



Develop a Disaster Plan

On January 13, 2018, a missile alert was issued through the Emergency Alert System to all cellphones in Hawaii. The message read: “**Emergency Alert** BALLISTIC MISSILE THREAT INBOUND TO HAWAII. SEEK IMMEDIATE SHELTER. THIS IS NOT A DRILL.” Similar messages were also played on all televisions and radio stations in the state. People were unsure of what to do, so panic ensued as people tried to seek shelter. If you received this alert, what would you do?

In this case, the alert was a false alarm sent mistakenly by an employee who was later fired from his position. What if it had been real, though? Would you know what to do?

When emergencies happen, having a plan that is already in place dramatically increases your chances of survival and improves outcomes. This activity is designed to get you thinking about the types of emergencies you may face and how you would respond.

For What Types of Emergencies Should I Prepare?

The first step of emergency planning is to determine the types of emergencies for which you need to prepare. Someone who lives in Oklahoma doesn't need to prepare for hurricanes but does need to prepare for tornadoes. Do you live in an area that is prone to flooding? Is there a chemical plant or nuclear power plant within 5 miles of your house? Do you live in a wooded area that is subject to wildfires? Are you near an area that experiences earthquakes? CDC has information to help you prepare for these emergencies and more here: <https://emergency.cdc.gov/hazards-specific.asp> You may also want to check out the resources available from Ready.gov, a government-run site designed to help you prepare for all types of emergencies: <https://www.ready.gov/>

Make sure to consider the likelihood of the following emergency situations:

- Avalanches
- Bioterrorism
- Chemical emergencies
- Disease outbreaks
- Earthquakes
- Extreme heat
- Floods
- Gas leaks/explosions
- House fires
- Hurricanes
- Landslides/mudslides
- Lightning
- Radiation emergencies
- Tornadoes
- Tsunamis
- Volcanoes
- Wildfires
- Winter weather

How Do I Develop a Plan?

Once you've identified the types of emergencies for which you need to plan, it's time to start putting together the details. This process can seem very overwhelming at first, but you can break it down by starting small. For most disasters, you will either need to shelter in place or **evacuate** to safety. You just need to figure out the details of how that's going to work in different scenarios. You also need to think about important names and phone numbers of people you may need to contact, such as doctors or veterinarians, as well as policy numbers for insurance, and banking information to access accounts. Remember, you might not have access to online information after a disaster.

Here are a few questions for you to discuss with other members of your household:

- How will you receive emergency alerts and warnings?
- What is your shelter plan?
- What is your **evacuation** plan?
- What is your household's communication plan?

Go to <https://www.ready.gov/plan> for more details and resources related to each of these questions. This site even has printable plans that you can fill out together.

As you develop your plan, make sure to consider the following factors to better match the plan to your household's needs:

- Different ages of members within your household
- Responsibilities for assisting others
- Locations frequented
- Dietary needs
- Medical needs, including prescriptions and equipment
- Disabilities or access and functional needs, including devices and equipment
- Languages spoken
- Cultural and religious considerations
- Pets or service animals
- Households with school-aged children

What Do I Do With My Plan?

Once you have written down your emergency plan, make sure you have access to it. Keep copies in places where you may need access: home, work, school, and vehicles. Keep a secure digital copy as a backup, but don't rely on it solely in case of power outages. Make sure that all family members, even children, know how to access the plan in case the family is separated.

Once the plan is written, practice it! The first time you do something, there's always room for improvement. Work with your household to rehearse the plan, making sure that each person knows their role in the plan. This can be tricky or even scary for younger children, so make sure to check out the resources available at <https://www.ready.gov/kids> to make the process easier.

12 WAYS TO PREPARE

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|---|--|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/>  Sign up for Alerts and Warnings | <input type="checkbox"/>  Make a Plan | <input type="checkbox"/>  Save for a Rainy Day | <input type="checkbox"/>  Practice Emergency Drills | <input type="checkbox"/>  Test Family Communication Plan | <input type="checkbox"/>  Safeguard Documents |
| <input type="checkbox"/>  Plan with Neighbors | <input type="checkbox"/>  Make Your Home Safer | <input type="checkbox"/>  Know Evacuation Routes | <input type="checkbox"/>  Assemble or Update Supplies | <input type="checkbox"/>  Get Involved in Your Community | <input type="checkbox"/>  Document and Insure Property |

Source: Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)



Build a Disaster Kit

Now that you have an idea of what to do, it's time to think about what you'll need. For natural disasters like hurricanes, you may go for weeks without power or access to fresh food and water. After Hurricane Maria hit Puerto Rico, it took 11 months to restore power to all areas! For disasters like wildfires or landslides, it is possible that you will temporarily move into an emergency shelter only to return to a home that is no longer there. It is important to be ready to survive whatever comes your way. In this activity, you will gather the resources needed and create an emergency disaster survival kit.

Basic Supply List

- Water (one gallon per person per day for several 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
- 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

Additional Supplies You May Need

- COVID-19 supplies - masks for everyone aged 2 and above, soap, hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes for surfaces
- Prescription medications
- Non-prescription medications such as pain relievers, anti-diarrhea medication, antacids, or laxatives
- Prescription eyeglasses and contact lens solution
- Infant formula, bottles, diapers, wipes, and diaper rash cream
- Pet food and extra water for your pet
- Cash or traveler's checks
- Important family documents, such as copies of insurance policies, identification and bank account records saved electronically or in a waterproof, portable container
- Sleeping bag or warm blanket for each person
- Complete change of clothing appropriate for your climate and sturdy shoes
- Fire extinguisher
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Feminine supplies and personal hygiene items
- Mess kits, paper cups, plates, paper towels and plastic utensils
- Paper and pencil
- Books, games, puzzles, or other activities for children

Pack Your Kit

This kit can be used for sheltering in place or **evacuation**, so it is important that it be semi-portable. A large plastic storage bin is a good choice for weatherproofing supplies. You might also use or include smaller bags or backpacks to make carrying the supplies easier in case of **evacuation**. Consider making more than one kit so that you have access to emergency supplies no matter where you are (home, car, work). Include a printed copy of your disaster plan in all kits. Be careful about storing too much personal information in your car due to the potential for break-ins and risk of identity theft.



Share Your Findings

The David J. Sencer CDC Museum uses award-winning exhibits and innovative programming to educate visitors about the value of **public health** and presents the rich heritage and vast accomplishments of CDC. Your demonstration could be a valuable contribution! Share your plan with the CDC Museum on Instagram using **@CDCmuseum**.