

Emergency preparation made simple!

We know that preparing for the “what ifs” can be overwhelming but we don’t want it to stop you from getting you and your family ready. We have broken down some important steps into quarterly tasks to make it easier to do.

In Louisiana, we should prepare for more than just hurricanes! As you are going through these tasks, think about different types of emergencies you may face.

Quarter 1: January through March

- Create an emergency plan.
 - ↪ *An emergency plan helps people and their families make decisions about:*
 - *whether to stay or go,*
 - *transportation, and*
 - *shelter*

Quarter 2: April through June

- Create a go bag/stay kit.
 - ↪ *A go bag/stay kit is a collection of supplies that each person needs to maintain their health and safety if they shelter-in-place or evacuate.*
 - *Everyone’s go bag/stay kit will look different.*

Quarter 3: July through September

- Create a communication plan.
 - ↪ *A communication plan ensures that people can keep in touch with each other during an emergency.*

Quarter 4: October through December

- Review emergency plans and check supplies for expiration dates.
 - ↪ *It’s important to review and change your plan if it doesn’t work or your situation changes.*

Things you can do *all year* to prepare:

- Save cash for use during evacuation.
- Get involved in your community preparedness activities or training.
- Stay informed of all weather activities.

Leaving (also called Evacuating)

Leaving home can be a safe option but without proper planning can create an emergency situation.

- Go Bag/Stay Kit
 - Make sure that your go bag is created for you. It doesn't have to look like everyone else's.
 - Pet supplies should be included in your bag/stay kit.
 - Do you need assistance evacuating?
 - Assistance can include packing, securing your home, caregiving, and/or transportation.
 - Show trusted people where your supplies are.
 - Decide ahead of time who can help you with specific tasks.
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Transportation

Do an honest assessment of your access to transportation. If it is not reliable, start learning about other options.

- Before a disaster, organize transportation for an evacuation.
 - Make a plan with a neighbor or trusted person who will not leave you behind.
 - When you make plans with others for transportation, confirm that you have transportation for leaving and returning home.
 - If your car is not reliable, make sure you understand the local government's transportation resources.
 - Do not risk getting in an evacuation scenario in an unreliable vehicle that can leave you stranded on the road in extreme conditions.
 - Expect that travel will take 4 times longer than it usually does.
 - Do you have adequate gas money in your budget for leaving and returning home?
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Sheltering

Knowing where you will go if you cannot stay or return home will create some focus and comfort in a stressful situation.

- Figure out where you will go if you have to leave town or cannot return home.
 - Are there friends or family who live in a safe area?
 - Is staying in a hotel within your budget?
 - Can you share a room with someone else to save money?
 - Remember to include gas and meals in your budget.

Make plans for all animals.

Quarter 2: April through June

Create a go bag/stay kit.

What is the difference between a go bag and a stay kit?

- *A go bag and/or a stay kit is a collection of supplies that each person needs to maintain their health and safety if they shelter-in-place or evacuate.*
- *Everyone's go bag/stay kit will look different.*
- *Supplies can be stored in a travel bag or plastic tote.*

1. Water:

- Pack 1 gallon per person/per day. Add more for pets.
 - At least a 3-day supply.
 - A 2-week supply is ideal.

2. Food:

- Pack at least a 3-day supply of canned and dried foods and other non-perishables.
- Juices, soups, and high-protein shakes may be particularly helpful for older adults.
- Include:
 - manual can opener
 - flashlight
 - waterproof matches
 - knife
 - re-sealable plastic bags
 - tin foil
 - disposable cups, plates, utensils, and basic cooking utensils

3. Basic hygiene products:

- soap
- shampoo
- toothpaste and toothbrushes
- sunscreen
- hand sanitizer
- toilet paper
- baby wipes
- trash bags for garbage

4. Change of clothing:

- Include a complete set of clothing for each person:
 - long sleeved shirt
 - long pants
 - shoes
 - coat
 - hat
 - gloves

5. Pet supplies:

- bowls for food and water
- pet food
- pet medications
- bags for waste
- cat litter/pan
- leashes
- kennel/cages labeled with pet and owners' names and contact information
- vet records or contact information for vet

6. First aid kit:

- First aid kits can be purchased pre-made or you can gather supplies you may already have around your house.
- Kits can include:
 - Band-Aids
 - alcohol wipes
 - medical tape
 - gauze
 - antibiotic ointment
 - over-the-counter pain reliever
 - ice pack
 - resealable plastic bags
 - gloves
 - hand sanitizer

7. Other supplies:

- portable radio
- batteries
- chargers or battery bank
- one blanket per person
- whistle
- flashlights
 - Some styles of outdoor solar lights can be brought inside to be used as a light source.

8. Important documents

9. Phone numbers and contact information:

- Create a digital and paper list of the numbers and addresses of:
 - friends and relatives you might need to contact
 - physicians and any specialists you see
 - medical supply companies you do business with

10. Cash:

- It's a good idea to bring as much cash as you can.
 - If the power is out, you will not be able to make purchases with credit or debit cards.

11. Maps:

- Include local and regional maps in case roads are blocked and you need to take detours.
- If cell towers are down you will not have access to GPS or location services on cell phones.

Go Bag/Stay Kit: Protecting Important Documents

Protecting your important documents is part of being prepared for emergencies.

What important documents should be protected?

- Birth certificates
- Social Security cards
- ID cards
- Marriage certificate
- Insurance policies
- Medical documentation
 - disability documentation
 - list of providers/prescribers
- Legal paperwork
 - wills
 - trusts
 - Power of Attorney
 - custody or guardianship
- Proof of residency
- Proof of income
- Property titles
- Military paperwork

Where should you store your important documents?

- Store documents in a waterproof and fireproof box.
- Keep paper copies with trusted people.
- Keep paper copies in a safe deposit box.
- Maintain paper and digital copies in your go bag/stay kit.
- Upload onto a flash drive or external hard drive.
- Email scanned copies to yourself and/or a trusted person.

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Quarter 3: July through September

Create a communication plan.

A communication plan ensures that people can keep in touch with each other during an emergency.

It is important for you to have others who know your location and plans. In extreme disasters, people can get separated from family and friends.

- How will you stay in touch with others?
 - What if cell towers are not working?

Pick two people to stay in touch with during the event.

- Make sure at least one person is an out of town contact.
- Let them know if you are staying or leaving.
- If you are leaving, let them know where you are going.
- Sharing locations on cell phones with other people may be helpful.
 - If cell towers are down, location services will not work. Plan for another way to share your location if this happens.
 - GPS and location services tend to drain the battery life of cell phones so you must be mindful of your battery life in an emergency.
- Encourage your out of town contact to follow your local news so they can stay up to date on the event.

Does someone else know your health and care needs?

- Decide ahead of time who can help you with specific tasks.
- Create a list of all important providers including doctors, Durable Medical Equipment Companies (DME), etc. that can be kept with you and shared with a trusted contact.
- Create a list of medications including over the counter medications with dosages and times given for each member of the household.

Practice explaining your health and care needs. Sometimes in stressful situations it can be hard to communicate.

- If you use alternate communication, make sure that you have some way to let others know your wants and needs.
- It may be helpful to create pre-recorded messages with important information.

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Quarter 4: October through December

Review emergency and communication plans, and check supplies.

It's important to review and change your plan if it doesn't work or your situation changes.

Emergency Plan

- Review your plan.
 - Is it still appropriate for your current situation?
 - Has anything changed?
 - Review everyone's medical needs (including pets).
 - Check with your contacts to make sure they are still comfortable with any role they may have in your emergency plans.
 - Verify transportation and evacuation plans.
 - Is your choice of transportation still a good option?
 - If you are riding with someone else, is their car still reliable? And, are they still in agreement with the plan?
 - Practice your plan.
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Go Bag/Stay Kit

- Inventory your kit for any missing supplies (or items you may have used throughout the year).
 - After-holiday sales provide a great opportunity to buy supplies at deeply discounted prices to add to your kits.
 - Does your food supply meet your family's dietary needs?
 - Is it food they are actually going to eat?
 - Not having preferred foods adds more stress to an already stressful situation.
 - Check the expiration dates on food and medicines.
 - Check the sizes of the clothing. Will they still fit?
 - Update your documents.
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Communication Plan

- Make sure you have the most up-to-date phone numbers for everyone on your contact list.
- If your emergency plan has changed, let your contacts know about the changes.
- Updates any lists of medications and providers.
- Continue practicing telling others about your health and care needs especially if there have been changes.

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