

Shelter-in-Place Preparedness Guide

A practical, step-by-step planning guide for households and teams



Circumspect Group Inc. (CGI)

Preparedness resources curated from FEMA Ready / Ready.gov and related public guidance.

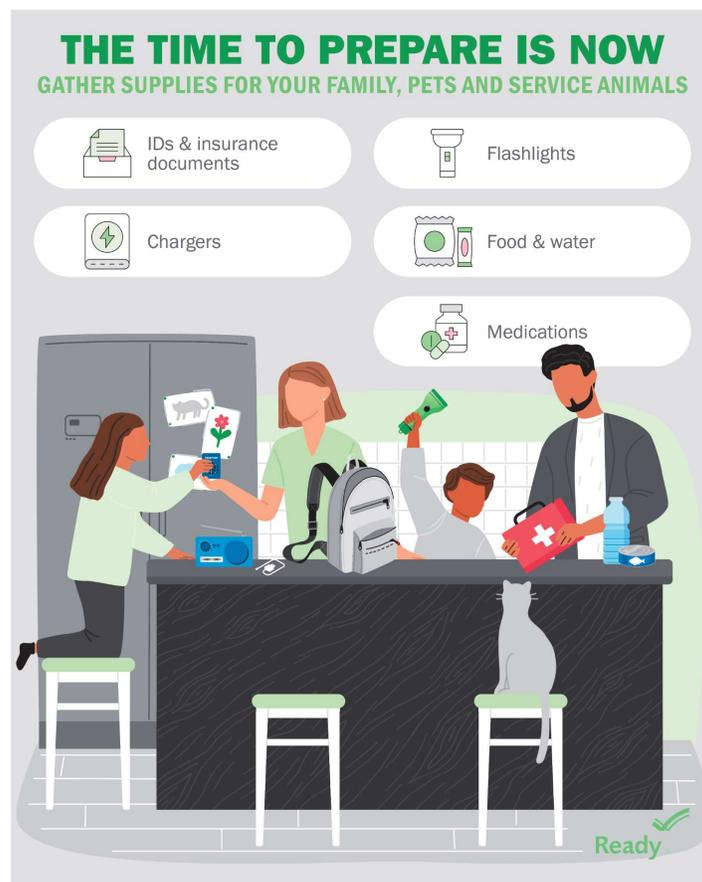
Version: Feb 2026

Important: This guide is for preparedness planning and does not replace official instructions from local authorities. In an immediate life-threatening emergency, call your local emergency number.

Quick Start

If you do nothing else, complete these six actions:

- 1 Know how you will receive alerts and warnings.
- 2 Define your shelter-in-place locations (home, work, school/childcare).
- 3 Create a family/household communication plan with an out-of-town contact.
- 4 Build or refresh supplies for staying indoors for several days (and for pets).
- 5 Safeguard critical documents and valuables to speed recovery after an incident.
- 6 Practice and update the plan on a regular schedule.



Planning framework adapted from FEMA Ready “Make A Plan” materials.

1. Shelter-in-Place Planning Basics

Shelter-in-place means staying indoors at your current location (home, workplace, school, or another safe building) until authorities advise that it is safe to leave. It may be used for severe weather, hazardous materials incidents, nearby violence, civil unrest, or other events where moving outside increases risk.

Plan for two decisions: (1) When to shelter-in-place and (2) when to evacuate. Your local authorities will normally provide the direction—your plan should help you act quickly and communicate clearly.

Triggers and information sources

- Official emergency alerts (wireless alerts, local emergency management, weather alerts).
- Trusted local news or emergency management social media.
- Workplace/school security or emergency notifications.
- CGI/mission board security notifications (when applicable).

Shelter-in-place core actions (first 10 minutes)

- 1 Bring people and pets indoors; account for everyone.
- 2 Close and lock doors and windows; close blinds/curtains.
- 3 Turn off fans, heating/AC, and close fireplace dampers if advised (especially for smoke or chemicals).
- 4 Move to your pre-identified shelter room(s).
- 5 Monitor official updates; do not leave until authorities say it is safe.
- 6 Text instead of calling when networks are congested; keep phone charging plans ready.

Choose your shelter location(s)

Pre-select at least one primary shelter room and one alternate. The right choice depends on the hazard:

- **Severe weather/tornado:** lowest level, interior room, away from windows (bathroom, closet).
- **Hazardous materials/smoke:** an interior room with the fewest openings you can seal; avoid basements if you are concerned about heavier-than-air gases unless local guidance says otherwise.
- **Nearby violence:** secure interior room, lock doors, stay quiet, lights off if appropriate, follow law enforcement instructions.

Tip: Keep plastic sheeting and duct tape for sealing a room when advised for contaminated air. (See supply checklist.)

2. Family and Team Communication Plan

Disasters often separate people. A simple plan—who to contact, where to meet, and how to share status—reduces confusion and speeds reunification.

Use an out-of-town contact

Pick one person outside your area who can relay messages if local communications are overloaded. Ensure every household member knows the contact’s phone number and how to send a short status text.

Print and fill: Family Emergency Communication Plan (FEMA P-1095)

The FEMA Ready fillable card captures household contacts, meeting places, and important numbers. Print two copies: one for home and one for each go-bag/stay-bag.



.....
Write your family's name above
Family Emergency Communication Plan
FEMA P 1095 / July 2017

HOUSEHOLD INFORMATION

Home #:
Address:
Name: Mobile #:
Other # or social media: Email:
Important medical or other information:

Name: Mobile #:
Other # or social media: Email:
Important medical or other information:

Name: Mobile #:
Other # or social media: Email:
Important medical or other information:

SCHOOL, CHILDCARE, CAREGIVER, AND WORKPLACE EMERGENCY PLANS

Name:
Address:
Emergency/Hotline #: Website:
Emergency Plan/Pick-Up:

Name:
Address:
Emergency/Hotline #: Website:
Emergency Plan/Pick-Up:

Name:
Address:
Emergency/Hotline #: Website:
Emergency Plan/Pick-Up:



Source: FEMA Ready Campaign – Family Emergency Communication Plan (FEMA P-1095, July 2017).

3. Safeguard Critical Documents and Valuables

After the immediate danger passes, having your medical, financial, and identity records helps you recover faster. Take time now to inventory and protect what you would need to access quickly.



When disaster strikes, your immediate concern will be your safety and the safety of those you care about. Once the immediate danger passes, however, having your financial and medical records and important contact information will be crucial to help you start the recovery process quickly. Taking time now to safeguard these critical documents will give you peace of mind, ensure you have access to essential medical and prescription information, and help you avoid additional stress during the difficult days following a disaster.

In addition, take the time now to think about the priceless personal items you would want to protect from damage or take with you if you had to suddenly evacuate your home.

The first step is to take an inventory of your household documents, contacts, and valuables. The checklists below will get you started. Then download the Emergency Financial First Aid Kit (EFFAK) at www.ready.gov/financialpreparedness for more complete checklists and guidance on collecting and safeguarding this important information.

Put a checkmark next to any item that you may need to collect and safeguard. Be sure to include emergency contact phone numbers or other contact information with your documentation for questions that may arise following a disaster.

HOUSEHOLD IDENTIFICATION

Think about the documents you would need to identify yourself and your household members, including children and pets, your relationships, or status. These may include:

- Vital records (birth, marriage, divorce certificate, adoption, child custody papers)
- Passport, driver's license, Social Security card, green card, military service identification, other
- Pet ownership papers, identification tags

FEMA P-1096/July 2018

What to gather (checklist starter)

- Household identification: vital records, IDs, passports, Social Security cards; pet ownership papers.
- Financial and legal documentation: housing/lease/mortgage, vehicle docs, insurance policies, account info, tax records, estate planning documents (will/trust/POA).
- Medical information: insurance cards, medication lists, prescriptions, allergies, medical devices, provider contacts; medical power of attorney/living will.
- Emergency contact information: employers, schools, houses of worship, service providers, utilities, repair services.
- Valuables and priceless personal items: photos, keepsakes, jewelry, collectibles; photos/inventory for insurance.

How to protect them

- Store paper copies in a fireproof/waterproof container, safe deposit box, or with a trusted person.
- Store electronic copies in password-protected/encrypted format on a removable drive kept in a protected container, or use a secure cloud service.
- Move valuables off basement floors and into waterproof containers when flooding is possible; secure items on shelves if high winds/earthquakes are likely.

PROTECT YOUR DOCUMENTS AND VALUABLES

Once you have gathered your financial, legal, and contact information, it is essential to safeguard this information.

- Consider storing paper copies of important documents at home in a fireproof and waterproof box or safe, in a bank safe deposit box, or with a trusted friend or relative. If you are using a safe deposit box, you may want to ask your bank or check state laws to confirm who can and cannot access the safe deposit box if that person dies or is incapacitated.
- Store electronic copies of important documents in a password-protected format on a removable flash or external hard drive in your fireproof and waterproof box or safe, or consider using a secure cloud-based service. Visit www.us-cert.gov/ncsc/topics/04-019 to learn how to use electronic encryption to protect sensitive information.
- Think about where you store valuable belongings and ways to better protect these items. If you have valuable items stored in a basement, you may want to move them to a higher location and put them in waterproof containers to avoid water damage. Or you may want to keep small items in a floodproofed home safe. You may also want to secure items that are displayed on shelves or walls if your home may be subject to high winds or earthquakes.

Thank you for doing your part to prepare. Spread the word and encourage others to join the movement at www.ready.gov/prepare.



12 WAYS TO PREPARE

<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: FEMA Ready Campaign – Safeguard Critical Documents and Valuables (FEMA P-1096, July 2018).

4. Shelter-in-Place Supplies and Kits

Build supplies for at least several days indoors. Consider two levels: (1) a home kit and (2) a smaller portable kit (vehicle/workplace) that supports you until you can reunite with the home kit.

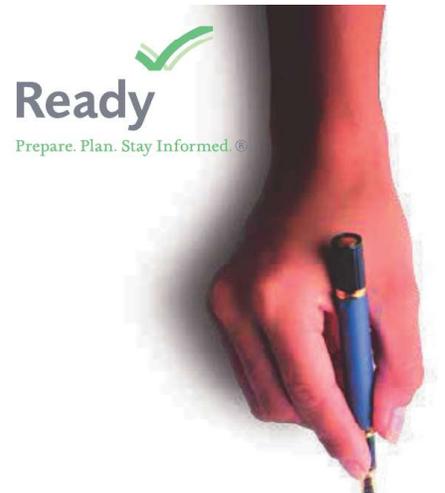
Basic emergency supply kit (high priority)

- Water and non-perishable food for several days (plus pet food/water).
- Battery-powered or hand-crank radio (NOAA weather alerts) and extra batteries.
- Flashlight and extra batteries; headlamp if available.
- First aid kit and an emergency reference/first aid book.
- Phone charging plan: power bank, car charger, spare cables.
- Whistle to signal for help.
- Dust mask, plastic sheeting, and duct tape for shelter-in-place (contaminated air).
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags, and plastic ties for sanitation.
- Non-sparking wrench/pliers to shut off utilities (know how and when).
- Local maps.



Additional Items to Consider Adding to an Emergency Supply Kit:

- Prescription medications and glasses
- Infant formula and diapers
- Pet food, water and supplies for your pet
- Important family documents such as copies of insurance policies, identification and bank account records in a portable waterproof container
- Cash and change
- Emergency reference material such as a first aid book or information from www.ready.gov
- Sleeping bag or warm blanket for each person. Consider additional bedding if you live in a cold-weather climate.
- Complete change of clothing including a long sleeved shirt, long pants and sturdy shoes. Consider additional clothing if you live in a cold-weather climate.
- Fire Extinguisher
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Feminine supplies, personal hygiene items and hand sanitizer
- Mess kits, Paper cups, plates and disposable utensils, paper towels
- Paper and pencil
- Books, games, puzzles or other activities for children



Ready

Prepare. Plan. Stay Informed. ®

Emergency Supply List



FEMA

www.ready.gov



Recommended Items to Include in a Basic Emergency Supply Kit:

- Water and non-perishable food for several days**
- Extra cell phone battery or charger**
- Battery-powered or hand crank radio that can receive NOAA Weather Radio tone alerts and extra batteries**
- Flashlight and extra batteries**
- First aid kit**
- Whistle to signal for help**
- Dust mask, to help filter contaminated air and plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter-in-place**
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation**
- Non-sparking wrench or pliers to turn off utilities**
- Can opener (if kit contains canned food)**
- Local maps**

FEMA's Ready Campaign

educates and empowers Americans to take some simple steps to prepare for and respond to potential emergencies, including those from natural hazards and man-made disasters. Ready asks individuals to do three key things: get an emergency supply kit, make a family emergency plan, and be informed about the different types of emergencies that could occur and appropriate responses. Everyone should have some basic supplies on hand in order to survive several days if an emergency occurs. This list of emergency supply kit items is only a starting point. It is important that individuals review this list and consider the unique needs of their family, including pets, for items to include. Individuals should also consider having at least two emergency supply kits, one full kit at home and smaller portable kits in their workplace, vehicle or other places they spend time.



Federal Emergency Management Agency
Washington, DC 20472

Source: Ready.gov – Emergency Supply List / Supply Kit Checklist (FEMA Ready Campaign).

5. Optional: “Stay-Bag” for Shelter-in-Place Away From Home

If you travel frequently or may need to shelter at work, a small “stay-bag” can bridge a 24-48 hour period. Tailor it to your operating environment and household needs.

- Air mattress (single or double)
- Tarpaulin
- Comfortable shoes
- Copy of important documents in waterproof, portable container
 - Proof of citizenship, visa
 - Passport, identity card, drivers license
 - Bank account records
 - Marriage certificate, academic certificates, school records
 - Insurance, land ownership
 - Power of attorney & will
 - Household effects inventory
 - Medical prescriptions, medical and dental records, immunization records, etc.
- ATM and credit cards, multiple currencies, checkbook
- Card of Emergency Contact numbers (laminated)
- Comfortable and functional clothing
- Daily use tools
 - Multifunction pocket knife
 - Scissors
 - Needle and thread
 - Matches in a waterproof container
 - Can opener, etc.
- Light, high energy food, readymade and non-perishable
- Mess kits, paper cups, plates, paper towels and plastic utensils
- Nylon rope
- Notebook and pen/pencil
- Local maps, laminated building floor plan
- Hard hat, safety goggles

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Supplemental reference: OSAC “Preparing a Stay-Bag” (included in your source pack).

6. Low and No-Cost Preparedness

Preparedness does not have to be expensive. Many steps are free: planning, communication, and organizing documents. Supplies can often be built over time through thrift stores, garage sales, and repurposing items you already have.



Source: Ready.gov – Low and No Cost Preparedness graphics.

7. Practice and Maintenance Schedule

A plan that is not practiced will fail under stress. Use this simple cadence:

- **Monthly:** check flashlight/radio batteries; verify water supply; confirm emergency alerts are enabled.
- **Quarterly:** run a 10-minute shelter-in-place drill; verify contact numbers; update medication lists and sizes for children/clothing.
- **Every 6 months:** rotate food supplies; update document copies; verify insurance photos/inventory.
- **Annually:** revisit hazards relevant to your area; refresh the plan; replace expired medical items; confirm meeting places.



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Source: FEMA Ready Campaign – “12 Ways to Prepare” (FEMA V-1021, April 2018).

References and Source Material

- FEMA Ready Campaign (Ready.gov): Make A Plan resources and preparedness materials.
- Family Emergency Communication Plan (FEMA P-1095, July 2017).
- Safeguard Critical Documents and Valuables (FEMA P-1096, July 2018).
- Emergency Supply List / Supply Kit Checklist (Ready.gov, FEMA Ready Campaign).
- 12 Ways to Prepare (FEMA V-1021, April 2018).
- OSAC: “Before Disaster Strikes: Preparing a Stay-Bag” (supplemental).

CGI note: If you are a CGI client and would like this guide tailored to a specific country, city, or mission compound (including local emergency numbers and security points of contact), contact your CGI account manager.