



**American
Red Cross**

Disaster and Emergency Preparedness for Older Adults

A disaster or emergency that can directly affect your daily life can happen at any time, sometimes without warning. Thankfully, there are things you can do to be prepared, respond safely and help speed your recovery. Following are some tips about what to do before, during and after a disaster or emergency.

BEFORE: Prepare and Get Ready Now

Get Informed



Identify Likely Disasters: Know the types of disasters that could happen in your community.



Learn About Community Response Plans: Find out about local plans for emergency alerts, evacuation and shelter resources.



Sign up for alerts and warnings to receive information during an emergency.



Get Trained: Learn first aid, CPR and the specific actions that can save your life for each type of disaster that is likely in your area.

Assess Your Needs



Understand how your medical, physical and cognitive needs may affect your ability to respond to a disaster or emergency.



Think About How You Would Respond: Consider needs you may have if the power went out, you had to stay home for two weeks or more, or if you had to evacuate your home or community.



Talk about the help you may need and who could assist you.

Build Your Support Network



Identify Helpers: Include family, friends, neighbors, caregivers and care providers to build your network of people who may be able to assist you or that you can assist.



Meet with your helpers to assess your needs and plan together.



Plan how you'll communicate with helpers.

Be Red Cross Ready

Prepare so you can protect.

NOW: Prepare Before the Disaster

Review, practice and refresh your plan, supplies and important documents every six months.

Develop Your Plan

- **Plan to Stay or Go:** Plan to stay home for at least two weeks or evacuate.
- **Help to Evacuate:** If you need help evacuating, plan who will help you. Find out if there are local registries and sign up.
- **Power Needs:** If you require power to operate medical devices or keep medicines cold, make a back-up plan.
- **Fire Safety:** Identify two ways out of every room to escape a home fire and plan for the help you may need.
- **Property or Renter's Insurance:** Make sure you have a policy that meets your property and disaster coverage needs.

Create a Communication Plan

- **Make an emergency contact list** and plan how you'll reach your support group and important emergency contacts when communications may be disrupted.*

Gather Your Supplies

- **Get Basic Emergency Supplies:** Use a checklist to prepare what you'll need in your home, car or when you evacuate.*
- **Manage Medical and Personal Needs:** Keep at least 30 days of medications and extra assistive items such as a cane or eyeglasses. Plan for your food needs if you follow a special diet.
- **Get batteries** to back-up power-dependent devices.

Prepare Key Documents

- **Locate Important Documents:** Use a checklist* to collect and copy documents including identifications, financial, legal and medical papers you'll need to help you recover.
- **Keep an Up-to-Date List of Medical Information:** conditions, allergies, medications, prescription records, doctors and insurance cards.

DURING: Know How to Respond

When There Is a Disaster

- **Stay Informed:** Monitor the news and emergency alerts for updates and guidance.
- **Stay or Go?** Be ready to stay at home or leave right away. Know how you'll decide and who will help.
- **Ask for Help:** Tell people what you need.

AFTER: Know How to Recover

When the Disaster Is Over

- **Let friends and family know you're safe.** Start with your contact list and share where you're staying and how to reach you.
- **Return Home Safely:** Wait until authorities say it's safe to return.
- **Work With Trusted Sources:** The American Red Cross, FEMA, your local government and your support network can help. Beware of scams.
- **Manage Property Damage:** Document any property damage for insurance and work with others to remove debris and clean safely.



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*Find these resources and more information at [redcross.org/OlderAdults](https://www.redcross.org/OlderAdults)