



## Shelter: One of our Most Basic Needs

Are you ready to leave your home if a disaster strikes? Where will you go? How will you get there? What will you bring with you? These are questions to answer **before** a disaster happens. To protect yourself and your family, learn about your resources now. Make an evacuation plan and put together a disaster kit. These steps can be the difference between life and death during a disaster.



### What Can I do Now?

#### Step 1: Know Where You Can Go if You Need to Leave Your Home

Your town may use schools or churches as shelters in a disaster. The Red Cross may also have shelters. If your town or state asks you to evacuate, you may be told about where you can go for shelter. You can go to stay with a friend or family if they are outside of the evacuation area. If not, you may need to go to a public shelter.

#### Step 2: Plan Your Evacuation Route

Know how to get out of your neighborhood if you are asked to evacuate. Plan a second route in case roads are blocked. If you don't have your own car, find out whether you can take a bus or train. If a friend or neighbor has a car, find out if you can ride with them. If you own a car and have space for other people, offer rides to friends or neighbors who need help. If you hear that you may need to evacuate, be sure to fill up the gas tank in your car. Do not wait until the last minute to leave your house. Evacuate as soon as possible. If you wait, you may get stuck in traffic or it may be harder to leave because of flooding.

#### Step 3: Make a List of Out-Of-Town Contacts

Set up an out-of-town contact now so that someone will know where you are at all times in a disaster. Take a minute now to call or e-mail an out-of-town friend or family member to ask him or her to be your family's contact in a disaster. Share this number with everyone in your family so that they can call if they need to. If there is a disaster and you need to leave your home, call and tell this person where you plan to go. Let them know where you are, or if your plans have changed.

For disaster planning tools for you and your family, visit [Ready.gov](http://Ready.gov)

## What Should I Bring to a Shelter?

Bring the items below with you to the shelter. Make sure you have enough supplies for your whole family. Prepare for the the worst and pack enough to last for a few days, even if you think you will be able to go home within a few hours.

- Enough food and water to last at least 3 days
- Manual can opener, utensils, cups, plates, etc.
- Cash or Travelers checks
- Medications and first aid supplies
- Sleeping bags, pillows, blankets, folding chairs
- Personal hygiene items such as soap, toothpaste, shampoo and a change of clothes
- Flashlight, battery powered TV/radio, extra batteries
- Cards, games, books (anything to keep busy with)
- Identification (passport or driver's license) and important personal papers (copies of insurance papers, family photos, list of medications, name and phone number of your doctor, names and phone numbers of family members and friends, etc)



## What Should I do if I have Special Needs?

Some people need extra help and support at shelters. This group includes people who:

- need special equipment (hospital bed or ventilator),
- need assistive devices or need assistance to walk,
- need a personal helper,
- have service animals

If you have any special needs, make sure that you or a family member finds out which shelters can help you. Please remember that hospitals are not shelters. If you have a personal helper or aide, he or she may be able to go with you to the shelter. Be sure to bring any the medical supplies you need with you. You may want to contact your local health department for more information.



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