

Evacuation — basic information

Who?

Who could be affected by evacuation?

Anyone living, working, or going to school in a particular neighborhood or community where something dangerous is happening or is expected to happen.

Who is in charge of evacuation?

Local or state emergency managers and law enforcement officers. It is the responsibility of local and state officials to plan for and carry out evacuations so that no one is left behind.

What?

What is evacuation?

A suggestion or an order for people to leave a dangerous area and go to a safer place. An evacuation might involve just a small number of people relocating for a short period of time. Or it might involve many thousands of people traveling great distances over a long period of time.

What could make evacuation necessary?

A natural disaster such as an approaching hurricane or wildfire, an accident such as a toxic chemical spill, or an intentional event such as an act of terrorism are examples of emergencies that could make evacuation necessary.

When?

When does evacuation happen?

Evacuation may take place before, during, or after a dangerous event has happened. This is because some kinds of emergencies can be predicted farther ahead of time than others. Some can't be predicted at all.

When can I go home after an evacuation?

Sometimes in a few hours, but other times it may take days or weeks for it to be safe enough for you to go home.

Where?

Where could an evacuation take place?

An evacuation can happen in any location where an emergency is taking place or is expected to take place and when staying put is likely to be more dangerous than going somewhere safer.

Where would I go if I had to evacuate?

To a place where emergency managers have decided offers the best protection under the circumstances. Often, emergency shelters will be set up where food, water, and sleeping space are provided.

Why?

Why would I have to leave my home, workplace, or school?

Because the emergency situation makes it more dangerous for you to stay where you are than to go to a safer location.

Why can't I just stay where I am?

Because if you stay in the dangerous situation, you also put at risk the lives of emergency workers trying to protect or rescue you.

How?

How would I know what to do and where to go?

Listen to local radio stations or watch local television channels for instructions. Be sure to keep a battery-operated radio in your **disaster supplies kit** so that if the power goes out you can still listen for instructions and updates.

How would I get to a safer place?

Personal cars, mass transit systems such as buses and subways, and interstate carriers like railroads and airlines may all be possible ways to evacuate. If you don't have a car, plan in advance how you will evacuate and what help you will need from others, such as neighbors or friends. Also find out what arrangements have been made by local government officials to help you evacuate.

Do you have more questions? Read **Evacuation: Getting out of Harm's Way** for more information and a checklist for what you need to know, what you need to do, and what you need to take with you.

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