

In Case of Emergency ... Be Ready for Anything

You may not want to think about it, but wherever you live you could someday face the wrath of nature—or man. You shouldn't duck this subject until you're dealing with the threat or the aftermath of a hurricane, tornado, earthquake, flood, fire, avalanche or even a terrorist attack. In the hurried confusion, you're likely to miss important items as you prepare your home or leave to seek shelter.

Experts at the American Red Cross and the Federal Emergency Management Agency say planning is the key. While disasters differ, your first defense is a disaster supplies kit in an easily accessible place. "You can keep a kit in a footlocker or other sturdy container," said Darcy Brune, American Red Cross. "It's important to have kits both at work and at home, and it's a good idea to keep a smaller kit in your car."

Think about where you live and how you would leave, both from your home and on the roads around it. Consider the geography and pay attention to whether you're near a nuclear power plant, refinery, manufacturing plant, lake, river, dam, forest or mountain. You should be aware of the threats in your area. Know where to go (a shelter, a close friend or relative's home) in an emergency, and set up a place to meet in case the family gets separated.

One item many people don't think about is cash. In the event of a disaster, phone lines may be down, rendering credit cards useless. You should also keep a set of important family documents in your kit, unless you have them in a safe deposit box. Have an extra set of car keys handy.

Red Cross disaster shelters don't allow pets, and neither do many hotels. Pick out at least two kennels along an evacuation route. If you plan to travel to a place where you can have a pet, take enough food and water for your pet, too. Be sure your pet has a leash, collar and tags that show vaccinations.

[Click here](#) to see the recommended contents of a disaster supplies kit for your home or work.

For more information about the steps you and your family should take to prepare for a disaster, contact your local Red Cross chapter. Disaster supplies kits are available on the [Red Cross online store](#).