

## Stay In Touch

If possible, have a cell phone and inform all relevant individuals of the cell phone number in advance of

an evacuation. Always be sure to have a portable radio with plenty of extra batteries to stay informed on current conditions. Before any disaster, become familiar with your local AM radio stations that would provide the best source of information to you prior to and during the event



## Your Local Resources

Familiarize yourself and your family with local disaster resources and procedures before disaster strikes. Most areas provide services on a local level like evacuation shelters, sand bag distribution centers and a host of other services.

Local agencies that may be able to help:

- Salvation Army
- American Red Cross
- State Disaster Management
- FEMA

## Returning Home

Be prepared for a delay in returning home. If you have been evacuated, it's possible you may not be able to return and reoccupy your home once the event has ended. Damage to your home, flooding, loss of utility services and police activity may prevent you from moving back. Have a relocation plan in place with friends and family.

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# Disaster Preparation

*Helping Seniors Prepare  
for Natural Disasters*



## Create an Emergency Network

Create an emergency network of family, neighbors, friends, professional caregivers, law enforcement, rescue workers and other relatives to assist during an emergency. Discuss your plan and make sure everyone knows their responsibilities and how to backup each other. Inform your employer that you may have to leave quickly during emergency conditions to take care of an elderly or disabled family member.

## Create An Evacuation Pack

Put together an evacuation pack. Have extra food, water and ice on hand. You will need a 3 day supply. Stock up on canned goods, non-perishable food and, most importantly, bottled water in case your loved one's home is inaccessible to first responders, or stores are closed or have empty shelves. Be sure to have at least two flashlights and plenty of spare batteries to use should there be a loss of power for a prolonged period of time.

If your elderly loved one must leave their residence, you should be prepared to take care of their basic needs for at least 72 hours. Do not assume that shelters have supplies and equipment. They will need basic food, water, medications and medical supplies (walker, hearing aid, oxygen, prosthetics, etc.), a blanket, pillow, and air mattress, personal hygiene items and extra clothing.

Some areas do provide special needs shelters for those who are too sick for regular shelters but do not require hospitalization. This would include those on electrically powered equipment or those with severe respiratory conditions, such as asthma. Those with limited abilities and mobility issues are candidates as well.



## Refill All Prescriptions

Refill all necessary prescriptions and have portable versions of medical equipment. Be sure to have an ample supply of all daily medications. These refills may save their lives, or buy enough time to find treatment at a health care facility. Purchase a travel cold pack if you use insulin or other medications that need to be kept cool. Have smaller or portable medical equipment available, like oxygen tanks, and be sure a walker or wheelchair can be folded to fit inside a car. Consider backup power supplies for life supporting medical equipment.

## Home Preparation

Remove obstacles around the house that may slow a hasty evacuation or cause injury. There should be two easily accessible exits. Install safety shutters or plywood to ensure no flying debris comes through the windows. Remove loose outside items, such as potted plants and lawn furniture that may become projectiles in high winds. If you own a swimming pool, this is an excellent place to store non-metallic outdoor furniture until the storm passes. Be prepared for loss of power and water. If evacuating, unplug all electrical devices and appliances. Damage can occur not only when the power goes out, but when it comes back on. If you are not going to evacuate, fill your bathtub and any clean/sterile plastic containers with water to provide you with a water reserve should the local water service be turned off.

## Develop a List of Resources

Families with elderly or disabled relatives should arrange for a professional or volunteer caregiver to check on them in the event of an emergency. Choose an agency with experience who can assist. Seniors who have assistance are more likely to remain comfortable during a trying time.

- Primary and backup resources like local emergency shelters, pharmacies and dialysis centers.
- Plan multiple locations and routes (in case roads are blocked) for evacuation, and know where resources are available in those locations.
- If evacuating, don't delay! Delaying your departure could leave you stranded as roadways become gridlocked. During an evacuation, families may be separated.
- Establish a meeting place. If a mandatory evacuation is ordered, designate a familiar location or family member's home as a meeting point.
- Family members should also be sure to have an updated photo of their elderly relative. The front of most telephone directories includes information on Emergency Operations Centers in your community.

## Emergency Info Package

An emergency information pack should include basic medical information (medications, drug allergies, medical ailments, etc.), copies of prescriptions, contact information for your family and doctors, medical power of attorney or living will, proof of insurance, Social Security documents and identification.