

11 Ways Seniors Can Prepare for Disaster

If you are a senior or care for a senior, a disaster is one of your worst fears like a hurricane, tornado or flood, can be a terrifying experience.

Things to think about.

1-Who needs to be contacted?

2-If you need to evacuate, where do you go?

3-How do you remember everything to bring?

4-What about emergency medical needs?

By following a simple set of instructions, you can be prepared for almost any disaster.

It won't necessarily make things easier, but it will make it safer and set your mind at ease.

These steps will help you be ready for what you may confront.

#1 – Learn in Advance



First, do some research about natural disasters that could occur in your area.

For example, if you live on the west coast, earthquakes are a distinct possibility. If you live on the Gulf Coast, hurricanes are a semi-regular occurrence. If you live in the mid-west, you're vulnerable to tornadoes.

Second if you or a family member has a particular medical condition, that should be taken into account as well.

Third if you live in an older home, consider things like house fires and gas leaks.

Fourth try to think of things that may happen so you will be prepared.

#2 – Create an Escape Route

If a disaster occurs or is going to occur, there's a high likelihood that you'll need to escape the area quickly to prevent injury. If you don't know the route you'll take in advance, there's a chance you could get caught in long traffic lines or use roads that aren't available. If your community has a prepared escape route, familiarize yourself with that.

The same goes for the home. In the event of a fire or other home emergency, every family member needs to know the proper escape route. If you can't move without help or are caring for someone in that position, that also must be accounted for. The last thing you want to happen is for someone to be trapped inside a burning house or left behind.

Finally, there should be an established meeting place for everyone once they escape the house to ensure that all are safe.

You may want to consider buying the appropriate equipment, such as ladders or instruments for breaking windows.

#3 – Get to Know the Community



In addition to knowing potential disasters that could strike your area, you should also know ways your community is prepared for disaster. Ask for information regarding:

- The local radio station where emergency information will be broadcast.
- The locations of local disaster shelters.
- The community warning systems, such as sirens.
- Transportation methods for those without vehicles.

This information is especially important if you live alone and don't have anyone nearby to care for you in the event of a disaster.

#4 – Establish Points of Communication

In the event of a disaster, you want to know who will be checking in on you. If you're caring for someone, you want them to have the knowledge that you will make sure they're okay. The worst scenario is you or someone you love being trapped or in danger and no one knowing it.

Create a check-in plan that will keep everyone in regular communication. Establish times when contact will be made. Also, create a plan in the event that someone fails to check in. This will ensure that everyone knows all essential information in the event of a disaster.

#5 – Prepare an Emergency Kit



An emergency kit contains all that you need to survive during and after a disaster. This kit should be assembled well in advance and contain all the necessary items to ensure survival and treat medical emergencies. Everyone should know where the kit is.

At a minimum, the kit should include:

- A three-day supply of water, assuming one gallon per person per day
- A three-day supply of non-perishable food.
- A flashlight and batteries
- A first aid kit

- Basic hygiene items
- Waterproof matches
- Blanket
- Copies of all essential information, such as identification and credit cards
- Cash and coins
- Basic cooking utensils
- A multi-purpose tool
- A cell phone charger
- A whistle
- Any special items, such as medication, glasses, hearing aid batteries, etc.

This kit should regularly maintained. Batteries should be replaced once per year, cell phone chargers should be updated to the current model, photocopies should be updated when new cards are acquired. Throw out damaged cans and place boxes in tight containers. If possible, the entire kit should be stored in an airtight, waterproof container.

Forgetting to keep your kit updated can render some items useless.

#6 – Create Emergency Contact Cards

Every person in the family should have an emergency contact card. The card should be kept in an easily accessible place, like a wallet or purse, and should contain the following information:

- Medications
- Allergies
- Blood type
- Immunizations
- Adaptive equipment (pacemaker, etc.)
- Communication difficulties
- Emergency contact information

If you or the person you're caring for gets hurt, this will allow strangers to effectively care for them.

#7 – Take A Home Inventory

If your home is damaged or destroyed, you'll need to file insurance claims. The insurance company will want to know what was damaged and will then recompense you accordingly. Without some sort of formal home inventory, there's no way to remember all the items in your home.

Create a home inventory list, print it out, and then store it in a safe place. If you are tech savvy, you can also take photos and then use an online service to store them.

#8 – Know CPR



Disasters can result in a variety of literally heart-stopping conditions, whether that's a heart attack or an injury. In these cases, it's essential that someone in the house know the proper way to perform CPR. Ideally, you should also have an automated external defibrillator (AED) and have at least one person who knows how to use it. Both of these things can be absolutely lifesaving.

#9 – Check and Maintain Fire Extinguishers

In the event of a house fire, fire extinguishers will be the first line of defense. However, it's not enough to just purchase them – they need to be regularly checked. Pay careful attention to the expiration dates and test them once per year to ensure they're still working properly.

If you don't feel comfortable performing this task, considering hiring a professional safety company to maintain all your extinguishers.

#10 – Copy Essential Documents

Important documents like your driver's license, SSN card, passport, will, deeds, financial statements, and insurance information should be copied and then put in a safe, offsite location. Consider using a safe deposit box or someone you trust with such information.

#11 – Take Note of Any Special Needs



If you or someone you are caring for has disabilities or special needs, these need to be carefully considered. These special needs include:

- **Wheelchairs** – You'll need a special route to evacuate with a wheelchair, as well a way to transport the wheelchair. If you use a motorized wheelchair, you'll need to think about backup batteries or a backup wheelchair.
- **Visual difficulties** – If you're blind or visually impaired, keep a cane with a whistle attached to it close by. Also, remember that your escape route from your home or building may have become blocked or littered with debris.
- **Hearing impaired** – Those with hearing challenges need to include extra hearing aid batteries in the emergency kit. They must be able to be located quickly after a disaster occurs.

Conclusion

A disaster may be your worst nightmare, but it doesn't have to be the end of the world. The key is to prepare well in advance, and then stay prepared as a disaster approaches. Don't panic, but stay calm. Trust your preparation, trust your emergency kit, and trust those on your contact list.

Benjamin Franklin said, "By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail." Thankfully, this won't be the case for you. By preparing, you are preventing yourself from failing. The worst may come, but you're ready for the worst. That makes all the difference.