

# National Preparedness Month Toolkit

---

**National Preparedness Month (NPM)** is an observance each September to raise awareness about the importance of preparing for disasters and emergencies that could happen at any time. The Ready Campaign's 2024 National Preparedness Month campaign hopes to empower all Americans to take action now to prepare for future risks and disasters.

Those launching the [National Preparedness Month](#) campaign in their community are encouraged to use the information in this toolkit to inform citizens on what simple, low and no cost preparedness actions they can take not only during the month of September, but throughout the year as well.

Preparedness materials in multiple languages can be accessed at [Ready in Your Language | Ready.gov](#).

## FEMA Region 7 Points of Contact

External Affairs Director  Disability Integration/Private Sector	Michael Cappannari	<a href="mailto:Michael.cappannari@fema.dhs.gov">Michael.cappannari@fema.dhs.gov</a>  816-810-5382
Public Affairs/Digital Communications	Barb Sturner	<a href="mailto:Barb.sturner@fema.dhs.gov">Barb.sturner@fema.dhs.gov</a>  816-783-3347
Congressional Affairs Liaison	Hannah Dickel	<a href="mailto:Hannah.dickel@fema.dhs.gov">Hannah.dickel@fema.dhs.gov</a>  202-674-5734
Intergovernmental Affairs Specialist	Sarah Albee	<a href="mailto:Sarah.albee@fema.dhs.gov">Sarah.albee@fema.dhs.gov</a>  202-716-1210
Community Preparedness Officer	Ryan Lowry-Lee	<a href="mailto:Ryan.lowrylee@fema.dhs.gov">Ryan.lowrylee@fema.dhs.gov</a>  202-549-9415
Regional Preparedness Liaison	Jennifer Tarwater	<a href="mailto:fema-r7-community-preparedness@fema.dhs.gov">fema-r7-community-preparedness@fema.dhs.gov</a>
Tribal Affairs Liaison	Jim Rogers	<a href="mailto:James.Rogers@fema.dhs.gov">James.Rogers@fema.dhs.gov</a>

		202-717-0491
Volunteer Agency Liaison	De'an Bass	<a href="mailto:Dean.bass@fema.dhs.gov">Dean.bass@fema.dhs.gov</a> 816-863-4745

## Key Messages

During [National Preparedness Month](#) all Americans can take these simple low and no cost steps to become better prepared for a disaster or emergency.

- **Get informed** about what kind of disasters and emergencies occur where you live.
- **Sign up** for emergency [alerts](#) in your area to receive life-saving information.
- **Download** the [FEMA App](#) to receive weather alerts, safety tips and reminders.
- **Create** an emergency communication plan using FEMA's [free template](#) to record important contact and medical information about your family, which you can share with others.
- **Build** your [emergency supply kit](#) over time. Start with items you may already have in your home, then when you go to the grocery store, pick up an extra item each time that you use regularly, especially if it's on sale!
- **Talk** with members of your household about where you will go if told to evacuate.
- **Store** important documents and items like passports, birth certificates, maps, and electronics in a flood-safe place like a high shelf or upper floor in resealable water-tight plastic bags. [Store important documents](#) like insurance policies digitally.
- **Check** online for free or discounted First Aid and CPR courses offered near you.
- **Visit** [www.floodsmart.gov](http://www.floodsmart.gov) to know your area's level of flood risk.
- **Download** free [preparedness resources](#).
- **Get involved** in preparedness efforts in your community. Become a [CERT](#) member or volunteer with a [VOAD](#).

## Twelve Ways to Prepare

[FEMA's 2023 National Household Survey](#) asked respondents what preparedness actions their households were taking based on FEMA's [Twelve Ways to Prepare](#). Emergency preparedness can seem intimidating, and costly, but by taking **just three preparedness actions**, all Americans can help **build their confidence in knowing what to do** when disaster strikes and understand that those preparedness actions **will make a difference** in their recovery from a disaster or emergency.

Those launching the [National Preparedness Month](#) campaign in their community are encouraged to use the information in this toolkit to inform citizens on what simple, low and no cost preparedness actions they can take not only during the month of September, but throughout the year as well.

The *Twelve Ways to Prepare* card can be downloaded in multiple languages [here](#).

## 1. Preparedness Action One: Sign Up for Alerts and Warnings

**Being prepared means knowing your risks.** The best way to be informed and know what risks occur where you live is to sign up for alerts and warnings with your local or state emergency management agency. Visit your local emergency management agency's website to review their emergency operations plans, which include what types of risks and hazards they are planning for.

Use the following information to assess your needs and take simple, low and no cost steps to help you get better prepared.

- Know what [disasters](#) could affect your area, which could call for an evacuation, and when to [shelter](#) in place, and plan what to do in both cases.
- Keep a [NOAA Weather Radio](#) tuned to your local emergency station and monitor TV and radio for warnings about severe weather in your area.
- [Download the FEMA app](#) and get weather alerts from the National Weather Service for up to five different locations anywhere in the United States.
- If you live in a flood-prone area, find out if your home is in a flood zone.
  - Flood damage isn't covered by standard homeowner's insurance policies and just one inch of floodwater can cause more than \$25,000 in damage.
  - Everyone should consider flood insurance. More than 20 percent of flood insurance claims come from properties that are not in identified high-risk zones.
  - Renters should purchase a flood insurance contents policy. Flood damaged household goods are rarely salvageable.
  - Talk to your insurance agent about flood coverage or visit [www.floodsmart.gov](http://www.floodsmart.gov).

Find more information at [Emergency Alerts | Ready.gov](#).

## 2. Preparedness Action Two: Make a Plan

Your family may not be together if a disaster strikes, so it is important to know which [types of disasters](#) could affect your area and how you'll contact one another and reconnect if separated. Establish a family meeting place that's familiar and easy to find. Be sure to include every family member in on the discussion and consider specific needs for your household. Having a plan before an emergency occurs can save precious time and money!

Here are some tips to use when developing your plan:

- Plan and practice an evacuation route with your family.

- Ask an out-of-state relative or friend to be the "family contact" in case your family is separated during a flood or other wide-spread event. Make sure everyone in your family knows the name, address, and phone number of this contact person.
- Plan how you will [communicate](#) if you have a communications need.
- Plan for [food](#), [water](#), and [essentials](#) for you and [pets or service animals](#).
- Plan for your transportation if you need help evacuating.
- Include items that [meet your individual needs](#), such as medicines, medical supplies, batteries and chargers, in your [emergency supply kit](#).
- Plan how you will have your assistive devices with you during an evacuation.
- [Make copies](#) of your home and medical insurance cards.

If you have or will be [planning for people with disabilities](#) determine any special assistance you may need and include plans for that assistance in your emergency plan.

- Create a support network of family, friends and others who can assist you during an emergency. Make an [emergency plan](#) and practice it with them.
- If you live alone, make sure at least one person in your support network has an extra key to your home, knows where you keep your emergency supplies, and knows how to use lifesaving equipment or administer medicine.
- If you undergo routine treatments administered by a clinic or hospital, find out their emergency plans and work with them to identify back-up service providers.
- Don't forget your pets or service animals. Not all shelters accept pets, so plan for alternatives. Consider asking loved one or friends outside your immediate area if they can help with your animals.

For additional information, discussion questions and sample plans, visit [Make A Plan | Ready.gov](#).

### 3. Preparedness Action Three: Save for a Rainy Day

Financial preparedness should be a key component of emergency planning. Americans at all income levels have experienced the challenges of rebuilding their lives after a disaster or other emergency. In these stressful times, having access to personal financial, insurance, medical and other records is crucial for starting the recovery process quickly and efficiently.

Follow these tips to become more financially prepared:

- Gather financial and critical personal, household, and medical information and store it in a safe and secure location.
- Consider saving money in an emergency savings account that could be used in any crisis. Keep a small amount of cash (in small bills) at home in a safe place.
- Obtain property (homeowners or renters), health and life insurance if you do not have them. Review your policy to make sure the amount and types of coverage you have meets the

requirements for [all possible hazards](#). Homeowners insurance does not typically cover flooding, so you may need to purchase flood insurance from the [National Flood Insurance Program](#).

- For more helpful financial preparedness tips, download the [Emergency Financial First Aid Kit](#) (EFFAK) to get started planning today.

Learn more about financial preparedness at [Financial Preparedness | Ready.gov](#).

## 4. Preparedness Action Four: Practice Emergency Drills

Once you have developed your household emergency plan, it is important to test it to make sure it works for everyone in your household. Emergency drills should be conducted at least every six months and include different types of drills – such as evacuation, communication or sheltering-in-place - in a variety of locations, at different times of the day. If you have young children in your household, you may need to practice the drills more frequently.

Make sure your drills cover the needs of those who may require extra assistance, such as those with specialized needs, disabilities, or children. Children make up about 25 percent of the population and it is important they know what to do in an emergency and that all disaster planning, preparedness, response, and recovery efforts include children's unique needs and abilities.

After carrying out your drills, make sure to update and tailor your plans as needed. Learn more about evacuating your home at [Practice Your Home Fire Escape Plan | Ready.gov](#).

## 5. Preparedness Action Five: Test Family Communication Plan

Your family may not be together if a disaster strikes, so it is important to know how you'll contact one another and reconnect if separated. Consider how you would connect if there were damage to critical infrastructure limiting power or cell reception.

Communication planning starts with three easy steps:

- **Collect** contact information for family members, medical providers and your support network and use this [template](#) to create your plan.
- **Share** a copy of your plan with family and members of your support network.
- **Practice** the plan and update as needed.

Create your family's communication plan at [Make a Plan Form | Ready.gov](#).

## 6. Preparedness Action Six: Safeguard Documents

When disaster strikes, your immediate concern will be your safety and the safety of those you care about. Once the immediate danger passes, however, having your financial and medical records and important contact information will be crucial to help you start the recovery process quickly. Taking time now to safeguard these critical documents will give you peace of mind, ensure you have access to essential medical and prescription information, and help you avoid additional stress during the difficult days following a disaster.

Store important documents either in a safety deposit box, an external drive or on the cloud to make it easy to access during a disaster.

Take time now to [safeguard these critical documents](#). Be cautious about sharing personal financial information, such as your bank account number, social security number, or credit card number.

Safeguard the following documents:

- Household identification
- Financial and legal documentation
- Housing payments (to identify financial records and obligations)
- Insurance policies (to re-establish financial accounts)
- Sources of income (to maintain payments and credit)
- Tax statements (to provide contact information for financial and legal providers and to apply for FEMA disaster assistance)
- Medical information

Use FEMA's [Emergency Financial First Aid Kit \(fema.gov\)](#) to learn more about safeguarding important documents.

## 7. Preparedness Action Seven: Plan with Neighbors

When an emergency or disaster occurs, it takes many people to assist with community needs. Individuals and communities can work together to improve preparedness and respond to disasters and emergencies. And neighbors helping neighbors can save lives!

Ways to plan or coordinate emergency response with your neighbors:

- Develop a plan to check on elderly or vulnerable residents during extreme weather.
- Host a CPR/First Aid class for your neighborhood group.
- Promote training to your neighbors such as [Until Help Arrives](#) or [CERT](#).
- Plan with neighbors in case your pets need to be evacuated while you are not home.
- Share or trade resources when weather causes store closures or impacts driving conditions.

Learn more about how you can get involved at [Get Involved | Ready.gov](#).

## 8. Preparedness Action Eight: Make Your Home Safer

[Ready.gov](#) has resources to help keep you safe from disasters like [floods](#), [tornadoes](#), [winter storms](#) and other [natural and man-made hazards](#) but are you prepared for everyday injuries or emergencies that can happen at home? There are several ways to make your home safer from emergencies and possibly mitigate damage from a disaster.

Follow these tips to make your home safer:

- Have a First Aid kit in the home and encourage everyone to take a [CPR](#) or [Stop the Bleed](#) course.
- Have working smoke and carbon monoxide detectors on every level of your home.
- Learn how to [shut off utilities](#) in case you need to turn off your water, power or gas.
- Clean and maintain chimneys, furnaces, and other appliances.
- Raise electrical outlets if you live in flood prone area. Check first to see what local codes allow, but most don't have restrictions on the height of an outlet above the floor. Consider moving outlets up at least one foot above the minimum flood level or 24 inches above floor level.
- Maintain gutters, troughs, and downspouts. Keep gutters and downspouts clear of leaves and sediment buildup so water flows freely down and out. Consider installing mesh leaf guards over gutter tops to minimize debris buildup. Thoroughly clean all gutters at least twice a year, especially before rainy seasons and in the fall, when debris might cause problems.
- Add an elbow or drain sleeve to the bottom of downspouts to help divert water away from a structure.
- Use caulk to seal all exterior openings, such as holes where wires, cables and pipes enter or exit a structure (winds of 74 mph can blow water up a wall about 4 feet).
- Make a drywall buffer zone. When floor-level water meets drywall, it wicks up into the wallboard, which can lead to mold if left untreated. So, when replacing drywall, create a small buffer zone by leaving a 1/2-inch to 1-inch gap between the bottom of the drywall sheeting and the top level of the floor. If adding carpeting, be sure the gap is above the carpeted level. Cover the gap with baseboard.
- Plant trees to help stem erosion. Be smart about what and where trees are planted, taking care to keep them far enough from structures to avoid danger in high winds. If needed, consult a tree professional for planting tips.

Learn more about home safety at [Home Safety | Ready.gov](#)

## 9. Preparedness Action Nine: Know Evacuation Routes

When disaster strikes, it's important to know how to leave the impacted area. Create an [evacuation plan](#) that includes the following information:

- Identify [two ways out of every room in case of fire](#).
- Identify routes to leave your neighborhood, community, or state.
- Learn public transportation options and public shelter locations.
- Identify several escape routes from your home to your destination in case roads are blocked.
- Have an out of state contact and pre-identified places to stay, making sure they accept pets, if needed.

Learn more about developing your evacuation plan at [Evacuation | Ready.gov](#).

## 10. Preparedness Action Ten: Assemble or Update Supplies

After an emergency, you may need to survive on your own for several days. Being prepared means having your own [food](#), [water](#) and other [supplies](#) to last for several days. A disaster supplies kit is a collection of basic items you or your household may need in the event of an emergency.

Build your [emergency supply kit](#) over time. Start with items you may already have in your home, like a flashlight, extra batteries, copies of important documents, water and non-perishable food. When you go to the grocery store, you can pick up an extra item each time that you use regularly, especially if it's on sale! Community food banks are a potential resource for food-insecure families to stock their emergency supply kits.

Besides basic supplies, older adults should include additional items that take into consideration their medical, physical and cognitive needs.

These items could include:

- Prescription medications
- Durable medical equipment
- Mobility aids
- Visual aids
- Hearing aids
- Personal care products and sanitation supplies
- Insurance and health information

[Download a printable version](#) of basic supplies to take with you to the store. Once you take a look at the basic items consider what [unique needs](#) your family might have, such as supplies for [pets](#) or [older adults](#).

### Basic Disaster Supplies Kit

To assemble your kit store items in airtight plastic bags and put your entire disaster supplies kit in one or two easy-to-carry containers such as plastic bins or a duffel bag.

A basic emergency supply kit could include the following recommended items:

- [Water](#) (one gallon per person per day for several days, for drinking and sanitation)
- [Food](#) (at least a several-day supply of non-perishable food)
- Battery-powered or hand crank radio and a NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert
- Flashlight
- First aid kit
- Extra batteries
- Whistle (to signal for help)



- Dust mask (to help filter contaminated air)
- Plastic sheeting and duct tape (to [shelter in place](#))
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties (for personal sanitation)
- Wrench or pliers (to [turn off utilities](#))
- Manual can opener (for food)
- Local maps
- Cell phone with chargers and a backup battery

## Maintaining Your Kit

After assembling your kit remember to maintain it so it's ready when needed:

- Keep canned [food](#) in a cool, dry place.
- Store boxed food in tightly closed plastic or metal containers.
- Replace expired items as needed.
- Re-think your needs every year and update your kit as your family's needs change.

## Kit Storage Locations

Since you do not know where you will be when an emergency occurs, prepare supplies for home, work, and cars.

- **Home:** Keep this kit in a designated place and have it ready in case you have to leave your home quickly. Make sure all family members know where the kit is kept.
- **Work:** Be prepared to shelter at work for at least 24 hours. Your work kit should include food, water and other necessities like medicines, as well as comfortable walking shoes, stored in a "grab and go" case.
- **Car:** In case you are stranded, keep a kit of emergency supplies [in your car](#).

Learn more at [Build A Kit | Ready.gov](#).

## 11. Preparedness Action Eleven: Get Involved in Your Community

During disaster response, affected communities depend heavily on local and national volunteer organizations to provide trained volunteers and much-needed donated supplies. Get involved today by donating to or volunteering with a reputable organization.

- [Join a Community Emergency Response Team \(CERT\)](#) program and get trained on basic disaster response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization, and disaster medical operations.
- During a disaster, you can donate to a reputable organization of your choice through the [National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters \(NVOAD\)](#), and volunteer to respond to disasters and

help your community. Remember, after a disaster, the best way to help is to donate cash to nonprofits organizations.

- Volunteer with your local community or a national organization to support preparedness efforts in your community.

You could help save countless lives by taking simple actions to prepare your community or organization for a disaster before one strikes. FEMA offers free trainings and education tools to train yourself and others on the best ways to prepare for, respond to, and recover from a disaster or emergency.

- [You Are the Help Until Help Arrives](#), designed by FEMA, are offered as online or in-person trainings where you learn the basics of how to save a life before a professional arrives.
- [Teach preparedness curriculum](#) in your school or childcare facility. Download everything you need for grades K-12 through our Ready Kids program.
- Promote preparedness online by sharing preparedness tips on your social media accounts with [Ready's online social media toolkit](#) or [public service announcements](#).
- Take a free online independent study course through [FEMA's Emergency Management Institute](#) or a [CPR course through the American Red Cross](#) and gain more knowledge to help your community become more prepared.

Learn more about how you can get involved at [Get Involved | Ready.gov](#).

## 12. Preparedness Action Twelve: Document and Insure Property

Your home, your personal belongings, and your business are meaningful and valuable assets. If a disaster strikes, having insurance for your home or business property is the best way to ensure you will have the necessary financial resources to help you repair, rebuild, or replace whatever is damaged. Yet, **more than half** of all homeowners in the United States **do not carry adequate homeowners' insurance** to replace their home and its contents should a catastrophic loss occur.

Now, before a disaster strikes, take the time to:

- Document your property.
- Understand your options for coverage.
- Ensure you have appropriate insurance for relevant hazards.

Learn more by downloading the ***Document and Insure Your Property*** info sheet in several languages at [Ready in Your Language | Ready.gov](#).

## Associated Content

Learn more information about preparedness through the following links:

- [Preparedness information and materials in different languages](#)
- [Emergency Financial First Aid Kit \(EFFAK\)](#)

- [Prepare For Emergencies Now. Information for Older Adults](#) (PDF)
- [Individuals with Disabilities and Other Access and Functional Needs](#)

#### Videos:

- [Build a Kit](#)
- [Build a Kit \(Spanish\)](#)
- [Make a Plan](#)
- [Make a Plan \(Spanish\)](#)
- [Protect Family and Property](#)
- [Protect Family and Property \(Spanish\)](#)
- [Teaching Youth](#)
- [Teaching Youth \(Spanish\)](#)
- [Preparing Makes Sense for Older Americans](#)

## Social Media for National Preparedness Month

#### Hashtags:

- #NationalPreparednessMonth
- #NPM2024
- #BuildaKit
- #MakeaPlan
- #StayInformed
- #GetInvolved
- #BeReady

#### Images and Graphics:

Find photos, graphics, and PSAs for the 2024 campaign at [National Preparedness Month | Ready.gov](#)