It's important to prepare for possible disasters and other emergencies. Natural and human-caused disasters can strike suddenly, at any time and anywhere. There are three actions everyone can take that can help make a difference...

Get a kit

At a minimum, have the basic supplies listed below. Keep supplies in an easy-to-carry emergency preparedness kit that you can use at home or take with you in case you must evacuate.

- Water—one gallon per person, per day (3-day supply for evacuation, 2-week supply for home)
- Food—non-perishable, easy-to-prepare meals (3-day supply for evacuation, 2-week supply for home)
- Flashlight
- Batteries
- Rain gear
- Extra clothing
- Car emergency kit
- Medications
- Personal hygiene items
- Copies of important documents
- Cell phone chargers
- Family emergency contact information

Consider the needs of all family members and add supplies to your kit. Suggested items to help meet additional needs are:

- Medical supplies (hearing aids, extra batteries, glasses, contact lenses, syringes, canes)
- Baby supplies (bottles, formula, baby food, diapers)
- Games and activities for children
- Pet supplies (collar, leash, ID, food, carrier, bowl)
- Two-way radios
- Extra set of car keys and house keys
- Manual can opener

Make a plan

- Meet with your family or household members.
- Discuss how to prepare and respond to emergencies that are most likely to happen where you live, learn, work, and play.
- Identify responsibilities for each member of your household and plan to work together as a team.
- If a family member is in the military, plan how you would respond if they were deployed.

Plan what to do in case you are separated during an emergency

- Choose two places to meet:
  - Right outside your home in case of a sudden emergency, such as a fire
  - Outside your neighborhood, in case you cannot return home or are asked to evacuate

- 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 programmed into their cell phones.

Plan what to do if you have to evacuate

- 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.

- Practice evacuating your home twice a year. Drive your planned evacuation route and plot alternate routes on your map in case roads are impassable.

- Plan ahead for your pets. Keep a phone list of pet-friendly hotels/motels and animal shelters that are along your evacuation routes.

Be informed

Learn what disasters or emergencies may occur in your area. These events can range from those affecting only you and your family, like a home fire or medical emergency, to those affecting your entire community, like an earthquake or flood.

- Identify how local authorities will notify you during a disaster and how you will get information, whether through local radio, TV or NOAA Weather Radio stations or channels.

- Know the difference between different weather alerts such as watches and warnings and what actions to take in each.

- Know what actions to take to protect yourself during disasters that may occur in areas where you travel or have moved recently. For example, if you travel to a place where earthquakes are common and you are not familiar with them, make sure you know what to do to protect yourself should one occur.

- When a major disaster occurs, your community can change in an instant. Loved ones may be hurt and emergency response is likely to be delayed. Make sure that at least one member of your household is trained in first aid and CPR and knows how to use an automated external defibrillator (AED). This training is useful in many emergency situations.

- Share what you have learned with your family, household and neighbors and encourage them to be informed.

Emergency Contact Cards for All Household Members

Get your cards online at redcross.org/prep/ECard.pdf.

- Print one card for each family member.
- Write the contact information for each household member, such as work, school and cell phone numbers.
- Fold the card so it fits in your pocket, wallet or purse.
- Carry the card with you so it is available in the event of a disaster or other emergency.