

FEMA REGION II

INDIVIDUAL AND COMMUNITY PREPAREDNESS TEAM

Be Prepared

From the COVID-19 pandemic to the most active hurricane season on record and snowfall and freezing temperatures in the southern U.S., recent challenges remind us to be prepared for anything. We should be reviewing our preparedness plans and updating your emergency kit.

For people with access and functional needs who rely on assistance from their caregivers, taking the following steps will help you and your support system develop an effective plan and be ready for any emergency.

Revise your emergency plan. Make sure your information is updated throughout the year, especially after a change. Be sure to record your caretakers' information so they can be reached when needed.

Your plan should include important information like allergies, medications (names, dosages, instructions), information on your medical conditions, dietary preferences and daily routines. Read more at <https://www.ready.gov/plan>.

If you do not drive, discuss with your support system how you will leave the area if authorities tell you to evacuate. You can ask your local Emergency Management Office if transportation services are available for people with your disability during an emergency evacuation.

Sign up for state or local emergency alert system. Some states have specific alert systems for people with access and functional needs.

Store your important documents (i.e. Social Security card, birth certificate) in a safe, secured, waterproof place such as a locked safe with the documents sealed in waterproof bags. If you have any digital documents, you can store them on a secure, password-protected jump drive or in the cloud.

Take preparedness steps such as stocking up on food and household items to last for at least two weeks, storing a few weeks' supply of over-the-counter medications and prescriptions and having batteries for any essential medical equipment.

Learn where and how to use the controls for your water, electricity, gas and sewage system. Contact utility company to tell them your needs especially if you have durable medical equipment.

If you haven't started an emergency fund, start one immediately. It is extremely important to have spare cash on hand in case you find yourself displaced. Learn how to build your financial resilience: at <https://www.ready.gov/financial-preparedness>.

Check your insurance plan to see if it covers all disasters – if not, consider another plan or enrolling in dual coverage. Make sure you have recent pictures of your home and property in case you must file a claim. You can add these to your waterproof document bag or store them in a password protected cloud or Iron Key thumb drive.

Talk to your support system about how they can help you and how you can reach them during an emergency. Show your support system how to use any medical equipment. Add what you discussed into your plan including any communication difficulties you may have.

Take a recent photograph of yourself, your loved ones and your pet(s) in case any of you should become separated during a disaster. Put copies in your important documents waterproof bag. Make sure your pet is included in your plans – find pet-friendly shelters, have your contact information listed on your pet's collar, and update your pet's microchip information, if necessary. Learn more about pet preparedness at <https://www.ready.gov/pets>

Write out instructions for items and extra support that you will need during an emergency. This is highly recommended if you will not be able to carry your evacuation kit or if you can't remember everything you will need to do. Make sure to give a copy to your personal support network. You can also take pictures of your prescriptions and medical equipment, and label all of your medical equipment and supplies with your name.

Make sure to practice your evacuation routes multiple times. It is recommended that you practice with the lights off and with a flashlight. This will help you remember the route during an emergency.

Make preparedness a part of your routine in 2021. The steps above should be repeated throughout the year to ensure your plan is up-to-date and your emergency supplies have not expired. Additional resources are available at <https://www.ready.gov/disability> to learn more.