

Seniors – Prepare Now for an Emergency

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When a disaster strikes, the senior population is one of the most vulnerable, especially for those who live alone. There are measures older Americans can take to start preparing for emergencies before they happen. For example, if it is difficult to get around on your own or you need assistance to shelter at home or evacuate, you need to know ahead of time who will help.

Older adults face many more obstacles during an emergency than most people: isolation, limited mobility, medical needs, and distrust. Sometimes, seniors rely on a single relative as their main caregiver. But emergencies can happen at any time, and that usual person may not be there. It is important to have a list of other people you can call on and know how to get hold of them.

Make a List of People Who Can Help

- Create a chain of contacts. Assign who will contact who during an emergency. Enlist family, friends, and neighbors, if necessary, but do not leave it all to one person. If the one person on the list is injured or incapacitated, you may be left stranded. Keep your list of helpers in your emergency kit.
- There are many communication apps available. Choose one or two, then ask the family and friends on your emergency contact list to download these same apps. They can be used to communicate with each other when phone lines or internet service is down.

Be Sure Your Medical Information is Available

If you have a medical condition, you may choose to wear a medical alert bracelet or pendant. This could save your life, especially if you are a diabetic or allergic to specific medications, etc. Any of the medical alert jewelry that is available today could help first responders treat you properly in case you are unable to give or tell them your medical history.

There are Things You Need to Take with You if You Leave Your Home

- Before an emergency arises, write down a list of everything it takes for you to stay healthy. Include your doctor's and pharmacy name and contact information, a list of



medications any medical devices and medications. Then let the people on your contact list know where the list will be in case you need it.

- **A kit.** One thing you will need is a kit with all the items you need to survive for a minimum of 72 hours. For a comprehensive list, visit [Build A Kit | Ready.gov](#). The American Red Cross can also help you with information on recommended items.
- **Cash.** The general rule of thumb is to have at least enough cash to pay for 30 days of essential living expenses. The amount depends on how much your critical expenses are. This usually includes a mortgage, electricity bill, phone bill, water bill, gas bill, etc. A better idea is to have your bills on auto-pay - then you may not have to worry about this issue unless there is a widespread power outage in your part of the country. Be sure you have at least some of your cash in small bills and some coins in case you need it for toll booths or for buying groceries and supplies.

Everyone can take steps to prepare for the kinds of emergencies that are the most likely where they live. In Louisiana those include hurricanes, flooding, fires and more. Sometimes the danger is known well ahead of time, and you have time to prepare. Other times, you must react now. When that happens, you need to know who to call for help.

For more information on being ready, see [Preparing Makes Sense for Older Americans - YouTube](#).

For the latest information on Hurricane Laura, visit [Louisiana Hurricane Laura \(DR-4559-LA\)](#). For the latest information on Hurricane Delta, visit [Louisiana Hurricane Delta \(DR-4570-LA\)](#). For more information on Hurricane Zeta, visit [Louisiana Hurricane Zeta \(DR-4577-LA\)](#). For more information on the Winter Storms, visit [Louisiana Severe Winter Storms \(DR-4590-LA\)](#) Or, follow the FEMA Region 6 Twitter account at [FEMA Region 6 \(@FEMARegion6\) / Twitter](#).

