no matter how well fastened to the ground.
- If you live in a high-rise building.
- If you live on the coast, on a floodplain, near a river, or on an inland waterway.
- If you feel you are in danger.
- If you live in an area below sea level.

During

- If you choose not to evacuate, stay indoors and away from windows and glass doors. Notify out-of-area contacts of your decision. Close all interior doors and secure and brace exterior doors. Keep curtains and blinds closed. Take refuge in a small interior room, closet, or hallway on the lowest level. Lie on the floor under a table or another sturdy object.
- Don't be fooled by a lull in the storm—it could be the eye of the storm and winds could resume.

After

- Be aware of flooding and tornadoes.
- Stay out of flood waters, if possible.
- Stay away from downed power lines.
- If you evacuated, do not return to your home until local authorities say it is safe.





GET READY!

HOME FIRES

Fire can spread rapidly through your home, leaving you as little as two minutes to escape safely once the alarm sounds. Your ability to get out depends on advance warning from smoke alarms and advance planning—a home fire escape plan that everyone in your family is familiar with and has practiced.

Before

- Install smoke alarms on every level of the home and outside each sleeping area. For the best protection, install interconnected smoke alarms in each bedroom and throughout the home. When one sounds, they all sound.
- Test alarms once a month. Change batteries at least once a year. Replace alarms every ten years.
- Consider installing smoke alarms with a “long-life” (10-year) battery. These alarms must be tested once a month.
- Consider installing a residential automatic fire sprinkler system.
- Plan and practice your family’s escape route. Make sure every room has two ways out. Make sure all doors and windows open easily. Consider escape ladders for upper floors and make sure security bars on your doors and windows open easily from the inside. Remember to plan for your pets.
- Never use flammable liquids inside and store them in approved containers in well-ventilated areas. Safely discard all rags or materials that have been soaked in flammable liquids outside in a metal container.
- Inspect your chimney regularly. Clear any branches and debris from the chimney area. Make sure your chimney is at least three feet taller than the roof, insulated, and equipped with spark arresters on top.
- Keep space heaters at least three feet from combustibles and away from open flames.
- Keep matches and lighters up high, away from children’s sight and reach.
- If you smoke, smoke outside. Use large deep, sturdy ashtrays.
- Stay in the kitchen when you are frying, grilling, or broiling food. If you leave the kitchen for even a short period of time, turn off the stove. If you are simmering, boiling, baking or roasting food, check it regularly, remain in the home while food is cooking, and use a timer to remind you that the stove or oven is on.

- Have an electrician check and maintain the wiring in your building. Inspect cords for frayed or exposed wiring and loose plugs. Do not run wires or cords under rugs, over nails, or across high-traffic areas. Do not overload extension cords. Make sure insulation does not touch bare electrical wiring.
- Inspect and clean dryer filters and exhaust frequently.

During

- Get out and stay out. Call the fire department from outside the home and do not return into the building until firefighters give the okay.
- If fire or smoke blocks your escape route, use your second way out. If you must pass through smoke, get low and go under the smoke and close doors behind you.
- If you need to open a closed door, feel the door. If it’s hot, use your second way out.
- If smoke, heat, or flames prevent you from exiting a room, keep the door closed, call for help and wait by the window for rescue.

After

- Evacuate immediately if you detect heat or smoke in a fire-damaged building.
- If you are a tenant, contact the landlord.
- If you have a safe or strongbox, wait several hours before opening it. It can hold intense heat and if you open it before it is completely cool, the contents could burst into flames.
- If you must leave your home after a fire because the building inspector has deemed it unsafe, ask someone you trust to watch the property in your absence.





GET READY!

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS INCIDENTS

In most communities, the local emergency planning committee (LEPC) is responsible for hazardous material response information and for making an emergency plan. Find out about the LEPC in your community, and get a copy of your community's emergency plan.

Before

- Add plastic sheeting, duct tape, masks and gloves, and scissors to your emergency supplies kit.

During

- If authorities ask you to evacuate, do so immediately. Stay tuned to local news for evacuation routes, temporary shelters, and procedures. If you have time, reduce potential contamination in the house by closing all the windows, shutting all the vents, and turning off attic fans. Take your emergency supplies kit with you. Help neighbors who may need special assistance.
- If you are caught outside, stay upstream, uphill, and upwind. Try to get at least one-half mile or eight to 10 city blocks from the danger area. Move away from the accident scene, and help keep others away. Do not walk into or touch any spilled liquids, airborne mists, or condensed solid chemical deposits. Try not to inhale gases, fumes, or smoke. If possible, cover your mouth with a cloth. Stay away from accident victims until the hazardous material has been identified.
- If you are in a motor vehicle, stop and seek shelter in a permanent building. If you must remain in your car, keep the windows and vents closed, and shut off the air conditioner and heater.
- If authorities ask you to stay inside, bring your pets in, as well. Close and lock all exterior doors and windows. Close the vents, fireplace dampers, and as many interior doors as possible. Turn off air conditioners and ventilation systems. Go into a pre-selected shelter room, which should be above ground and have the fewest openings to the outside. Seal gaps under doorways and windows with wet towels or plastic sheeting and duct tape. Seal gaps around window air conditioning units, bathroom and kitchen exhaust fans, and stove and dryer vents with duct tape and plastic sheeting, wax paper, or aluminum foil. Use material to fill cracks and holes in the room, such as those around pipes. If gas or vapors could have entered the building, take

shallow breaths through a cloth or a towel. Avoid eating or drinking any potentially contaminated food or water.

- In a sealed shelter room, 10 square feet of floor space per person will provide sufficient air to prevent carbon dioxide buildup for up to five hours, assuming a normal breathing rate while resting. Officials are unlikely to recommend shelter in a sealed room for more than two to three hours, however, because the contaminated outside air gradually seeps into the shelter. At this point evacuation is the better choice.

After

- Ventilate the shelter when the emergency has passed to avoid breathing contaminated air still inside.
- Return home only after authorities say it is safe. Open windows and vents and turn on fans to provide ventilation.
- If you have come in contact with or have been exposed to hazardous chemicals, act quickly and do the following: Follow decontamination instructions from local authorities. You may be advised to take a shower, or you may be told to stay away from water. Seek medical treatment for unusual symptoms as soon as possible. Place exposed clothing and shoes in tightly sealed containers. Do not allow them to contact other materials. Call local authorities to find out about proper disposal. Advise anyone who comes into contact with you that you may have been exposed to a toxic substance.
- Find out from local authorities how to clean up your land and property.
- Report any lingering vapors or other hazards to your local emergency services office.





GET READY!

FLOODS

Floods can happen everywhere, making them one of the country's most common natural disasters. Flooding poses a greater threat in low-lying areas, near water, downstream from dams. Even the smallest streams, creek beds or drains can overflow and create flooding. During periods of heavy rain or extended periods of steady rains, be aware of the possibility of a flood. Flash floods develop quickly—anywhere from a few minutes to a few hours. Listen to local weather reports for flooding information.

Before

- Check to see if you have flood insurance coverage.
- Raise your furnace, water heater, or electrical panel if they are in areas of your home that may be flooded.
- Install “check valves” in sewer traps.
- Construct barriers, such as levees, berms, or flood walls, to stop floodwater from entering the building.
- Seal walls in basements with waterproofing compounds.
- During a flood or flash flood watch, be prepared to evacuate, including fill your car's gas tank; bring in outside furniture; move valuables to high points in your home; and unplug electrical appliances and move them to high points.
- During a flood warning, evacuate if you are so advised.
- During a flash flood warning, immediately seek higher ground.
- Keep your emergency supplies kit, including water, stored in an easily accessible, waterproof place.

During

- If time allows, call someone to let them know where you are going, and check with neighbors who may need a ride.
- Stay out of flood waters, if possible. Even water only several inches deep can be dangerous. If you have to walk through water, use a stick to check the firmness of the ground ahead of you. Avoid moving water.
- Do not drive into flooded areas. If your car becomes surrounded by rising water, get out quickly and move to higher ground.
- Stay away from downed power lines.



After

- Do not return home until local authorities say it is safe to do so.
- Do not drink or cook with your tap water until local authorities say it is safe.
- Avoid floodwaters, which could be contaminated or electrically charged.
- Watch out for areas in which the floodwaters may have receded, leaving weakened roadways.
- Be extra careful when entering buildings that may have hidden structural damage.
- Clean and disinfect everything that got wet.
- Service damaged septic tanks, cesspools, pits, and leaching systems as soon as possible. Damaged sewer systems are a serious health hazard.



GET READY!

EXTREME HEAT

A heat wave is an extended period of extreme heat, and is often accompanied by high humidity. These conditions can be dangerous and even life-threatening for people who don't take the proper precautions.

- Prepare for a heat wave by checking to see that your home's cooling system works properly.
- Make sure your home is well insulated, including weather stripping around doors and windows.
- Keep storm windows up all year.
- Plan on being inside a cool building during the hottest time of the day.
- Cover windows that receive morning or afternoon sun with drapes, shades, or awnings.
- Never leave children or pets alone in a closed vehicle.
- During a heat wave, slow down and avoid strenuous activity. Stay inside as much as possible. If air conditioning is not available, consider going to a public building or to the lowest floor and staying out of the sunshine. Wear lightweight, light-colored clothing. Drink plenty of water regularly and often even if you do not feel thirsty. Avoid drinks with alcohol or caffeine. Eat small meals and eat more often.
- If someone is experiencing heat cramps, get them to a cooler place and have him or her rest in a comfortable position. Lightly stretch the affected muscle and replenish fluids at a rate of a half glass of cool water every 15 minutes. Do not give caffeinated or alcoholic liquids, which can worsen conditions.
- Watch for signs of heat exhaustion, including cool, moist, pale, or flushed skin; heavy sweating; headache; nausea or vomiting; dizziness; and exhaustion. Body temperature will be near normal. If you see signs of heat exhaustion, get the person out of the heat and to a cooler place. Remove or loosen tight clothing and apply cool, wet cloths, such as towels or sheets. If the person is conscious, give him or her cool water to drink.
- Watch for signs of heat stroke, including hot, red skin; changes in consciousness; rapid, weak pulse; and rapid, shallow breathing. Body temperature can be very high—as high as 105° F. If the person was sweating from heavy work or exercise, his or her skin may be wet otherwise, it will be dry. If you see signs of heat stroke, call 9-1-1 and get help fast. Move the person to a cooler place. Quickly cool the body by immersing the victim in a cool bath or wrapping wet sheets around the body and fanning the victim. Keep the person lying down and continue to cool the body any way you can. If the person refuses water or is vomiting or his or her level of consciousness changes, do not give them anything else to eat or drink.





GET READY!

EARTHQUAKES

Throughout the United States, 45 states and territories have a moderate to high risk of an earthquake. Falling walls, flying glass, or debris cause most deaths and injuries associated with earthquakes.

Before

- Identify safe places in your home or place of work where you will ride out an earthquake. The best protection from falling debris is under heavy furniture. When entering buildings for the first time, remember to locate the exits and look for the best place to ride out an earthquake.
- Prepare your emergency kit, including water, and keep it stored in an easily accessible location.
- Bolt bookcases, china cabinets, filing cabinets, and other tall furniture to wall studs. Anchor overhead light fixtures and heavy electronics such as televisions and computers.
- Install strong latches on cabinets and securely fasten shelves to walls.
- Strap the water heater to wall studs and bolt it to the floor.
- Keep large or heavy objects on lower shelves and store breakable items in lower cabinets with doors and latches.
- Inspect and repair electrical wiring and gas connections.
- Check for structural defects and repair cracks in your ceiling and foundation, and that your home is anchored.
- Keep toxic and flammable items securely stored in cabinets with doors and latches.
- Learn how to turn off electricity, gas, and water.

During

- When the shaking begins, **DROP, COVER, and HOLD ON**. Move only a few steps to a nearby safe place. The best protection from falling debris is under heavy furniture. The least safe place is directly outside of a building.
- If you are inside, stay inside until the shaking stops and you're sure it is safe to exit.
- Stay away from windows, mirrors, or other glass.
- In a high-rise building, expect the fire alarms and sprinklers to go off even if there is no fire.

- If you are outside, stay clear of buildings, power lines, overpasses, and elevated expressways.
- If you are in a vehicle, pull over at a clear location and stop. Stay in the vehicle, with your seatbelt fastened until the shaking stops.

After

- Expect aftershocks, which can occur hours or days after the initial quake.
- If you live in a coastal area, be aware of possible tsunamis. Listen to portable battery operated TV or radio for emergency updates.
- Check for gas leaks. If you smell gas or hear a hissing or blowing noise, open a window and leave the building immediately. Turn off the gas at the outside main valve, if possible, and call the gas company. Only use your phone to call the gas company if you can safely distance yourself from the odor of the gas. Remember not to use any appliance or open flame in areas where you still smell gas. Watch for fallen power lines.
- Open cabinets and doors cautiously.





GET READY! RELIEF AID in a Disaster



No person or community is immune to the threat of disaster!

Preparation can be vital to surviving and recovering from a disaster. Immediately following a disaster, the safety and well being of you and your family come first. The recovery process is not automatic. Essential services may be cut off and local emergency responders and disaster relief workers may not be able to reach you right away.

When a disaster threatens or occurs, local authorities take immediate steps to warn and evacuate, protect life and property, and alleviate suffering. If additional help is needed, the governor may direct execution of the state's emergency plan, using state police, the National Guard, or commit other state resources as the situation demands. Federal establishments, particularly military installations which provide immediate assistance, volunteer organizations, and other federal agencies operating under their own statutory authorities, may be able to help. If the situation is beyond the capabilities of local and state forces, however, the governor may request that the president declare a "federal disaster."

State Offices of Disaster Operations

Each state has an office responsible for disaster operations, such as the Office of Emergency Services or the Office of Civil Defense. State offices of emergency or disaster services coordinate state agency response to major disasters in support of local government.

Local Volunteer Organizations

Private volunteer organizations, such as the American Red Cross, the Salvation Army, and church and community groups, are usually on the scene during or right after a disaster. These groups help with the essentials, such as new clothing, groceries, shelter, medical aid, counseling, and money. If you need help, listen to news reports to find the nearest Red Cross Disaster Service Center or call Red Cross at 800-733-2767.

Financial Assistance

Four basic sources of financial assistance are available to help you through the recovery process: insurance, government disaster programs, volunteer organizations, and businesses.

Disaster Application Centers (DAC)

A widespread disaster that caused a lot of damage may render your community eligible for state and federal aid. Local TV, radio, and newspapers will keep you informed about assistance that may be available to you. If the disaster was severe and the president declared your area a major disaster, one or more DACs may open, usually in schools or other public buildings. Staff at these centers give information and take applications for assistance.

Federal Disaster Assistance

Federal disaster assistance is available for everyone. People who are not insured should first go to a DAC. If possible, people with insurance should file their "Proof of Loss" form with their insurance company before visiting a DAC. Bring a copy of the form with you to the DAC.

Federal Disaster Aid Phone Numbers

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)	Small Business Administration
National Telephone Registration	1(800) 488-5323
1(800) 462-9029	Social Security Administration
TDD: 1(800) 462-7585	1(800) 772-1213
Internal Revenue Service	Department of Veteran's Affairs
1(800) 829-1040	1(800) 827-1000
TDD: 1(800) 852-5711	





GET READY!

WINTER STORMS AND EXTREME COLD

Most of the United States is at risk for winter storms. Severe storms can cause dangerous or life-threatening conditions. The dangers include blinding wind-driven snow, extreme cold, ice road conditions, avalanches, and downed trees and power lines. It's important to prepare before the winter storm season.

Before

- Stay informed of winter weather.
- Keep a sufficient supply of heating fuel. Consider storing a back-up fuel, such as a good supply of dry, seasoned wood for your fireplace or wood stove.
- Winterize your home. Insulate walls and attics, caulk and weather-strip doors and windows, and install storm windows or cover windows with plastic.
- Insulate pipes with insulation or newspaper and plastic and allow faucets to drip a little during cold weather to avoid freezing.
- Learn how to shut off water valves in case a pipe bursts.
- Winterize your car. Keep a shovel, a windshield scraper, and a small broom in your vehicle.
- Add rock salt, sand, and shovels to your emergency supplies kit, as well as extra socks, hats, mittens, and blankets.

During

- Conserve fuel.
- Stay safe and dry indoors.
- If you are outside, cover your mouth, keep dry, and avoid overexertion. Dress for the weather, wear layers, mittens, and a hat.
- Watch for signs of frostbite, including loss of feeling and white or pale extremities. If you detect any symptoms, seek immediate medical attention.
- Watch for signs of hypothermia, including uncontrollable shivering, memory loss, disorientation, incoherence, slurred speech, drowsiness, and apparent exhaustion. Get the victim to a warm location; remove any wet clothing; put the person in dry clothing and wrap their entire body in a blanket; warm the center of the body first; give warm, non-alcoholic or non-caffeinated beverages; and seek medical attention.
- Drive only if absolutely necessary. If you become trapped while you have a cell phone, call 9-1-1, explain your situation, and tell them to try to track your location by the phone signal. If you must drive,

travel during the day; don't travel alone; keep others informed of your schedule; and stay on main roads.

- If a blizzard traps you in your car, pull off the highway and stay in your vehicle. Tie a brightly colored cloth to the antenna and turn on the inside light at night for rescuers to see. Run the engine and heater about 10 minutes each hour to keep warm. When the engine is running, open a downwind window slightly and periodically clear snow from the exhaust pipe. In extreme cold, use any available means to insulate and maintain body heat. Make sure at least one person is awake at all times to watch for rescuers.

After

- Check on neighbors or anyone who may need assistance.
- Use common sense when going outdoors. Dress warmly and always wear a hat. Stretch before shoveling heavy snow. Take frequent breaks. Use caution when walking on snowy walkways.
- Supervise children at all times. Children should be told to play only in safe, supervised areas outdoors—never in the street or snow banks on the side of the road.

