

30 Days 30 Ways | Haysinformed

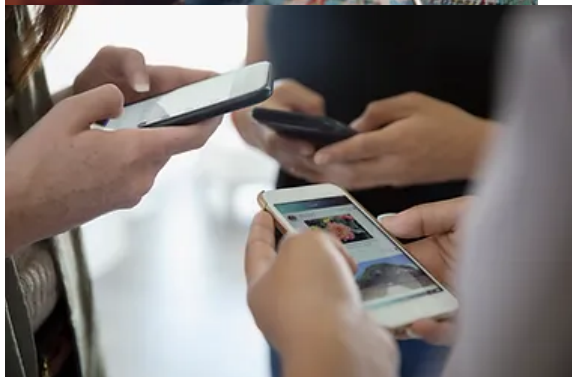


Below are 30 tips for having a plan and being prepared for just about any emergency.



1. Create your Family Disaster Plan: Meet with your family and discuss why you need to prepare for disasters. Explain the dangers of fire and severe weather to children. Plan to share responsibilities and work together as a team. Keep it simple enough so family members can remember all the details. This is important because the high stress of a disaster can help create confusion. Discuss the types of disasters that are most likely to happen. Explain what to do in each case. Everyone should know what to do in case all family members are not together. Discussing disasters ahead of time will help reduce fear and anxiety and will help everyone know how to respond. Remember to review your plans periodically.

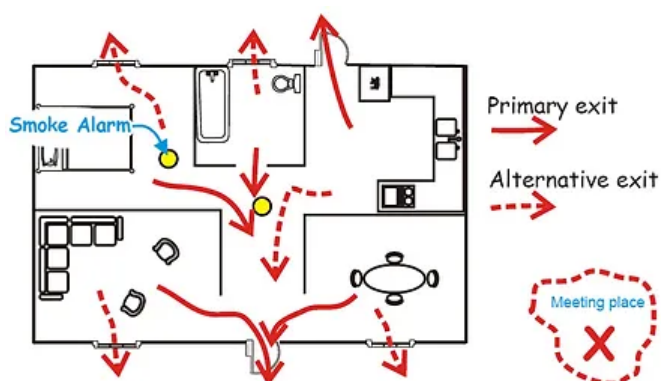
3. Emergency Communication Plan: Develop an emergency communication plan in the event family members are separated from one another during a disaster and have a plan to reunite. Family members often spend their days apart so having this plan in place will ensure that everyone will be able to come together. Memorize family phone numbers in case yours gets lost or damaged. Identify an out-of-town relative or friend to be your contact. This person should live outside of your area. After a disaster, it is often easier to make a long-distance call than a local call. Family members should call this contact and tell him or her where they are. Everyone should know the contact's name, address, and phone number.



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4. Escape Routes: Identify and be familiar with escape routes. These routes could be in your home, work, or community in the event of fire, flooding, etc. Depending on the type of disaster, it may be necessary to evacuate your home. Plan primary and alternate escape routes in case certain roads are blocked or closed. Remember to follow the advice of local officials during evacuation situations. They will direct you to the safest route; some roads may be blocked so don't go around the barricades for your safety. The best thing as you try to navigate this stressful time is to **KEEP CALM**.



5. Pets: Do not forget to prepare an emergency plan for your pets. Pets, other than service animals are usually not permitted in places where food is served due to health department regulations. Plan where you would take your pets if you had to go to a public shelter where they are not allowed. Make sure you have a kennel in addition to a leash and harness. If you have large animals i.e. horses, know how you will evacuate with them and where will you take them for short term and long-term periods of time.



6. Utilities: Educate family members on how and when to turn off the water, gas, and electricity at the main switches or valves. Review this procedure every six months. Keep necessary tools near gas and water shut-off valves. Turn off utilities only if you suspect a leak or damaged lines, or if you are instructed to do so by authorities. If you turn the gas off, you will need a professional to turn it back on. Paint shut-off valves with white or fluorescent paint to increase visibility. Attach a shut-off valve wrench or other special tool in a visible place close to the gas and water shut-off valves.



Protection

7. Insurance: Check if you have adequate insurance coverage. Ask your insurance agent to review your current policies to ensure that they will cover your home and belongings adequately. Homeowner's insurance does not cover flood losses. If you are a renter, your landlord's insurance does not protect your personal property; it only protects the building. Renters' insurance pays if a renter's property is damaged or stolen. Renters' insurance can cost less than \$15 a month in most areas of the country. Contact your insurance agent for more information.

8. Smoke Alarms: Install smoke alarms on each level of your home near bedrooms. With all the petroleum-based products in households, residents only have an average of 5 minutes to escape a fire. Working smoke alarms increase your chances of survival in a home fire by 50%. Smoke alarms sense abnormal amounts of smoke or invisible combustion gases in the air. They can detect both smoldering and flaming fires. Many areas are now requiring hard-wired smoke alarms in new homes. If you live in an apartment complex, double check that your unit has smoke alarms. It is required that landlords have working smoke alarms in the units they rent out.



9. Fire Extinguishers: There is no time to read directions during an emergency!! Check with your local fire department to see if they provide training on how to use your fire extinguisher (A-B-C types) and ensure that all family members know where the extinguishers are kept. Different extinguishers operate in different ways. Only adults should handle and operate extinguishers. Most fire departments are more than willing to come out to their local neighborhoods or associations to discuss fire safety when requested.

10. Home Hazard Hunt: Conduct a home hazard hunt. What is a home hazard hunt you ask? Well, during a disaster, ordinary objects in your home can cause injury or damage. Anything that can move, fall, break, or cause a fire is a home hazard. For example, during a tornado, a water heater, a bookshelf which could turn over, or hanging objects that could fall and hurt someone are home hazards. There are electrical, chemical, and fire hazards, so go hunt for these and make your home safer. Contact your local fire department to learn about home fire hazards. Some of them may be very surprising. Inspect your home at least once a year and fix potential hazards.





11. Disaster Supply Kit: Stock emergency supplies and assemble a Disaster Supply Kit. Keep enough supplies in your home to meet your needs for at least three days (water, food, medications, etc.) ... Assemble a Disaster Supply Kit with items you may need in case of an evacuation. Store these supplies in sturdy, clearly labeled, easy-to-carry containers, such as backpacks, duffel bags, etc. In an evacuation, you may not have time to pack and time is not your friend. Having this ready to grab and go could make all the difference. Check out the Disaster Center's recommended supplies. They have everything from supplies needed to how to build a makeshift toilet.

12. Home Safety Checklist: Today is the day to complete an at home safety checklist. Inspect your home at minimum, once a year and fix potential safety hazards. Look for frayed wires on your appliances and electrical devices. Test smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms. Ensure that the areas where you cook and burn candles are neat and clean, and that your evacuation routes are clear and your home's heating system is safe. If you think this is silly, just remember, you've worked hard for that roof over your head. Do not allow a preventable accident to be the reason you need a new roof over your head.

Day 12: Home Safety Checklist



Fire Safety Checklist for Homeowners and Renters

If there is a fire, you may have less than 2 minutes to get out of your home. Talk through what you should do to be safe. Make sure everyone in your home knows what to do if there is a fire.

✓ Put a check in front of each statement that is true for your home.

Smoke Alarms

- ☐ Smoke alarms are on every level of the home.
- ☐ Smoke alarms are tested and outside sleeping areas.
- ☐ Smoke alarms are tested each month.
- ☐ Smoke alarm batteries are changed as needed.
- ☐ Smoke alarms are less than 10 years old.

Carbon Monoxide Alarms

- ☐ Carbon monoxide alarms are located on each level of the home.
- ☐ Carbon monoxide alarms are less than 7 years old.

Electrical and Appliance Safety

- ☐ All electrical cords are in good condition and not frayed or cut.
- ☐ People clean the dryer of lint after every use.
- ☐ All plug-in items are safe and do not feel warm when you touch them. (If they are warm, call the landlord or an electrician.)

Candle Safety

- ☐ Candles are in sturdy fire-proof containers that won't be tipped over.
- ☐ Adults blow out all candles when leaving the room or going to bed.
- ☐ Candles are kept out of reach from children and pets.

Cooking Safety

- ☐ The cooking area has no items that can burn.
- ☐ People stay in the kitchen when they are frying, grilling, broiling, or toasting food.
- ☐ Pot handles are always turned toward the back of the stove.

Escape Plan

- ☐ There is a fire escape plan that shows 2 ways out of every room.
- ☐ Everyone knows where the safe meeting place is outside the home.
- ☐ Everyone living in the house practices the escape plan 2 times a year.

Test your alarm regularly. Your smoke alarm is working if it makes a noise when you press the "Test" button.

Children are sometimes curious about fire. If you have children in your home, lock up any items that can start a fire (candles, lighters, cigarettes, etc.) and make sure children cannot reach candles.

Create a home safety checklist and share with family members

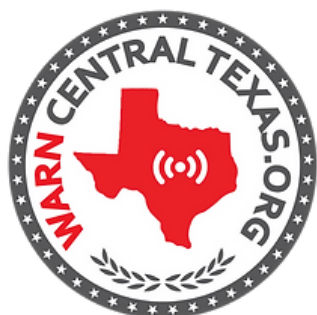
Find more preparedness tips at haysinformed.com



13. Supply Kit: Keep a small Disaster Supplies Kit in the trunk of your car. If you become stranded or unable to return home, having these items will keep you comfortable. It can be in a duffel bag, tote, or any container that can hold up to the extreme Texas weather. Check out <http://www.disastercenter.com/guide/kit.html> for tips and tricks on how to prepare your kit!

The top half of the image shows a vintage Panasonic portable cassette player, model SL-NP30, resting on a white surface. To its left is a red rotary telephone. The bottom half of the image features a black background with a large yellow house icon. Inside the house icon is a black silhouette of a family consisting of two adults and a child. Below the icon, the text "SHELTER IN PLACE" is written in white, bold, capital letters.

16. Warn Central Texas: Ignorance is not always bliss, especially when it comes to potential dangers around you and your family. Through <https://warncentraltexas.org/>, the county utilizes a platform called Everbridge to send out alerts through phone, text and email, to keep you apprised of hazards in real time. This free service allows us to keep you in the loop when information is vital. Click on <https://member.everbridge.net/892807736729515/login> to register or update your existing account at the bottom of the link's page.



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you can get.






18. Flood Zones:

Look up & learn about your flood zone at <http://msc.fema.gov>

While you may be required to have flood insurance if you live in a flood zone, you can buy flood insurance even if you don't live in a flood zone.

Learn more: <http://floodsmart.gov>



Make Water Safe

After a natural disaster, water may not be safe to drink. Listen to local officials to find out if your water is safe.

Adding some bleach helps make water safe to use.

If tap water is clear:

1. Use bleach that does not have an added scent (like lemon).
2. Add 1/8 teaspoon (8 drops or about 0.75 milliliters) of household liquid bleach to 1 gallon (16 cups) of water.
3. Mix well and wait 30 minutes or more before drinking.

If tap water is cloudy:

1. Use bleach that does not have an added scent (like lemon).
2. Add 1/4 teaspoon (16 drops or 1.5 milliliters) of household liquid bleach to 1 gallon (16 cups) of water.
3. Mix well and wait 30 minutes or more before drinking.

Remember that containers may need to be sanitized before using them to store safe water:

1. Use bleach that does not have an added scent (like lemon).
2. Add 1 teaspoon (64 drops or 5 milliliters) of household liquid bleach to 1 quart (32oz, 4 cups, or about 1 liter) of water.
3. Pour this into a clean storage container and shake well, making sure that the solution coats the entire inside of the container.
4. Let sit at least 30 seconds, and then pour out solution.
5. Let air dry OR rinse with clean water that has already been made safe, if available.

■ Never mix bleach with ammonia or other cleaners.
■ Open windows and doors to get fresh air when you use bleach.

19. Water: Without water an individual becomes dehydrated which impairs thinking and other key bodily functions. One gallon per person per day is the recommended minimum with a 3-day supply if evacuating, or a 2-week supply for sheltering in place. <https://www.ready.gov/water> Stock up on sanitation wipes to reduce your need for using water for hygiene. As a back-up, here is five methods to purify water listed in order of best method. 1. Boil (roiling boil) for 1-3 minutes 2. Iodine tablets- follow directions on the bottle 3. Bleach- 8 drops per gallon of water 4. Water purifier- Ensure the product eliminates viruses, protozoa and bacteria (Several choices on the commercial market.) 5. Transpiration bag-you will not have to purify the water but, you may have to filter it of any pollens, insects etc.

20. Food: Consider foods that provide high energy, protein and fiber. As you gather your food for your kit, keep nutrition and an extended shelf life as your guide for selection. A manual can opener is a must. It can be a simple p-38 military style opener or something more elaborate as a commercial purchased hand operated opener. Some foods to always keep in your pantry may include: Peanut butter, whole wheat crackers (may substitute for bread and lasts longer), nuts and trail mixes, cereal, granola bars, power bars, dried fruits, canned meats, vegetables and soups. Powdered sports drinks, milk, sugar, salt and pepper. There are several commercial “especially designed for an emergency” food products you can purchase on the open market to include the vast freeze-dried packaged food, jerky and Meals Ready to Eat. <http://www.ready.gov/food>

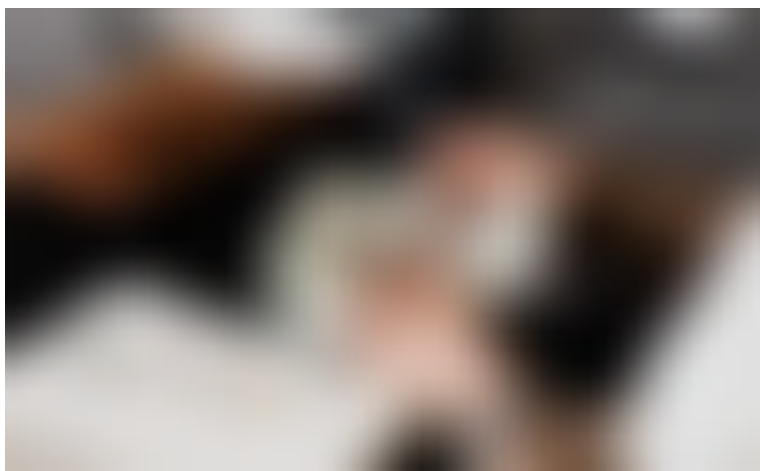


21. Medical Plan:

If you receive medical treatments or home health care services, work with your medical provider to determine how to maintain care and service if you are unable to leave your home during a hurricane or other emergency.

22. Financial Plan: Put a small amount of cash aside in a safe place or with emergency supplies for use in an emergency. ATMs and credit card machines won't always be available after a disaster or power outage.

www.ready.gov/financial-preparedness

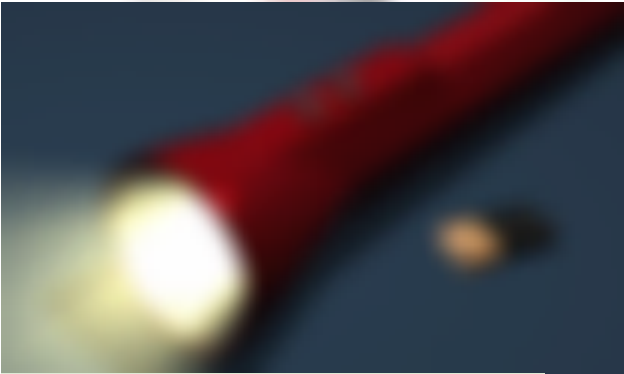


23. Stock up on essentials: This week when you're shopping, buy extra batteries for your flashlights, radios, and any other items you'd need during a power outage.

24. First AID: Considerations for a home and/or car first aid kit should include materials to treat the following: Burns, Cuts, Abrasions, Stings, Splinters, Sprains and Strains. A drug store may not be accessible during a disaster so it is a good idea to have items which can alleviate fever, nasal congestion, coughs, and sore throats. Include any maintenance medications you are taking along with items for skin problems, allergies, gastrointestinal problems or mild pain. Ensure insect repellant, lip balm and sunscreen make your list, even during winter months sunscreen is a must! Know how to use all the items in your kit. Storing your items in a water-resistant drop proof container is best. Train others in your family how to use the kit. You can either purchase a ready to use kit commercially or build your own. Here are some sites to visit for first aid kit ideas:

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

The American Red Cross puts expert advice to everyday emergencies in your hand with this app <https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/mobile-apps.html>



25. Children: Speak with your children about emergency preparedness and get them to begin thinking about it in a positive, “can do” attitude. Keep in mind their age and the depth of information that is appropriate. FEMA and The Red Cross have made a coloring book that goes with the topic of preparedness. It is a great ice breaker on the topic. It is also a free book that you can print off following this link: <https://www.ready.gov/kids/prepare-pedro>

Be sure to have games and coloring books on hand for kids, whether during sheltering or after an evacuation.

26. Gas: Always maintain at a minimum a half a tank of gas in your vehicle. When disaster strikes, it seldom sends an invitation. A half of a tank of fuel will allow you to proceed far enough out of the danger area to refuel in the event of an evacuation. If power is down or a timely evacuation is crucial, this minimum half tank also prevents you from needing to fill up at pumps that won’t work or compete for a spot to be able to fuel.





27. Generator: Consider a generator in the event of a power outage. In order to select the best backup generator for yourself and your family, determine how much power you would need in the event of a blackout. Homes with well-water will need to have the well pump on the generator system if toilets are to be flushed. What could you do without power for a few days? Hot water? Cold food? Check the manufacturer information for each appliance to find out the wattage of your necessary appliances, and then tally their numbers. A portable generator may be your best option if you stay aware of your energy consumption and hold to using the wattage limit of the generator. Depending on the model, portables can generate between 2,500-4,500 watts. By using energy wisely, you'll still be able to comfortably endure a blackout. Safety to remember: Connecting a portable generator directly to your household wiring can be deadly to you and others. A generator that is directly connected to your home's wiring can "back feed" onto the power lines connected to your home and injure neighbors or utility workers. By working with a qualified electrician, you can install a manual transfer switch to safely tie into selected circuits of your main electrical panel. If a portable generator is running and power is restored, the power company's electricity cannot get to those isolated circuits until the generator is turned off and the manual transfer switch is reset to the non-backup position.

28. Hays County CERT: Join CERT and become an asset to your community and neighbors. Sign up to attend your local Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training offered by the Hays County Office of Emergency Services at www.hayscountycert.com. Individuals trained in CERT learn proper communication, safety, fire suppression, search and rescue, medical triage/treatment/stop the bleed, psychology in disaster, standard response protocol, terrorism identification chemical, biological, radiation, nuclear or explosive (CBRNE) weapons deployed and Citizen Response in Active Shooter Events (CRASE). CERT members expand our First Responders capacity and allow First Responders to focus on life threatening events. CERT members are essential in communicating the preparedness message to other residents in the communities during public events and fairs.



29. Get to Know your Neighbors: Since 1984, "National Night Out - America's Night Out Against Crime" has grown to involve over 27 million people from more than 8,700 communities. Along with the traditional porch-sitting and 'lights on' initiatives, individual areas sponsor locally tailored events such as block parties, cookouts, parades, visits from law enforcement, rallies and marches. "NNO" is a popular and effective

vehicle for heightening awareness, enhancing policy-community relations, and bolstering volunteer morale. "National Night Out" has the support of many agencies and organizations, including the U.S. Congress, Justice Department, FBI, and the International Association of Chiefs of Police. "NNO" has grown to involve cities and law enforcement agencies from all 50 states, U.S. territories, Canada and U.S. military bases around the world.

30. Share the knowledge! Share important info with friends, neighbors and relatives. Help a friend, family member, or neighbor prepare for emergencies. Someone you know may need help gathering supplies, making an emergency plan, or preparing their home. Discuss your preparations & see how you can help them.

