

## **Recommended Items to Include in a Basic Emergency Supply Kit:**

- [Water](#), one gallon of water per person per day for at least three days, for drinking and sanitation
- [Food](#), at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food
- Battery-powered or hand crank radio and a NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert and extra batteries for both
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- [First aid kit](#)
- Whistle to signal for help
- [Dust mask](#), to help filter contaminated air and 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
- Can opener for food (if kit contains canned food)
- Local maps
- Cell phone with chargers, inverter or solar charger

## **Additional Items to Consider Adding to an Emergency Supply Kit:**

- Prescription medications and glasses
- Infant formula and diapers
- Pet food and extra water for your pet
- Cash or traveler's checks and change
- Important family documents such as copies of insurance policies, identification and bank account records in a waterproof, portable container. You can use the [Emergency Financial First Aid Kit \(EFFAK\)](#) - PDF, 277Kb) developed by Operation Hope, FEMA and Citizen Corps to help you organize your information.
- Emergency reference material such as a first aid book or information from [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov).
- Sleeping bag or warm blanket for each person. Consider additional bedding if you live in a cold-weather climate.
- Complete change of clothing including a long sleeved shirt, long pants and sturdy shoes. Consider additional clothing if you live in a cold-weather climate.
- Household chlorine bleach and medicine dropper – When diluted nine parts water to one part bleach, bleach can be used as a disinfectant. Or in an emergency, you can use it to treat water by using 16 drops of regular household liquid bleach per gallon of water. Do not use scented, color safe or bleaches with added cleaners.
- Fire Extinguisher
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Feminine supplies and personal hygiene items
- Mess kits, paper cups, plates and plastic utensils, paper towels
- Paper and pencil
- Books, games, puzzles or other activities for children

[Find out how to keep food safe during](#)

- Cover all of your home's windows with pre-cut ply wood or hurricane shutters to protect your windows from high winds.
- Plan to bring in all outdoor furniture, decorations, garbage cans and anything else that is not tied down.
- Keep all trees and shrubs well trimmed so they are more wind resistant.
- Secure your home by closing shutters, and securing outdoor objects or bringing them inside.
- Turn off utilities as instructed. Otherwise, turn the refrigerator thermostat to its coldest setting and keep its doors closed.
- Turn off propane tanks.
- Install a generator for emergencies
- Reinforce your garage doors; if wind enters a garage, it can cause dangerous and expensive structural damage.
- Ensure a supply of water for sanitary purposes such as cleaning and flushing toilets. Fill the bathtub and other large containers with water.
- Find out how to keep food safe during and after an emergency by visiting [www.FoodSafety.gov](http://www.FoodSafety.gov).

### Step 3: Be Informed

Hurricane hazards come in many forms: [lightning](#), [tornadoes](#), [flooding](#), [storm surge](#), [high winds](#), even [landslides or mudslides](#) can be triggered in mountainous regions. Look carefully at the safety actions associated with each type of hurricane hazard and prepare your family disaster plan accordingly. But remember this is only a guide. The first and most important thing anyone should do when facing a hurricane threat is to use common sense.

- [Learn about damaging and potentially deadly hurricane hazards](#)
- [What to do during a hurricane](#)
- [Get your children involved \(kids site\)](#)
- [People with Disabilities and Other Access and Functional Needs](#)
- [Care for pets](#)

### Familiarize yourself with the terms that are used to identify a hurricane.

- A **hurricane watch** means a hurricane is possible in your area. Be prepared to evacuate. Monitor local radio and television news outlets or listen to NOAA Weather Radio for the latest developments.
- A **hurricane warning** is when a hurricane is expected in your area. If local authorities advise you to evacuate, leave immediately.

Hurricanes are classified into **five categories** based on their wind speed, central pressure, and damage potential. Category Three and higher hurricanes are considered major hurricanes, though Categories One and Two are still extremely dangerous and warrant your full attention.

<b>Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale</b>		
<b>Scale Number (Category)</b>	<b>Sustained Winds (MPH)</b>	<b>Damage</b>
1	74-95	<p>Very dangerous winds will produce some damage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minor damage to exterior of homes</li> <li>• Toppled tree branches, uprooting of smaller trees</li> <li>• Extensive damage to power lines, power outages</li> </ul>
2	96-110	<p>Extremely dangerous winds will cause extensive damage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Major damage to exterior of homes</li> <li>• Uprooting of small trees and many roads blocked</li> <li>• Guaranteed power outages for long periods of time – days to weeks</li> </ul>
3	111-130	<p>Devastating damage will occur</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extensive damage to exterior of homes</li> <li>• Many trees uprooted and many roads blocked</li> <li>• Extremely limited availability of water and electricity</li> </ul>
4	131-155	<p>Catastrophic damage will occur</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of roof structure and/or some exterior walls</li> <li>• Most trees uprooted and most power lines down</li> <li>• Isolated residential due to debris pile up</li> <li>• Power outages lasting for weeks to months</li> </ul>
5	More than 155	<p>Catastrophic damage will occur</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A high percentage of homes will be</li> </ul>

		<p>destroyed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fallen trees and power lines isolate residential areas</li> <li>• Power outages lasting for weeks to months</li> <li>• Most areas will be uninhabitable</li> </ul>
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### Recommended Training

FEMA's Emergency Management Institute (EMI) has developed a training program to encourage community hurricane preparedness. This computer-based course provides basic information about dealing with tropical cyclones and hurricanes. Visit [www.training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/is324a.asp](http://www.training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/is324a.asp) and select the 'take this course' option at the top of the right hand column to take the interactive web-based course.

### Federal and National Resources

Find additional information on how to plan and prepare for a hurricane by visiting the following resources:

- [Federal Emergency Management Agency](#)
- [NOAA Hurricane Center](#)
- [American Red Cross](#)
- [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency](#)
- [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Center for Disease Control](#)

### Encourage Electronic Payments for Federal Benefit Recipients

Keep in mind a disaster can disrupt mail service for days or even weeks. For those who depend on the mail for their Social Security benefits, a difficult situation can become worse if they are evacuated or lose their mail service – as 85,000 check recipients learned after Hurricane Katrina. Switching to electronic payments is one simple, significant way people can protect themselves financially before disaster strikes. It also eliminates the risk of stolen checks.

The U.S. Department of the Treasury recommends two safer ways to get federal benefits:

- **Direct deposit** to a checking or savings account is the best option for people with bank accounts. The **Direct Express**® **prepaid debit card** is also available for people who don't have a bank account. Federal benefit recipients can sign up by calling (800) 333-1795 or at [www.GoDirect.org](http://www.GoDirect.org).

## Family Emergency Plan

- Identify an **out-of town contact**. It may be easier to make a long-distance phone call than to call across town, so an **out-of-town contact** may be in a better position to communicate among separated family members.
- Be sure every member of your family **knows the phone number** and has a cell phone, **coins**, or a **prepaid phone card** to call the emergency contact. If you have a cell phone, program that person(s) as "ICE" (In Case of Emergency) in your phone. If you are in an accident, emergency personnel will often check your ICE listings in order to get a hold of someone you know. Make sure to tell your family and friends that you've listed them as emergency contacts.
- Teach family members how to use text messaging (also known as SMS or Short Message Service). Text messages can often get around network disruptions when a phone call might not be able to get through.
- Subscribe to **alert services**. Many communities now have systems that will send instant text alerts or e-mails to let you know about bad weather, road closings, local emergencies, etc. Sign up by visiting your [local Office of Emergency Management web site](#).

## Planning to Stay or Go

Depending on your circumstances and the nature of the emergency, the first important decision is whether you stay where you are or evacuate. You should understand and plan for both possibilities. Use common sense and available information, including what you are learning here, to determine if there is an immediate danger. In any emergency, local authorities may or may not immediately be able to provide information on what is happening and what you should do. However, you should watch TV, listen to the radio or check the Internet often for information or official instruction as it becomes available. [Further information on staying put or sheltering in place](#).

## Emergency Information

Find out what kinds of disasters, both natural and man-made, are most likely to occur in your area and how you will be notified. Methods of getting your attention vary from community to community. One common method is to broadcast via **emergency radio** and **TV broadcasts**. You might hear a special siren, or get a telephone call, or emergency workers may go door-to-door.

## Emergency Plans

Use the [New Online Family Emergency Planning Tool](#) created by the Ready Campaign in conjunction with the Ad Council to prepare a [printable Comprehensive Family Emergency Plan](#).

Use the [Quick Share application](#) to help your family in assembling a quick reference list of contact information for your family, and a meeting place for emergency situations.

You may also want to **inquire about emergency plans** at places where your family spends time: **work, daycare** and **school**. If no plans exist, consider volunteering to help create one. Talk to your neighbors about how you can work together in the event of an emergency. You will be better prepared to safely reunite your family and loved ones during an emergency if you think ahead and communicate with others in advance