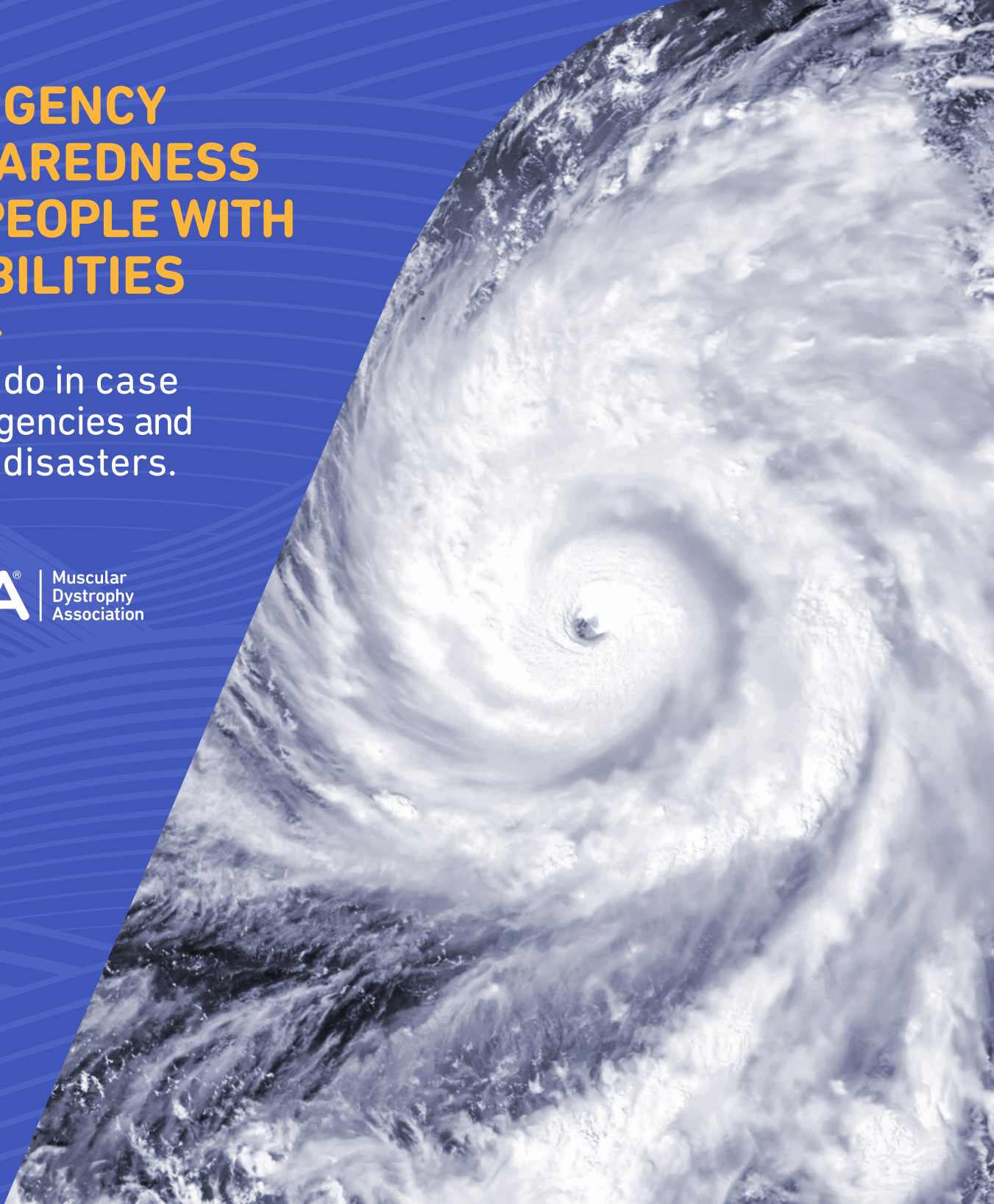


# EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

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What to do in case  
of emergencies and  
natural disasters.

**MDA**<sup>®</sup> | Muscular  
Dystrophy  
Association



## Always plan ahead.

Emergencies and disasters can strike without warning. They can force you to evacuate your neighborhood or confine you to your home. If a disaster were to suddenly hit your area, would you be prepared? Would you know what to do or whom to call?

We never want to see a disaster happen. But it's always best to be prepared. This brochure provides information on what assistance you may need before, during and after a disaster. Let this document serve as a guide to assist you and your loved ones in the case of an emergency or weather-related disaster. To see a list of additional tools and resources, please refer to the end of this document or your local Center for Independent Living.

## Disaster planning starts with building your support network

Have a personal support network to help you prepare for and deal with a disaster – which should include people you trust like relatives, neighbors, friends and co-workers who can check to see if you need assistance.

Call your local Fire and Police Department at their non-emergency number today to inform them about mobility needs and together identify a rescue plan.

### Citation

[https://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/20130726-1445-20490-6732/fema\\_476.pdf](https://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/20130726-1445-20490-6732/fema_476.pdf)

## Items to do Before a Disaster.

### Considerations for people with neuromuscular conditions.

People with neuromuscular conditions often require more detailed planning in the event of a disaster. Consider the following actions as you prepare:

- Be sure to call your local Fire and Police Department at their non-emergency number to make them aware of your mobility needs and together identify a rescue plan.
- Learn what to do in case of power outages and personal injuries. Know how to connect and start a back-up power supply for essential medical equipment.
- Consider obtaining and activating a medical alert system that will allow you to call for help if you are immobilized in an emergency. Consider signing up for emergency alert systems in your local area.
- If you use an electric wheelchair or scooter, have a manual wheelchair for backup.
- Teach those who may need to assist you in an emergency how to operate necessary equipment. Also, label equipment and attach laminated instructions for equipment use.
- Store back-up equipment (mobility, medical, etc.) at your neighbor's home, school, or your workplace.
- Arrange for more than one person from your personal support network to check on you in an emergency, so there is at least one back-up if the primary person you rely on cannot.
- If you are vision impaired, deaf or hard of hearing, plan for someone to convey essential emergency information to you if you are unable to use the TV or radio.
- If you use a personal care attendant obtained from an agency, check to see if the agency has special provisions for emergencies (e.g., providing services at another location should an evacuation be ordered).
- If you live in an apartment, ask the management to identify and mark accessible exits and access to all areas designated for emergency shelter or safe rooms. Ask about plans for alerting and evacuating those with sensory disabilities.
- Have a cell phone with an extra charger and cable. If you are unable to get out of a building, you can let someone know where you are and guide them to you. Keep the numbers you may need to call with you if the 911 emergency number is overloaded.
- Learn about devices and other technology available (apps, text radio, pagers, etc.) to assist you in receiving emergency instructions and warnings from local officials.
- Be prepared to provide clear, specific and concise instructions to rescue personnel. Practice giving these instructions (verbally, pre-printed phrases, word board, etc.) clearly and quickly.
- Prepare your personal support network to assist you with anticipated reactions and emotions associated with disaster and traumatic events (i.e. confusion, thought processing and memory difficulties, agitation, fear, panic, and anxiety).
- You don't have to be the only one prepared – encourage others to be prepared and consider volunteering or working with local authorities on disability and other special needs preparedness efforts.



## Power Outage

Power outages are the unexpected loss of electrical power and may impact the whole community. A power outage may disrupt communications, water, and transportation. It may close retail businesses, grocery stores, banks, gas stations, ATMs and other services, cause food spoilage and water contamination, prevent the use of medical devices, and prevent the charging of mobility and other care devices.





## BEFORE

- Take an inventory of the items you need that rely on electricity.
- Talk to your medical provider about a power outage plan for medical devices powered by electricity and refrigerated medicines. Find out how long medication can be stored at higher temperatures and get specific guidance for any medications that are critical for life.
- Install carbon monoxide detectors with battery backup in central locations on every level of your home.
- Plan for batteries and other alternatives to meet your needs when the power goes out.
- Sign up for local alerts and warning systems. Monitor weather reports.
- Review the supplies that are available in case of a power outage. Have flashlights with extra batteries for every household member. Have enough nonperishable food and water.
- Use a thermometer in the refrigerator and freezer so that you can know the temperature when the power is restored. Throw out food if the temperature is 40 degrees or higher.
- Keep mobile phones and other electric equipment charged and gas tanks full.
- Fill a bucket or two as a water source and potentially for bathing and flushing the toilet – if municipal water pressure relies on electricity, pressure in the system may fail.



## DURING

- Report your outage. Never assume a neighbor has reported it.
- Keep freezers and refrigerators closed. The refrigerator will keep food cold for about four hours. A full freezer will keep the temperature for about 48 hours. Use coolers with ice if necessary. Monitor temperatures with a thermometer.
- Never leave a burning candle unattended.
- Maintain food supplies that do not require refrigeration.
- Avoid carbon monoxide poisoning. Generators, camp stoves, or charcoal grills should always be used outdoors and at least 20 feet away from windows. Never use a gas stovetop or oven to heat your home.
- Go to a community location with power if heat or cold is extreme.
- Turn off or disconnect appliances, equipment, or electronics. Power may return with momentary “surges” or “spikes” that can cause damage.
- If water pressure falls, a bucket of water dumped manually into a toilet will cause it to flush.



## AFTER

- When in doubt, throw it out! Throw away any food that has been exposed to temperatures 40 degrees or higher for two hours or more, or that has an unusual odor, color, or texture.
- If the power is out for more than a day, discard any medication that should be refrigerated, unless the drug’s label says otherwise. If a life depends on the refrigerated drugs, consult a doctor or pharmacist and use medicine only until a new supply is available.
- Eliminate unnecessary travel especially by car as some traffic lights might be out and roads could be congested.



### Citation

<https://www.ready.gov/power-outages>

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergencymanagement/sites/emergencymanagement/files/assets/cerg%20final%20jan%2030%20final.pdf>





## Fire

Over 4,000 Americans die each year and 25,000 are injured in fires. Fire can start fast – in less than 30 seconds a small flame can turn into a major fire. It also spreads quickly, both vertically and across enclosed spaces. In 5 minutes, a residence can be engulfed in flames. Moreover, even in areas without flames, smoke and heat can be lethal due to burns (exterior or to the throat and lungs), asphyxiation, disorientation, and/or panic. Kitchens and cooking areas are the primary areas where these fires start.





## DURING



## AFTER



## BEFORE

- Install smoke alarms and change the batteries every six months. Audible alarms for visually impaired people should pause with a small window of silence between each successive cycle so that they can listen to instructions or voices of others. Smoke alarms with a vibrating pad or flashing light are available for the hearing impaired. Contact your local fire department for information about obtaining a flashing or vibrating smoke alarm. Smoke alarms with a strobe light outside the home to catch the attention of neighbors, and emergency call systems for summoning help, are also available.
- Place fire extinguishers on each floor in your house, in known and easy-to-grab locations, and know how to use them; be sure the extinguisher in your kitchen is designed for grease fires. Check that fire extinguishers are sufficiently pressurized every six months.
- Create and exercise a household evacuation plan that includes two ways to exit each room in the event the primary way is blocked by fire or smoke.
- Acquire appropriate homeowner's or renter's insurance.
- Inspect extension cords for frayed or exposed wiring or loose plugs.
- Do not store used rags soaked with painting or cleaning chemicals.
- Do not keep spare fuel tanks (propane or gasoline) indoors, including in an attached garage.
- Be careful when using alternative heating sources (for example, space heaters). Never leave these heating sources unattended.
- Never use a device meant for cooking or outside use (for example, a camp stove or deep-fryer) as an interior heat source.
- Always check your surroundings and when possible, identify two exits. If you are unable to safely navigate stairs, be sure to make special arrangements with neighbors or emergency management in advance. Remember elevators should never be used in an emergency.
- The U.S. Fire Administration encourages individuals with disabilities to live on a ground floor. If you live in a multistory home, sleeping on the first floor near an exit will make escape easier.
- If you use a walker or wheelchair, check all exits to be sure you can get through the doorways. Make any necessary changes, such as installing exit ramps and widening doorways, to make an emergency escape easier.



- Use a fire extinguisher to put out small fires. Never use water on an electrical or grease fire.
- If you are escaping through a closed door, use the back of your hand to feel for heat.
- Smoke rises, so it's important to stay as low as possible to your exit.
- Close doors behind you to delay the spread of fire.
- Do not gather valuables or use the phone while exiting a burning structure. Just get out.
- Once you are out safely, call 911.
- Once the fire department arrives on the scene, go to the first unit and tell them that all family members are out or accounted for including pets.
- Do not remain in a burning structure to save a pet that does not want to leave.



- Seek medical attention as needed.
- Do not go back into a burning structure for any reason until authorities say it is safe to do so.
- Let family and friends know you are safe.
- Call your insurance agent.
- Contact your local disaster relief services if you need housing, food or a place to stay.
- Conduct an inventory of damaged property and items. Do not throw away any damaged goods until after an inventory is made.
- Begin saving receipts for any money you spend related to fire loss. The receipts may be needed later by the insurance company and for verifying losses claimed on income tax.
- Notify your mortgage company of the fire.

### Citation

<https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies/fire/home-fire-recovery.html>  
<https://www.ready.gov/home-fires>  
<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergencymanagement/sites/emergencymanagement/files/assets/cerg%20final%20jan%2030%20final.pdf>  
<https://www.usfa.fema.gov/prevention/outreach/disabilities.html>



## Medical Emergency

A medical emergency is any acute injury or illness that poses an immediate risk to a person's short-term or long-term health. You cannot predict accidents or illnesses, but you can prepare for a medical emergency. Medical emergencies may happen on their own, or they may be a secondary result of virtually every other hazard addressed in this guide. Some examples of medical emergencies are: difficulty breathing, fainting, chest pain or pressure, uncontrolled bleeding, coughing or vomiting blood, sudden severe pain, poisoning, or major injuries, such as broken bones, lacerations, burns, or puncture wounds.





## BEFORE

- Know how to call or text 911.
- Keep well-stocked First Aid kits at home, at work and in your car.
- Put together a list of emergency contacts.
- Always keep a list of your medical conditions and medications with you.
- Learn the warning signs of medical emergencies.



## DURING

- Stay calm and call 911. Call if you can since it is a better way of exchanging information.
- If you think you are having a medical emergency, seek immediate medical care.
- Gather as much information as possible about the circumstance and call 911. Follow all the operator's instructions carefully. Stay on the line until the operator says it's OK to hang up.
- If you have only a brief time with the operator, make sure you share your address and your medical issue first.



## AFTER

- Review all your documentation to ensure your emergency contact and medical information are up to date.
- Inform others in your trusted network to arrange for assistance with follow-up appointments, prescriptions retrieval, assisting at home, etc.



### Citation

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergencymanagement/sites/emergencymanagement/files/assets/cerg%20final%20jan%2030%20final.pdf>





## Extreme Heat

Extreme heat – especially coupled with high humidity – can be deadly, slowing evaporation and thus requiring the body to work harder to moderate its core temperature. Overexposure to heat and/or overexertion (too much exercise or effort) can trigger a heat-related illness: heat cramps, heat exhaustion, and eventually heat stroke. Heat-related illness is a particularly high risk for children, older adults, and those who are infirm or overweight.





## BEFORE

- Listen to local weather forecasts and stay aware of upcoming temperature changes.
- If you have an air conditioner, have it serviced regularly.
- Cover windows with drapes or shades.
- Weather-strip doors and windows.
- Use window reflectors, such as aluminum foil-covered cardboard, to reflect heat back outside.
- Add insulation to keep the heat out.
- Use attic fans to clear hot air.
- Install window air conditioners and insulate around them.
- Drink plenty of fluids. Know your body and know what is normal.
- If you or someone you care for is on a special diet, ask a doctor how best to accommodate it.
- Reschedule outdoor activities, if possible.



## DURING

- Never leave a child, adult, or animal alone inside a vehicle on a warm day.
- Find places with air conditioning. Libraries, shopping malls, and community centers can provide a cool place to take a break from the heat.
- If you're outside, find shade. Wear a hat wide enough to protect your face.
- Dress in loose-fitting clothes that cover as much skin as possible. Lightweight, light-colored clothing reflects heat and sunlight and helps maintain normal body temperatures.
- Drink plenty of fluids to stay hydrated. Avoid drinks with caffeine or alcohol.
- Do not use electric fans when the temperature outside is more than 95 degrees, as this could increase the risk of heat-related illness. Fans create air flow and a false sense of comfort, but do not reduce body temperature.
- Avoid high-energy activities.
- Check yourself, family members, and neighbors for signs of heat-related illness.



## AFTER

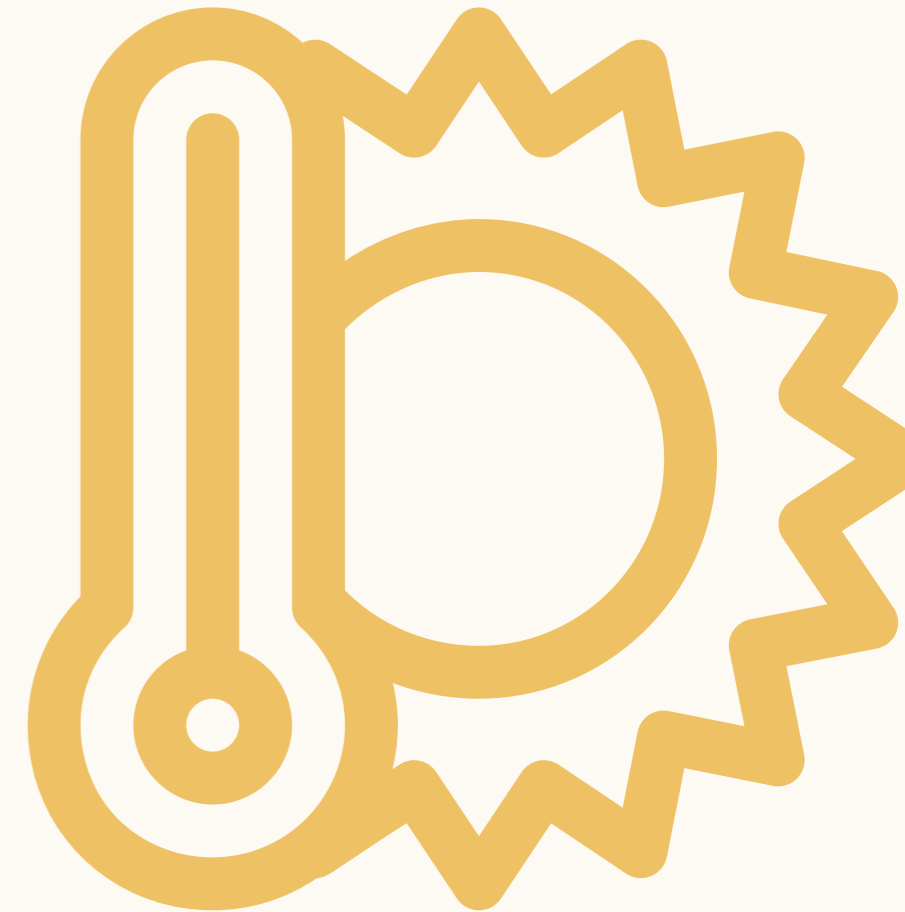
- Consult a medical professional if a heat-related condition does not improve.
- Continue to hydrate.



### Citation

<https://www.ready.gov/heat>

<https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies/heat-wave-safety.html>





## Winter Weather Extreme Cold

Winter weather includes ice, heavy snow, and extreme cold conditions. These can cause power outages and loss of heat and communications services – sometimes for many days. The greatest threat from winter weather is often from secondary impacts, such as traffic accidents on icy roads. Hypothermia and frostbite, which can result from prolonged exposure to cold, are also risks. Additionally, clean-up (shoveling) from winter weather events can be strenuous and may therefore pose a risk for older adults and others with physical limitations.





## BEFORE

- Know your area's risk for winter storms. Extreme winter weather can leave communities without utilities or other services for long periods of time.
- Prepare your home to keep out the cold with insulation, caulking, and weather stripping. Learn how to keep pipes from freezing. Install and test smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors with battery backups.
- Have your furnace serviced regularly.
- Have your vehicle winterized before the winter storm season to decrease your chance of being stranded in cold weather.
- Have emergency heating equipment.
- Pay attention to weather reports and warnings of freezing weather and winter storms. Sign up for your community's warning system. The Emergency Alert System (EAS) and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio also provide emergency alerts.
- Gather supplies in case you need to stay home for several days without power. Keep in mind each person's specific needs, including medication. Do not forget the needs of pets. Have extra batteries for radios and flashlights.
- Create an emergency supply kit for your car. Include jumper cables, sand, a flashlight, warm clothes, blankets, bottled water, and non-perishable snacks. Keep the gas tank full.
- Learn the signs of, and basic treatments for, frostbite and hypothermia.



## DURING

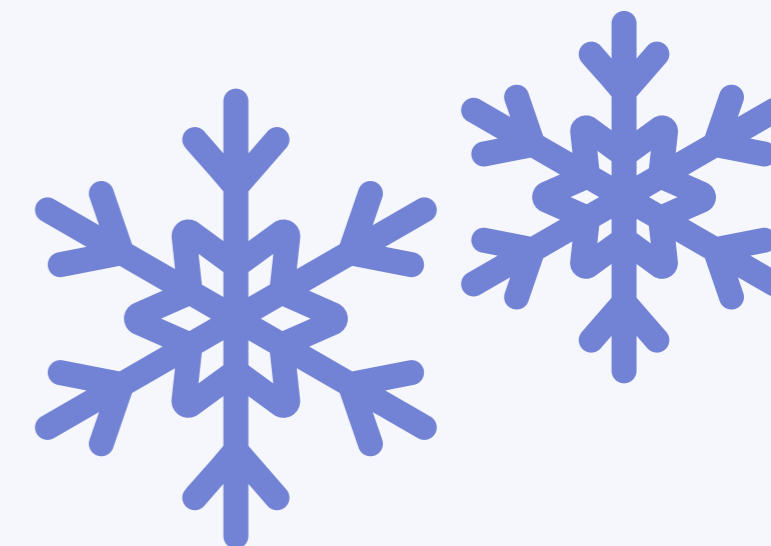
- Stay off roads if possible. If trapped in your car, then stay inside. Run the engine occasionally to keep warm. Turn on the engine for about 10 minutes each hour (or five minutes every half hour). Running the engine for only short periods reduces the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning and conserves fuel. Use the heater while the engine is running. Keep the exhaust pipe clear of snow, and slightly open a downwind window for ventilation.
- Limit your time outside. If you need to go outside, then wear layers of warm clothing. Watch for signs of frostbite and hypothermia. Cover your mouth to protect your lungs from severely cold air. Avoid taking deep breaths; minimize talking.
- Avoid carbon monoxide poisoning. Only use generators and grills outdoors and away from windows. Never heat your home with a gas stovetop or oven.
- Watch for signs of frostbite and hypothermia and begin treatment right away.
- Conserve fuel. Winter storms can last for several days, placing great demand on electric, gas, and other fuel distribution systems (fuel oil, propane, etc.). Lower the thermostat to 65° F (18° C) during the day and to 55° F (13° C) at night. Close off unused rooms, and stuff towels or rags in cracks under the doors. Cover the windows at night.

- Eat regularly. Food provides the body with energy for producing its own heat.
- Keep the body replenished with fluids to prevent dehydration. Drink liquids such as warm broth or juice. Avoid caffeine and alcohol. Caffeine, a stimulant, accelerates the symptoms of hypothermia. Alcohol, such as brandy, is a depressant and hastens the effects of cold on the body. Alcohol also slows circulation and can make you less aware of the effects of cold. Both caffeine and alcohol can cause dehydration.



## AFTER

- Avoid driving and other travel until conditions have improved.
- Avoid overexertion.
- If you are using a portable generator, take precautions against carbon monoxide poisoning, electrocution and fire.
- Be sure paved areas on your property and adjacent rights-of-way (including sidewalks) are shoveled. Un-shoveled snow is a hazard to your neighbors, and it may eventually turn to ice.



### Citation

<https://www.ready.gov/winter-weather>

<https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies/winter-storm.html>

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergencymanagement/sites/emergencymanagement/files/assets/cerg%20final%20jan%2030%20final.pdf>



## Floods

Flooding is a common hazard. Depending on its depth and velocity, flooding can be a nuisance or a disaster. Be prepared for flooding no matter where you live, but particularly if you are in a low-lying area, near a body of water, downstream from a dam, or in other areas known to flood in previous storms.





## BEFORE

- Decide early whether you will evacuate, and where you will go if ordered to or opt to leave. Identify which shelters can accommodate medical equipment and/or services animals.
- Protect your property. Move valuables to higher levels. Declutter drains and gutters. Install check valves. Consider a sump pump with a battery.
- Disconnect electrical appliances.
- Gather supplies in case you must leave immediately or if services are cut off. Keep in mind each person's specific needs including medication. Obtain extra batteries and charging devices for phones and other critical equipment.
- Respiratory equipment (Bi-PAP, C-pap, etc.) should never be used with tap water. Only distilled water can be used. Make sure to stock up.
- Know if your residence is in a floodplain.
- Apply for flood insurance. Consider this even if you are not in the 100-year floodplain (the FEMA-designated "Special Flood Hazard Area") – many recent floods have exceeded the 100-year and even 500-year marks!



## DURING

- Depending on where you are, and the impact and the warning time of flooding, go to the safe location that you previously identified. Identify which shelters can accommodate any medical equipment or services animals.
- If told to evacuate, do so immediately. Never drive around barricades. Local responders use them to safely direct traffic out of flooded areas.
- Listen to the Emergency Alert System (EAS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio, or local alerting systems for current emergency information and instructions.
- Do not walk or drive through flood waters. Turn Around. Don't Drown!
- Stay off bridges over fast-moving water. Fast-moving water can wash bridges away without warning.
- If your vehicle is trapped in rapidly moving water, then stay inside. If water is rising inside the vehicle, then seek refuge on the roof.
- If trapped in a building, then go to its highest level. Do not climb into a closed attic. You may become trapped by rising floodwater. Go on the roof only if necessary. Once there, signal for help.
- Avoid contact with floodwater. It may be contaminated with sewage or contain dangerous insects or animals.
- Don't use gas or electrical appliances that have been flooded.
- Dispose of any food that comes into contact with flood water.
- Avoid downed power lines.



## AFTER

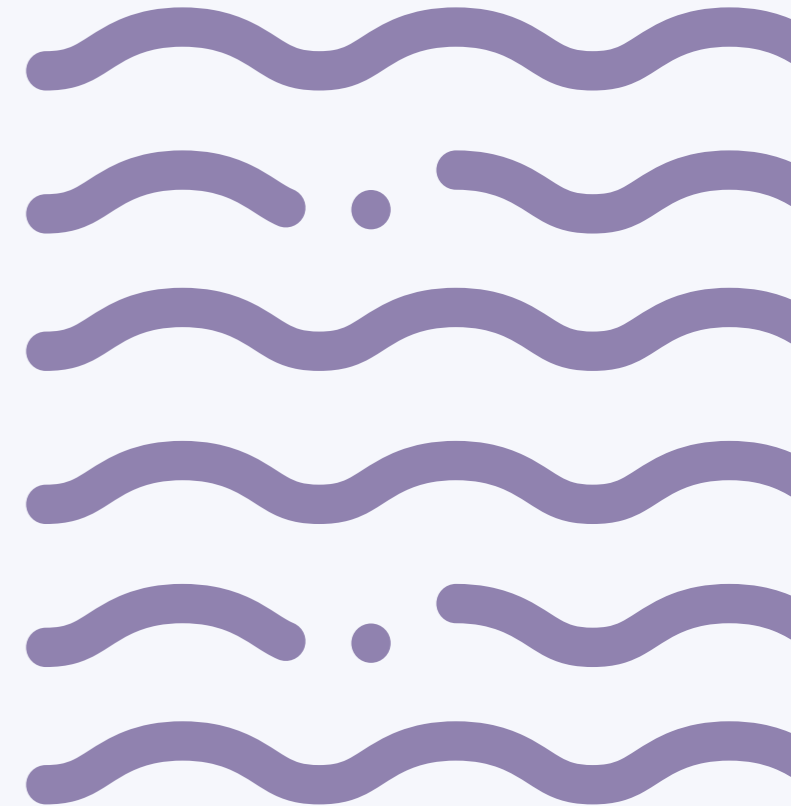
- Return home when local officials say it is safe.
- Avoid walking or driving through floodwaters.
- Do not drink from floodwaters.
- Do not drink or wash with water from a flooded household well until it is tested and found to be safe to use.
- Eliminate standing water where mosquitoes may breed.
- Do not eat any food that may have come into contact with flood water. "When in doubt, throw it out."
- Remove all porous items that have been wet for more than 48 hours and that cannot be thoroughly cleaned and dried. These items can remain a source of mold growth and should be removed from the home.
- If any gas or electrical appliances were flooded, don't use them until they have been checked for safety.
- Take pictures of home damage, both of the buildings and its contents, for insurance purposes.
- Check in with family and friends by texting or using social media.

### Citation

<https://www.ready.gov/winter-weather>

<https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies/winter-storm.html>

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergencymanagement/sites/emergencymanagement/files/assets/cerg%20final%20jan%2030%20final.pdf>





## Tornadoes

Tornadoes are nature's most violent storms. They are characterized by a rapidly spinning column of air from 65 miles per hour to upwards of 200 miles per hour. Weak tornadoes will cause superficial damage to directly impacted buildings, while very strong tornadoes can destroy everything along paths hundreds of yards across. Tornadoes can accompany thunderstorms, tropical storms, and hurricanes. They can appear suddenly, without warning, and can be invisible until dust and debris are picked up or a funnel cloud appears. Although severe tornadoes are most common in the Plains States, they can happen anywhere.





## BEFORE

- Have a battery or crank powered National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) weather radio available.
- Move to an underground shelter, basement or safe room. If none is available, a small, windowless interior room or hallway on the lowest level of a sturdy building is the safest alternative. Remember: no area of a mobile home is safe during a tornado. If you have access to a sturdy shelter or a vehicle, go there immediately, using your seat belt if driving.
- If there is a tornado watch, pay attention to a weather radio, commercial radio, television, or a news website for up to date information.
- During a tornado watch (not a warning), secure or bring inside any outdoor objects that could blow away or become "missiles" and cause damage.
- Watch for signs of a tornado: dark or greenish skies, hail, large, dark low-lying clouds, loud roar.
- Learn First Aid.



## DURING

- Listen to official information.
- Go immediately to the lowest level of your building, to an interior room or hallway.
- Stay away from windows and doorways.
- Do not stay in a trailer or a mobile home. Go immediately to a building with a strong foundation.
- If you are in a car, or if shelter is not available, lie flat in a ditch or other low-lying area. Do not seek refuge under a bridge or overpass.
- Plan to stay in your shelter location until the danger has passed.



## AFTER

- Keep listening to EAS, NOAA Weather Radio, and local authorities for updated information.
- If you are trapped, cover your mouth with a cloth or mask to avoid breathing dust. Try to send a text, bang on a pipe or wall, or use a whistle instead of shouting.
- Stay clear of fallen power lines or broken utility lines.
- Do not enter damaged buildings until you are told that they are safe.
- Save your phone calls for emergencies. Phone systems are often down or busy after a disaster. Use text messaging or social media to communicate with family and friends.
- Be careful during clean-up. Wear thick-soled shoes, long pants, and work gloves.
- Take pictures of home damage, both of the buildings and its contents, for insurance purposes.



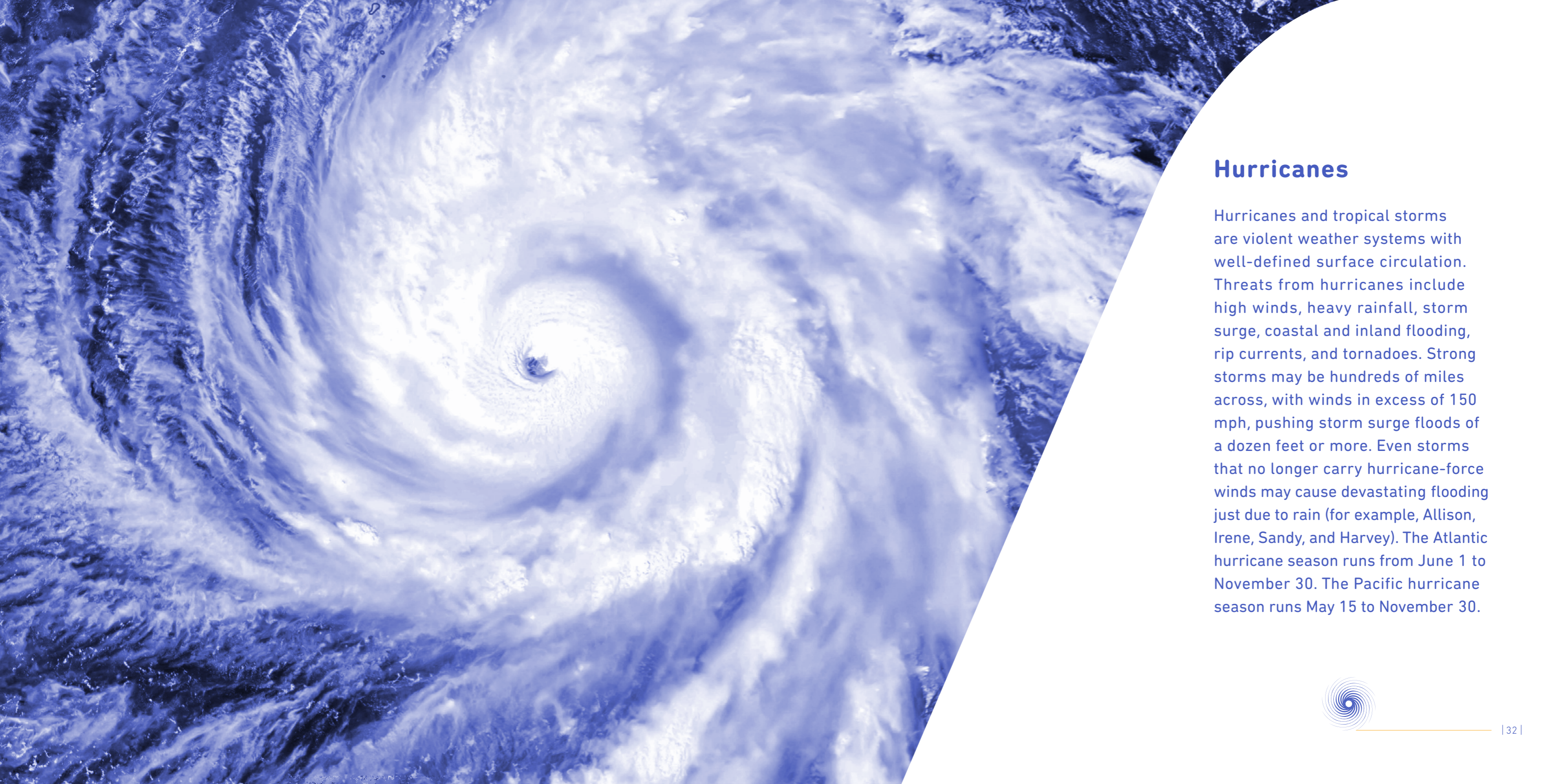
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<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergencymanagement/sites/emergencymanagement/files/assets/cerg%20final%20jan%2030%20final.pdf>





## Hurricanes

Hurricanes and tropical storms are violent weather systems with well-defined surface circulation. Threats from hurricanes include high winds, heavy rainfall, storm surge, coastal and inland flooding, rip currents, and tornadoes. Strong storms may be hundreds of miles across, with winds in excess of 150 mph, pushing storm surge floods of a dozen feet or more. Even storms that no longer carry hurricane-force winds may cause devastating flooding just due to rain (for example, Allison, Irene, Sandy, and Harvey). The Atlantic hurricane season runs from June 1 to November 30. The Pacific hurricane season runs May 15 to November 30.





## BEFORE

- Know your area's risk of hurricanes.
- Sign up for your community's warning system. The Emergency Alert System (EAS) and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio also provide emergency alerts.
- If you are at risk for flash flooding, watch for warning signs such as heavy rain.
- Practice going to a safe shelter for high winds, such as a FEMA safe room or ICC 500 storm shelter. The next best protection is a small, interior, windowless room in a sturdy building on the lowest level that is not subject to flooding.
- Based on your location and community plans, make your own plans for evacuation or sheltering in place. Identify which shelters can accommodate medical equipment and/or services animals.
- Become familiar with your evacuation zone, the evacuation route, and shelter locations.
- Gather needed supplies for at least three days. Keep in mind each person's specific needs, including medication, batteries and charging cables for medical devices.
- Keep important documents in a safe place or create password-protected digital copies.
- Protect your property. Declutter drains and gutters. Install check valves in plumbing to prevent backups. Consider hurricane shutters. Review insurance policies.



## DURING

- Listen to official information.
- Stay indoors.
- Avoid beaches, riverbanks and flood waters.
- Use flashlights in the dark if the power goes out. Do NOT use candles.
- Continue listening to local area radio, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) weather radio or TV stations for the latest information and updates.
- Avoid contact with floodwater. It may be contaminated with sewage or contain dangerous insects or animals.
- If caught on a flooded road with rapidly rising waters, get out of the car quickly and move to higher ground.
- Stay off bridges over fast-moving water.
- Turn off the power and water mains if instructed to do so by local authorities.



## AFTER

- Return home when local officials say it is safe.
- Avoid floodwaters.
- Check in with family and friends by texting or using social media.
- Do not use water that could be contaminated to wash dishes, brush teeth, prepare food, wash hands, make ice or make baby formula.
- Be careful during clean-up. Wear protective clothing and work with someone else.
- Do not touch electrical equipment if it is wet or if you are standing in water. If it is safe to do so, turn off electricity at the main breaker or fuse box to prevent electric shock.
- Document any property damage with photographs. Contact your insurance company for assistance.



### Citation

<https://www.ready.gov/winter-weather>

<https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies/winter-storm.html>

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergencymanagement/sites/emergencymanagement/files/assets/cerg%20final%20jan%2030%20final.pdf>



## Earthquakes

An earthquake is a shaking of the ground that can cause damage to buildings and infrastructure. Following an earthquake, fire is a significant risk due to gas leaks and water-pressure failures. Earthquake strength is described by the Richter Scale, which measures amplitude on a logarithmic basis – meaning that each whole number correlates to a 10-fold increase in earthquake amplitude, or a 30-fold increase in total energy released. Earthquakes below 5 on the Richter scale may be felt but rarely cause damage; earthquakes of 9 and up cause complete regional devastation. There are 45 states or territories in the United States at risk of earthquakes.





## BEFORE

- Sign up for your local community alerts and have a battery or crank powered radio available.
- Locate safe spots in each room. A safe place could be under a piece of furniture or against an interior wall away from windows, bookcases or tall furniture that could fall on you.
- Hold earthquake drills with your family members.
- Create a family emergency communications plan that has an out-of-state contact. Plan where to meet if you get separated.
- Understand how your home or structure will react and consider hardening if there are areas of concern.
- Make a supply kit that includes enough food and water for at least three days, a flashlight, a fire extinguisher, and a whistle. Consider each person's specific needs, including medication. Do not forget the needs of pets. Have extra batteries and charging devices for phones and other critical equipment.
- Consider obtaining an earthquake insurance policy. Standard homeowner's insurance does not cover earthquake damage.
- Learn First Aid.



## DURING

- Listen to official information.
- Cover your head and neck with your arms. Hold on to any sturdy furniture until the shaking stops. Crawl only if you can reach better cover without going through an area with more debris. Move as little as possible - most injuries during earthquakes occur because of people moving around, falling and suffering sprains, fractures and head injuries.
- If in bed, stay there and cover your head and neck with a pillow.
- If inside, stay there until the shaking stops. DO NOT run outside.
- If in a vehicle, stop in a clear area that is away from buildings, trees, overpasses, underpasses, or utility wires. If a power line falls on your vehicle, do not get out. Wait for assistance.
- If you are in a high-rise building, expect fire alarms and sprinklers to go off. Do not use elevators.
- If you smell gas, get out of the house and move as far away as possible.
- If near slopes, cliffs, or mountains, be alert for falling rocks and landslides.



## AFTER

- Expect aftershocks (smaller earthquakes) for hours or days after the initial quake.
- Avoid damaged areas.
- Check your utilities (especially gas). Evacuate and call 911 if you smell gas.
- Look for cracks in your foundation or drywall, as this may be a sign of structural damage. If you find damage, have the structure inspected before reoccupying it.
- Open closet and cabinet doors carefully as contents may have shifted.
- Check in with family and friends by texting or using social media.
- Use extreme caution during post-disaster clean-up of buildings and around debris. Do not attempt to remove heavy debris by yourself. Wear protective clothing, including a long-sleeved shirt, long pants, work gloves, and sturdy, thick-soled shoes during clean-up.

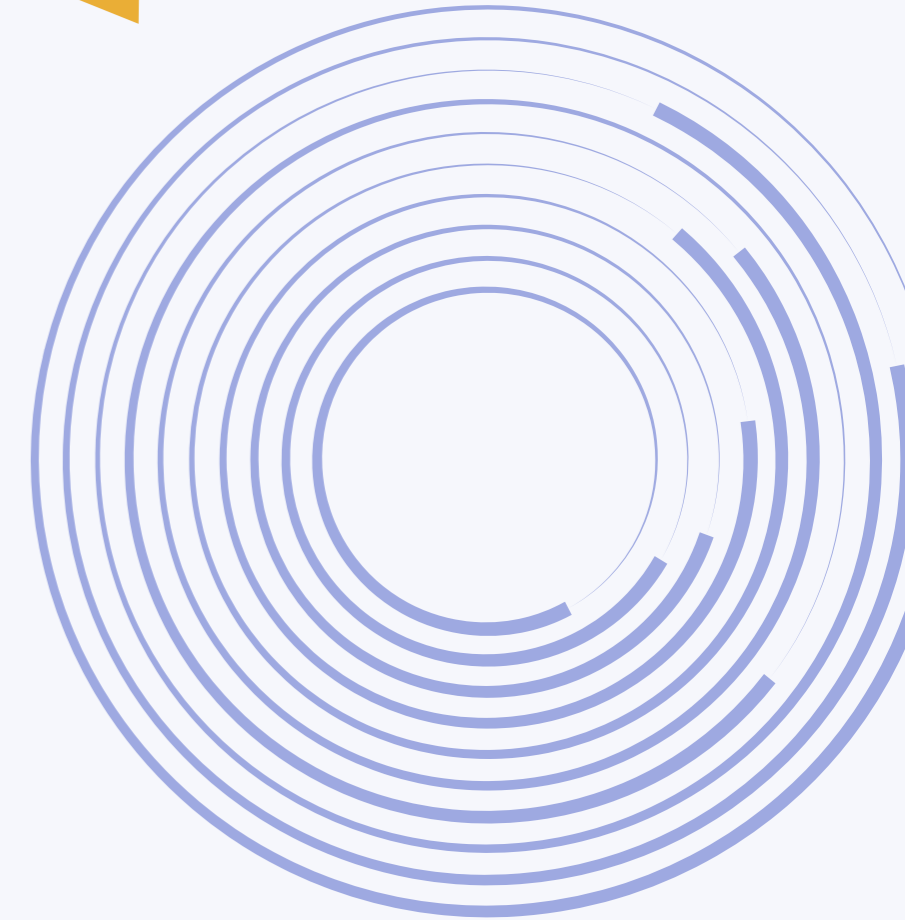


### Citation

<https://www.ready.gov/winter-weather>

<https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies/winter-storm.html>

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergencymanagement/sites/emergencymanagement/files/assets/cerg%20final%20jan%2030%20final.pdf>



# DISASTER PREPAREDNESS KIT SUGGESTIONS (FROM FEMA\*)

Be sure to call your local Fire and Police Department at their non-emergency number and make them aware of your mobility needs and together identify a rescue area.



A supply of water (one gallon daily per person for three-to-seven days)



Medical Supplies



Non-perishable packaged or canned food/juices (at least enough for three-to-seven days)



Non-electric can opener



Flashlight/batteries



Battery-operated radio and NOAA weather radio



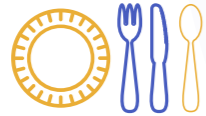
Cash – banks and ATMs may not be open or available for extended periods



Keys



Cooking tools/fuel



Paper plates/ plastic utensils



Blankets/pillows and other bedding



Clothing (seasonal/rain gear/ sturdy shoes)



Toys, books and games



Important documents – in a waterproof container (e.g., insurance, medical records, bank account numbers, Social Security card, etc.)



Document all valuables with video if possible



Keep a set of tools with you during the storm



First aid kit /medicines/ prescription drugs



Consider a back-up generator\*



Toiletries (hygiene items)



Moisture wipes



Vehicle fuel tanks filled



Proper identification / immunization records



Pet care items including carrier or cage for your pet, muzzle and leash



For flash floods, have a whistle so that rescuers can locate you

\*Providing alternatives for your power-dependent equipment including wheelchairs and respiratory equipment is essential during power outages. If possible, obtain a means of back-up power (generator, batteries, etc.) in the event the power goes out. Contact your utility company before you connect a generator to house wiring. Connecting a generator is specifically prohibited by law in some areas, so you must check with your local utility or fire department first.

Also contact your local electric company about power needs for life-sustaining devices in advance. Some power companies can put you on a "priority reconnection service" list. Let your local fire department know that you are dependent on life-support devices.

## Citations

<https://www.phe.gov/Preparedness/planning/abc/Pages/shelterinplace.aspx>  
<http://www.disastersrus.org/mydisasters/disability/disability.pdf>

## MDA IS HERE TO HELP

If you or someone you love is impacted by emergencies or natural disasters and are in need of MDA services, you can reach MDA by calling 1-833-ASK-MDA1 (1-833-275-6321) or send an email to [resourcecenter@mdausa.org](mailto:resourcecenter@mdausa.org).

We recommend programming this information into your cell phone for easy access. Our Resource Center is available Monday-Friday 9am-5pm CST to assist you.

### IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

In an emergency call 911  
Emergency referral line: 211  
Red Cross: 800-733-2767  
Salvation Army: 800-728-7825

### INSURANCE HOTLINES

State Farm: 800-732-5246  
Allstate: 800-547-8676  
Citizens: 866-411-2742  
Nationwide: 800-421-3535  
USAA (Military): 800-531-8222

### OTHER INSURANCE INFORMATION

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### FEMA TEXT MESSAGE UPDATES

To sign up for monthly preparedness tips:  
text **PREPARE** to **43362** (4FEMA)

To search for shelters or Disaster Recovery Centers (DRCs):  
Text **SHELTER** and a ZIP Code to **43362** (4FEMA)  
Text **DRC** and a ZIP Code to **43362** (4FEMA)

### MOBILE RESOURCES

The FEMA app (free smartphone app for mobile devices) contains a map with shelters and FEMA Disaster Recovery Centers, disaster safety tips, and interactive lists for storing your emergency kit and meeting location information.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION, GO TO

Preparing for Disaster for People with Disabilities and Other Special Needs — FEMA-American Red Cross publication.

Preparing for Emergencies: A Checklist for People with Neuromuscular Diseases — MDA brochure available online or in print from your local MDA office.



This emergency preparedness brochure is made possible through the generous support of the Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation.



## References

<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/emergencypreparedness.html>

<https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/disaster-safety-for-people-with-disabilities.html>

<https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies.html>

<http://www.ready.gov>

