

Recommendations for Emergency Evacuation Preparedness

The amount of time you have to leave will depend on the hazard. If the event is a weather condition, such as an anticipated winter storm, you might have a day or two to get ready. However, many disasters allow no time for people to gather even the most basic necessities, which is why planning in advance is essential. There may be conditions under which you will decide to get away or there may be situations when you are ordered to leave. The following are guidelines for evacuation. The American Red Cross and FEMA provide more detailed information to aid in better preparation.

Advanced Planning:

Emergency kit:

Prepare an emergency evacuation kit containing essentials that will be available to you if the need to evacuate is sudden and urgent. This kit may also be used in the event of the need to shelter-in-place. Emergency kits may be purchased through the American Red Cross Store or you may create your own. Recommendations for your emergency supply kit are:

1. Non-perishable foods (examples: canned foods and manual can opener, dried fruit, nuts and nut butters, snack bars) Replace yearly.
2. Drinking water
3. Prescription medications, over-the-counter medications, and medical items
4. Working flashlights and extra batteries; matches
5. Portable battery-operated or hand-crank radio
6. Copies of documents (insurance policies, accounts, copies of medical and eyeglasses prescriptions, etc.)
7. Cash
8. First Aid kit
9. Emergency contact cards for all household members
10. Whistle and flares to signal for help
11. An emergency kit for your pet, to include: food, water, medicines, crate, photo ID and ID tags, collar and leash, sanitation supplies, and toy

Communication:

Your family may not always be together when an emergency occurs and should have plans for contacting and finding one another. Plan what to do in case you are separated.

1. Choose two places to meet:
 - a. Right outside your home in case of a sudden emergency, such as a fire.
 - b. Outside your neighborhood, in case you cannot return home or are asked to evacuate.
2. Choose an out-of-area emergency contact person. It may be easier to text or call long distance if local phone lines are overloaded or out of service. Everyone should have emergency contact information in writing or saved on his or her cell phones.
3. Decide where you would go and what route you would take to get there. You may choose to go to a hotel/motel, stay with friends or relatives in a safe location, or go to an evacuation shelter if necessary.
4. Practice evacuating your home twice a year. Drive your planned evacuation route and plot alternate routes on your map in case roads are impassable. Choose several destinations in different directions so you have options in an emergency.

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5. Plan ahead for your pets. Keep a phone list of pet-friendly hotels/motels and animal shelters that are along your evacuation routes.
6. Let your family know you are safe. If your community has experienced a disaster, register on the American Red Cross Safe and Well website to let your family and friends know you are safe. You may also call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) and select the prompt for "Disaster" to register yourself and your family.

Transportation:

1. If you have a car, keep a full tank of gas in it if an evacuation seems likely. Keep a half tank of gas in it at all times in case of an unexpected need to evacuate. Gas stations may be closed during emergencies and unable to pump gas during power outages.
2. Keep maps, flares, cell phone charger in your car.
3. Leave early enough to avoid being trapped by severe weather.
4. Follow recommended evacuation routes. Do not take shortcuts; they may be blocked.
5. Be alert for road hazards such as washed-out roads or bridges and downed power lines. Do not drive into flooded areas.
6. If you do not have a car, plan how you will leave if you have to. Make arrangements with family, friends or your local government.

Evacuation is imminent:

1. Get you and your pet's emergency supplies kits.
2. Prepare your pets for travel. Take your pets with you, but understand that only service animals may be permitted in public shelters.

As time permits:

1. Listen to local radio/television for updates and instructions.
2. Unplug electrical equipment such as radios, televisions and small appliances. Leave freezers and refrigerators plugged in unless there is a risk of flooding. If there is damage to your home and you are instructed to do so, shut off water and electricity before leaving. Unless local officials advise otherwise, leave natural gas on because you will need it for heating and cooking when you return home. If you turn gas off, a licensed professional is required to turn it back on, and it may take weeks for a professional to respond.
3. Dress for adverse conditions and take extra clothing and personal items.
4. Review your plan for a meeting place in case you are separated.
5. If driving, fill gas tank, check roadway safety (try to avoid driving in sleet, freezing rain or drizzle, snow or dense fog).
6. Obtain road closure information by calling 911 or DOT (for county roads).
Other websites: <http://www.highwayconditions.com/nc/> or
<http://www.localconditions.com/weather-asheville-north-carolina/28800/traffic.php>
7. Call or email the out-of-state contact in your family communications plan. Tell them where you are going.

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8. Secure your home by closing and locking doors and windows.
9. If possible, notify someone within the community that you are leaving.

Evacuation is urgent:

If you have only moments before leaving, grab these things and go!

1. Your emergency supplies kit
2. Your pet(s) and their emergency kit(s)
3. Driver's license or personal identification
4. Car keys and keys to the place you may be going (friend's or relative's home)
5. Medical supplies: prescription medications in original bottle, eyeglasses, and dentures
6. Additional bottled water
7. Clothing and bedding: a change of clothes and a sleeping bag/bedroll and pillow for **each** household member
8. Checkbook, cash, and credit cards

Let's hope none of the above is ever needed. But it is best to be prepared. Please visit the resources below for more complete guidance in emergency preparedness.

Resources:

<http://www.fema.gov>

<http://www.ready.gov> or call 1-800-BEREADY

<http://www.redcross.org/prepare>

<http://www.redcrossstore.org>