

Make a Family Emergency Plan

Introduction

When an emergency happens, your family may not all be together. A little planning now can help everyone know what to do, where to go, and how to stay in touch. Whether it's a tornado, wildfire, flood, severe winter storm, or extended power outage, having a family emergency plan gives everyone confidence and can save valuable time.

1. Know Your Risks

Discuss the emergencies most likely in your area, such as tornadoes, severe thunderstorms, winter storms, flooding, grass or wildland fires, and extended power outages.

2. Choose Two Meeting Places

Select one meeting place near your home and another outside your neighborhood that everyone knows.

3. Pick an Emergency Contact

Choose someone outside your local area who can serve as the family's emergency contact. Make sure everyone knows their name, phone number, and address.

4. Plan How You'll Communicate

Use multiple ways to stay in touch, including cell phones, text messages, email, and social media. Remember that text messages often work when phone calls do not.

5. Know Your Evacuation Routes

Know at least two ways out of your neighborhood, keep your vehicle fueled during severe weather, and never drive through flooded roads.

6. Plan for Children, Seniors & Pets

Include everyone in your household, including children, older adults, people with medical needs, pets, and livestock. Remember medications, pet supplies, and important documents.

7. Practice Your Plan

Practice your fire escape routes, tornado shelter plan, meeting locations, and emergency contact procedures. Review your plan every year.

Family Emergency Plan Checklist

- Discuss local hazards
- Choose two meeting places

- Pick an out-of-town emergency contact
- Save emergency phone numbers
- Plan evacuation routes
- Include children, seniors, pets, and medical needs
- Practice your emergency plan
- Review and update annually

Helpful Resources

Ready.gov – Make a Plan
FEMA Mobile App