

# What you should know before an emergency strikes



In today's high-tech world, we often get advance notice of pending dangers through weather forecasts and other alert systems. However, there are times when natural or human-made disasters can happen without warning. That doesn't mean you can't be ready.

## Readiness 101

Here are steps you can take to protect yourself and your family in case of a crisis:

- **Create an emergency kit.** Put together a kit to help you survive for three days in case you can't get home.
  - Include water, canned food, a can opener, first aid supplies, blankets, cash, medications, extra clothing, a flashlight (and extra batteries) a cell phone and charger. Don't forget pet supplies if you have a pet.
  - Make the kit small enough to carry. Keep it stocked and stored in an accessible place so if you need to leave fast, you can grab it and go.
  - Check your kit from time to time. Be sure water, food, medicines and batteries haven't expired.
- **Have a plan.** Family members should talk ahead of time and agree on:
  - A place where everyone can meet in case you're separated. It may not be safe or possible to go home.

Perhaps you can choose a relative or friend's house that's not in your immediate neighborhood but also isn't too far away.

- One phone number (perhaps that same relative or friend?) that you can all call so you can be in touch with each other.
- **Stay alert.** Know about the most likely emergencies where you live or travel. Are you in an area that tends to have tornadoes, floods or earthquakes? Pay attention to weather warnings and practice or discuss emergency actions with your family and loved ones.

No one wants to live with a 24/7 emergency mentality. But by taking these steps, you may feel more at ease. You can be ready.

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