

# Disaster Planning Checklist

How to start crafting your disaster planning checklist for wildfires, hurricanes, floods, and other emergencies.

## Include these essentials in your disaster plan:

**Make your grab-and-go kit.** A must in the first stage of disaster planning. Pack 3 days worth of food and water in a large backpack or duffle bag. Add a first aid kit, rechargeable battery pack for your phone (with phone charger), flashlight, at least one spare change of clothing, and a radio (just in case electricity isn't available).

**Copy essential documents.** Not just hard copies, but digital, too. You can either use a scanner or even take a picture on your phone, then back up onto a hard drive—even better if the [hard drive is fireproof](#).

Here's what to duplicate:

- Driver's license
- Passport(s)
- Social security card
- An emergency contact list
- Proof of insurance
- Medical records

These are all either extremely difficult to replace, or time-consuming (especially when you need to prove your identity).

**Add and maintain smoke alarms.** If you have a multi-story home, FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) suggests installing working smoke alarms on every level of your home, inside and outside sleeping areas, and in the basement. Even better, consider getting smart smoke alarms, which detect slow- and fast-burning fires and wirelessly interconnect with each other.

**Know your escape plan.** Consider drawing an outline of your house that shows 2 ways out of every room. For families, agree on a safe meeting place. Practice your escape plan 2 times a year and, especially with young ones in the house, be sure to post your escape plan somewhere highly trafficked (the fridge is a great spot). Check out this handy [escape planning grid](#) from FEMA, who also has tons of great advice for disaster planning.

**Prep your furry friends.** Micro-chip your pets and give them I.D. collars. In addition to your own grab-and-go kit, create one for your best friend, bundling together food and water bowls, a leash, medications, and three days worth of food and water.

**Familiarize yourself with utility shut-offs.** For leaking natural gas, know how to shut off the main valve. Then find the electrical circuit box and know how to switch off all the individual circuits (followed by the main circuit). To prevent water contamination or keep draining water out of the home's lines (just in case there's a break in a pipe outside), locate the main shut off valve and turn the knob / handle clockwise until it's fully closed.

## Keep Your Memories Safe

Learn how fireproof, waterproof, and disaster-proof storage will save your family's irreplaceable memories.

Get Started