



SENIORS

The likelihood that you and your family will recover from an emergency tomorrow often depends on the planning and preparation done today. While each person's abilities and needs are unique, every individual can take steps to prepare for all kinds of emergencies. By evaluating your own personal needs and making an emergency plan that fits those needs, you and your loved ones can be better prepared.

There are commonsense measures older Americans can take to start preparing for emergencies before they happen.

Create a network of neighbors, relatives, friends and co-workers to aid you in an emergency. Discuss your needs and make sure everyone knows how to operate necessary equipment. If appropriate, discuss your needs with your employer.

Seniors should keep specialized items ready, including extra wheelchair batteries, oxygen, catheters, medication, food for service animals and any other items you might need. Keep a list of the type and model numbers of the medical devices you require. Be sure to make provisions for medications that require refrigeration. Make arrangements for any assistance to get to a shelter.

For more information, read Ready.gov's [Preparing Makes Sense For Older Americans](#) [1] or visit the [Red Cross](#) [5] website.



["Information for Seniors"](#)

[1]
(PDF)



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[Preparing Makes Sense for Older Americans](#)

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Resources from AARP: Create the Good

- [Operation Emergency Prepare](#) [6]
- [Operation Hurricane Prepare](#) [7]

Federal Benefits

Seniors who receive federal benefit should consider receiving payments electronically. Keep in mind a disaster can disrupt mail service for days or even weeks. For those who depend on the mail for their Social Security benefits, a difficult situation can become worse if they are evacuated or lose their mail service – as 85,000 check recipients learned after Hurricane Katrina. Switching to electronic payments is one simple, significant way people can protect themselves financially before disaster strikes. It also eliminates the risk of stolen checks.

The U.S. Department of the Treasury recommends two safer ways to get federal benefits:

- Direct deposit to a checking or savings account is the best option for people with bank accounts. Federal benefit recipients can sign up by calling (800) 333-1795 or at [www.GoDirect.org](#) [8].
- The Direct Express® prepaid debit card is designed as a safe and easy alternative to paper checks for people who don't have a bank account. Sign up is easy – call toll-free at (877) 212-9991 or sign up online at [www.USDirectExpress.com](#) [9].

Signing up for direct deposit or the Direct Express® card is a simple but important step that can help protect your family's access to funds in case the unthinkable were to happen. If you or those close to you are still receiving Social Security or other federal benefits by check, please consider switching to one of these safer, easier options today.

Create a Support Network

- If you anticipate needing assistance during a disaster, talk to family, friends and others who will be part of your personal support network.
- Write down and share each aspect of your emergency plan with everyone in your support network.
- Make sure everyone knows how you plan to evacuate your home or workplace and where you will go in case of a disaster.
- Make sure that someone in your local network has an extra key to your home and knows where you keep your emergency supplies.
- Teach those who will help you how to use any lifesaving equipment, administer medicine in case of an emergency.
- Practice your plan with those who have agreed to be part of your network.

Medications & Medical Supplies

- If you take medicine or use a medical treatment on a daily basis, be sure you have what you need to make it on your own for at least a week, maybe longer.
- Keep written copies of your prescriptions, over-the-counter medications and orders for medical equipment, including dosage, treatment and allergy information in your emergency kit. Also consider keeping electronic copies of this information on a flash drive. This could be useful for others even if you don't personally use a computer often.
- If you are able to obtain an emergency supply of prescription medications or consumable medical supplies, be sure to establish a plan for rotating your supply so it remains up-to-date.
- If you can't easily obtain an emergency supplies, talk to your pharmacist or doctor about what else you can do to prepare.
- If you are unable to obtain an emergency supply, be sure to always fill prescriptions on the first day you become eligible for a refill, rather than waiting until the day you run out.
- If you undergo routine treatments administered by a clinic or hospital or if you receive regular services such as home health care, treatment or transportation, talk to your service provider about their emergency plans. Work with them to identify back-up service providers and incorporate them into your personal support network.
- Consider other personal needs such as eyeglasses, hearing aids and hearing aid batteries, wheelchair batteries and oxygen.

Emergency Documents

- Include copies of important documents in your emergency supply kits such as family records, medical records, wills, deeds, social security number, charge and bank accounts information and tax records.
- Have copies of your medical insurance and Medicare cards readily available.
- Get copies and maintain electronic versions of health records from doctors, hospitals, pharmacies and other sources and store them, for personal reference. HHS provides an online tool intended to help people locate and access their electronic health records from a variety of sources. <http://healthit.gov/bluebutton> [10]
- Keep a list of the style and serial number of medical devices or other life-sustaining devices. Include operating information and instructions.
- Make sure that a friend or family member has copies of these documents.
- Include the names and contact information of your support network, as well as your medical providers.
- If you have a communication disability, make sure your emergency information notes the best way to communicate with you.
- Keep these documents in a water proof container for quick and easy access.

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Links

- [1] <http://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/90375>
[2] <http://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/90946>
[3] <http://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/90954>
[4] <http://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/videos/78859>
[5] <http://www.redcross.org/porta/site/en/menuitem.d8aaecf214c576bf971e4cfe43181aa0/?vgnextoid=1e920c45f663b110VgnVCM1000089f0870aRCRD&vgnnextfmt=default>
[6] <http://createthegood.org/toolkit/operation-emergency-prepare?how-to-toolkit=1>
[7] <http://createthegood.org/toolkit/operation-hurricane-prepare?how-to-toolkit=1>
[8] <http://www.GoDirect.org>
[9] <http://www.USDirectExpress.com>
[10] <http://healthit.gov/bluebutton>