

# TAKE CONTROL IN

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## Disaster Preparedness Guide for Caregivers



FEMA



ROSALYNN **FOR**  
CARTER **CAREGIVERS**  
INSTITUTE 

# INTRODUCTION

As a family caregiver, you are one of 53 million Americans caring for someone older, ill, or disabled. In many cases, you may be the only one attending to the daily needs of an elderly parent, disabled neighbor, or medically complex child. Those in your care depend on you for their safety and well-being—especially during emergencies. In recognition of your unparalleled dedication and commitment to those in your care, the [Federal Emergency Management Agency \(FEMA.gov\)](https://www.fema.gov) and the [Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregivers \(RCI\) \(rosalynncarter.org\)](https://www.rosalynncarter.org) have created this *Disaster Preparedness Guide for Caregivers* to help you navigate the unique challenges that may arise when disasters strike.

Caregivers navigate complex systems and plan for the unexpected every day. In preparing for a disaster, you will use all this experience! You are already further along in your preparedness journey than you might think. This guide will help you learn about disaster preparedness and identify the needs of your care recipient and how they might change during a disaster. You may also have questions about preparedness or not even know the questions to ask. This guide will help answer these questions, share ways to connect with your community, and bolster your confidence as a caregiver during a disaster.

Not all caregiving experiences are the same, and the information and resources in the guide reflect this. Before you start, think about your unique circumstances: Are you a caregiver who will prepare with your care recipient? Are you a caregiver with a support network to help prepare your care recipient? Are you a solo caregiver starting from scratch? This guide provides tailored information and resources to support you as a caregiver no matter your situation.





## STEP 1 | IDENTIFY BARRIERS AND RISKS

This step identifies common challenges you face as a family caregiver and strategies for overcoming them—either with your care recipient, with your support network, or as a solo caregiver. It will also enable you to understand the various obstacles you may face when getting your care recipient ready for a disaster—including mobility issues, limited resources, and medical needs. In this section, you will find ways to build resilience for yourself and those in your care.



## STEP 2 | LEARN AND CONNECT

This step guides you in establishing partnerships with emergency services and identifying community resources you will use to make your plan. You can learn and connect with your care recipient or with your support network. If you are a solo caregiver, now is the time to start making connections and finding support. Through these tips, you can strengthen your community ties and ensure support and resources are readily available when you need them.



## STEP 3 | MAKE A PLAN

In this step, you will learn the essential aspects of preparedness and how to develop a comprehensive emergency plan, including building a disaster preparedness kit. Part of making a plan is empowering your care recipient in their disaster preparedness planning or engaging your support network. If you don't have a support network, now is the time to start making those connections that will benefit you both today and during a disaster.



# STEP 1

# Identify Barriers and Risks



With Your Care Recipient



With Your Support Network



Solo Caregiver

*Consider your circumstances and find information and resources to meet your unique needs throughout the guide.*

As a family caregiver, you are used to handling the unexpected. You know that circumstances can change quickly and that plans need to adjust based on the needs of your care recipient—sometimes day-to-day and sometimes hour-by-hour. You have learned how to navigate complex systems to help your care recipient lead a fulfilling and meaningful life. All of your experience as a caregiver will help you prepare your care recipient for disasters and emergencies. Caregivers and their support networks have a window into the world of their care recipients. Yet often, it is easy to miss some specific barriers they may face. Understanding your care recipient's unique risks is vital in personalizing a comprehensive disaster preparedness plan.

Step 1 of this guide focuses on identifying barriers and risks, provides insights that will help you overcome challenges, and, most importantly, gives you the tools to build resilience for yourself and your care recipients.



## With Your Care Recipient:

- How do you best understand and respond to information?
- How do you communicate your needs to others? How does this change in stressful or unfamiliar situations?
- What help do you require for personal care?
- What assistive technology do you use to meet your daily activity needs?
- Do you have the money to cover expenses such as relocation, extra medications, or other associated costs you may encounter in a disaster?
- What helps you adjust to new or unfamiliar people and places?
- What methods of transportation do you rely on?
- How do you communicate pain or when you are subjected to extreme temperatures?



## With Your Support Network:

- How does my care recipient communicate their needs to others?
- Does my care recipient use assistive devices, interpreters for communication, or speak a language not common in the community? Is my support network familiar with these communication needs and know how to address them?
- How do I inform first responders or emergency response personnel about the unique communication needs of my care recipient?

- Does my care recipient use medical equipment that requires electricity?
- How does my care recipient report pain or indicate when they are subjected to extreme temperatures?
- Do members of my support team have a full understanding of the medication and equipment needs of the person I am taking care of?
- Does the person I am caring for depend on other providers or medical services for extended care? Does my support network know how to access this care?
- What is the role of my support network in helping my care recipient accomplish activities such as grocery shopping and paying bills?
- What medications or assistive devices enable my care recipient to function independently? Does my support network know how to use this technology or administer these medications?
- Does my care recipient engage in self-harming behaviors, and how can my support network help me identify strategies to keep my care recipient safe?



### Solo Caregiver:

- Do I fully understand the medication and equipment needs of the person I am taking care of?
- What are the most pressing concerns I have when my care recipient is without their typical level of supervision?
- What are my limitations as a solo caregiver?
- Do I know how to assist my care recipient with finding resources to meet expenses during or after a disaster?
- Do I know who provides medical care and how to access this care during a disaster?





## STEP 2

# Learn and Connect



With Your Care Recipient



With Your Support Network



Solo Caregiver

*Consider your circumstances and find information and resources to meet your unique needs throughout the guide.*

Now that you have taken some time to assess the barriers, risks, and needs that your care recipient may face, step 2 will help you assess preparedness roles, learn about resources to meet these needs, and provide guidance on fostering a collaborative approach to preparedness. If you are a solo caregiver, now is the time to start building connections to create a support network that will allow you and your care recipient to be resilient in the face of barriers and risks you encounter.

## ASSESS PREPAREDNESS ROLES



### With Your Care Recipient:

Engaging your care recipient, if they are able to do so, is a crucial step in emergency preparedness. Below are some conversation starters to engage your care recipient in a discussion about preparedness activities.

- “I’d like to talk about disaster preparedness and what that means to me and you.”
- “When preparing for a disaster, I see my role as \_\_\_\_\_. What do you see your role as?”
- “I would like to talk about our activities for disaster preparedness. Would you like to engage in disaster preparedness activities?”



### With Your Support Network:

Engage your support network, along with involving your care recipient, to ensure that emergency preparedness planning becomes a team effort. Below are some conversation starters to engage your support network in a discussion about preparedness activities.

- “I would like to talk about disaster preparedness and how we can work together to ensure [name] is prepared in the event of an emergency.”
- “As a close family member, friend, or medical provider of [name], could you provide any additional considerations that I should be aware of as I help [name] get prepared?”
- “What resources of yours can I leverage to ensure myself and my care recipient are prepared?”



## Solo Caregiver:

As a solo caregiver, it might be difficult to figure out where to start in preparing yourself and your care recipient for a disaster. Below are some questions you can ask yourself as a solo caregiver to get started in your preparedness journey.

- “What barriers to preparedness may I or my care recipient face?”
- “What additional help do I need to ensure that I and my care recipient are prepared?”
- “Are there additional ways I can get involved in emergency preparedness or get connected to emergency management professionals?”

## DISASTER PREPAREDNESS RESOURCES FOR CAREGIVERS

While many resources are available to support your preparedness journey, knowing where to look to help you create your unique preparedness plan can be hard. While it can feel overwhelming, you might be further along than you think—all of the ways you navigate medical systems, maintain schedules, and meet the needs of your care recipient will help you as you plan for a disaster.

**Medications, prescription refills, medical care:** For many caregivers and care recipients, the daily stress of prescription refills and managing medication schedules becomes even more urgent and complicated in a disaster situation. While there may not be an easy answer, there are programs and resources you can leverage in times of disaster. Learn about these resources before you need them, talk to your care recipient’s doctor and support network, and know that doing the work now will help alleviate stress should you ever need this information.



- **Emergency prescription laws:** Each state has different laws that authorize pharmacies and pharmacists to refill prescriptions early in the event of a declared emergency. Familiarize yourself with the laws in your state by visiting: [Healthcare Ready’s A Review of State Emergency Prescription Protocols \(healthcareready.org/a-review-of-state-emergency-prescription-protocols/\)](https://healthcareready.org/a-review-of-state-emergency-prescription-protocols/) and [CDC’s A Prescription for Preparedness \(blogs.cdc.gov/publichealthmatters/2019/09/prescription-preparedness/\)](https://blogs.cdc.gov/publichealthmatters/2019/09/prescription-preparedness/).
- **Locate an open pharmacy or healthcare facility during and after a disaster:** If your care recipient relies on medication or routine medical treatments, knowing how to find a pharmacy or facility after a disaster is important. Healthcare Ready’s [Rx Open \(rxopen.org\)](https://rxopen.org) provides information on the operating status of healthcare facilities in areas impacted by a disaster. If you require specialty or compounded medications, make a list of these pharmacies along your evacuation route.

- **Home medical equipment, adaptive equipment, assistive technology, and durable medical equipment:** If your care recipient has specialized equipment or devices, include these in your preparedness planning, and know that there are options to replace or get support if needed after a disaster.
- **Replace assistive technology and durable medical equipment:** Pass It On Center is a national resource to reuse assistive technology and durable medical equipment. For additional information or to find a program near you, search the database here: [Pass It On Center Find Reuse Locations \(pioc.gatech.edu/pioc/reuse\\_locations.php\)](https://pioc.gatech.edu/pioc/reuse_locations.php).
- **Replace medicine and equipment if you don't have insurance:** The Emergency Prescription Assistance Program (EPAP) helps people in a federally identified disaster area who do not have health insurance to get the prescription drugs, vaccinations, medical supplies, and equipment they need. Review covered items and learn more about this program here: [The Emergency Prescription Assistance Program \(aspr.hhs.gov/EPAP/Pages/default.aspx\)](https://aspr.hhs.gov/EPAP/Pages/default.aspx).

**Power restoration:** If your care recipient relies on electricity for medical devices, assistive technology, or to maintain health and independence, your electricity supplier may have programs or resources to help. Ask how to get on a priority restoration list or if they can provide battery backups to individuals with a qualifying need and diagnosis. When you start to make your plan, identify people in your support network who may be outside the affected area if there is a loss of electricity and you need to evacuate.

**Transportation:** When engaging in preparedness planning, it is important to consider the transportation needs of your care recipient—particularly if an evacuation is necessary. Your local Area Agency on Aging is one resource that can connect you to information about transportation options and in-home care support.

- The [Eldercare Locator \(eldercare.acl.gov/Public/Resources/Topic/Caregiver.aspx\)](https://eldercare.acl.gov/Public/Resources/Topic/Caregiver.aspx) can help you identify transportation resources before a disaster and help you plan for a disaster or emergency.

**Respite care:** As a family caregiver, you know you can't go it alone—and you don't have to. When you need help, and you will, there are resources to locate respite care in your community that you can consider as you prepare.

- The [National Respite Network and Resource Center \(archrespite.org/caregiver-resources/respitelocator/\)](https://archrespite.org/caregiver-resources/respitelocator/) can help you locate respite service providers in your community. Respite providers can be an important part of your support network.

**Additional resources:** Every caregiver and their care recipient have different needs, barriers, and challenges to overcome. And even after reviewing the resources in this guide, you may still have questions.

- [Aging and Disability Resource Centers \(acl.gov/programs/aging-and-disability-networks/aging-and-disability-resource-centers\)](https://acl.gov/programs/aging-and-disability-networks/aging-and-disability-resource-centers) can help caregivers connect to services and supports.



## LEARN ABOUT DISASTERS AND EMERGENCIES YOU MIGHT FACE



Just like the care you provide is unique, so are the impacts of a disaster on yourself and your care recipient. It's important to get familiarized with disasters that may happen and to think about the possible effects on your care recipient and yourself. Learn about disasters and hazards in your area and how to prepare through FEMA's Ready.gov [Hazard Information Sheets \(ready.gov/be-informed\)](https://www.ready.gov/hazard-information-sheets) and Healthcare Ready's Disaster [Disaster Tip Sheets \(healthcareready.org/disaster-tip-sheets/\)](https://www.healthcareready.org/disaster-tip-sheets/).

## ESTABLISHING PARTNERSHIPS WITH EMERGENCY SERVICES

As a family caregiver, you need to be aware of and communicate your needs to those in your community charged with keeping you safe. It is essential to form relationships ahead of time with emergency services personnel and community organizations who can connect you to accessible resources and help you understand your options during an emergency. And if you are a solo caregiver, you know you can't go it alone, so now is the time to build a support network.



### With Your Care Recipient:

- Find out how emergency management officials communicate with your community in an emergency.
- Identify the communications channels to access in a disaster.
- Sign yourself and your care recipients up for [emergency alerts \(ready.gov/alerts\)](https://www.ready.gov/alerts).
  - The National Weather Service broadcasts weather and emergency warnings specific to your community. You can purchase a [special receiver \(weather.gov/nwr/nwr\\_receivers\)](https://www.weather.gov/nwr/nwr_receivers) to access these alerts.
  - The [FEMA App \(ready.gov/fema-app\)](https://www.ready.gov/fema-app) allows you to receive real-time weather and emergency alerts, send notifications to loved ones, locate emergency shelters in your area, get preparedness strategies, and more.
- Attend community preparedness fairs or fire station open houses with your care recipient to meet and connect with first responders.
- Discover how to get transportation services if necessary. Ask your care recipient about their transportation preferences.



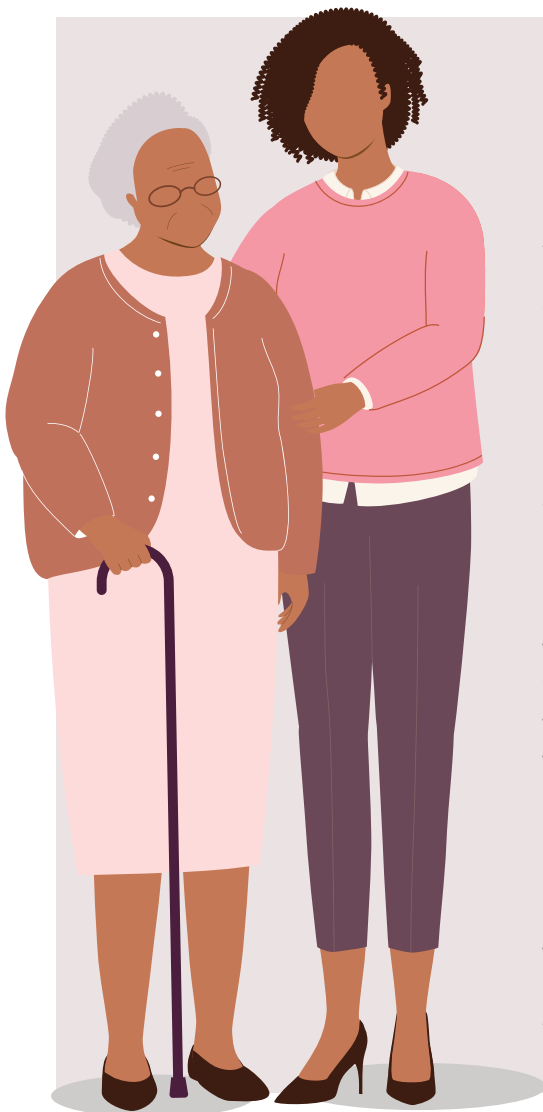
### With Your Support Network:

- Join or contact your local Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) to gain community-specific insights and valuable skills to help you and your care recipient prepare.
  - Visit the [FEMA's CERT homepage \(community.fema.gov/PreparednessCommunity/s/welcome-to-cert?language=en\\_US\)](https://www.community.fema.gov/PreparednessCommunity/s/welcome-to-cert?language=en_US) to learn more and find your local program.
- Create a checklist of emergency services numbers and contacts and have it available in hard copy and electronically and share it with your support network.
- With your support network, tour a shelter and discuss barriers your care recipient will face.
- Create a profile that can help first responders learn about the needs of your care recipient through [Smart911 \(smart911.com/\)](https://www.smart911.com/) or [RapidSOS \(rapidsos.com/\)](https://www.rapidsos.com/).



## Solo Caregiver:

- Identify the help that you need with day-to-day caregiving activities, such as helping pick up medications or doing laundry, and start to communicate those needs to those in your life.
- Find networks to lean on for support before, during, and after a disaster.
- Attend community preparedness fairs or fire station open houses to meet and connect with first responders.
- Discover how to get transportation services if necessary. Think about how you access transportation now, and how that might change in a disaster.
- Sign yourself up for [emergency alerts \(ready.gov/alerts\)](https://www.ready.gov/alerts).
  - The National Weather Service broadcasts weather and emergency warnings specific to your community. You can purchase a [special receiver \(weather.gov/nwr/nwr\\_receivers\)](https://www.weather.gov/nwr/nwr_receivers) to access these alerts.
  - The [FEMA App \(ready.gov/fema-app\)](https://www.ready.gov/fema-app) allows you to receive real-time weather and emergency alerts, locate emergency shelters in your area, get preparedness strategies, and more.
- Identify the communications channels you can access in a disaster.



## UNDERSTANDING THE CRITICAL ROLE OF FAMILY CAREGIVERS

In 2018, Hurricane Florence forced our family into crisis decision making mode. As the storm barreled toward the North Carolina coast, my grandmother's facility called to encourage my mom to take her before we evacuated. If we didn't, they were going to place memory care residents across the state.

For the first time, our caregiver stress was compounded with the stress of a disaster. Every option would likely increase her confusion and agitation. In the end, we decided to take her with us. This experience illustrated how much our systems aren't designed to support caregivers during disasters—or a pandemic.

My mom and I talk often about how we would have managed caregiving during this pandemic, living in fear of not cleaning a surface properly or forgetting to wash grandma's hands or ours. Would we have allowed home health workers into the house? After all, they provide respite for so many, and do essential medical tasks, not to mention they help reduce isolation. But is the risk to the household, or the risk to the worker, worth it?

Understanding the critical and irreplaceable role family caregivers of all ages play—that they too are on the front-line of care and need our support—will be key to effectively navigating future disasters.

*-Dr. Jennifer Olsen, Chief Executive Officer, Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregivers*



# STEP 3

## Make A Plan



With Your Care Recipient



With Your Support Network



Solo Caregiver

*Consider your circumstances and find information and resources to meet your unique needs throughout the guide.*

Now that you have done a thorough risk assessment and identified the resources available to you and your care recipient, you are ready to make a disaster emergency plan. This includes building a disaster preparedness kit and preparing for evacuation or disaster sheltering scenarios. While planning, you will want to include your care recipient, when possible, as well as family and friends and any support networks you have developed. Be honest and open about the process and the role you are willing to play.



### With Your Care Recipient:

One important thing to remember when preparing as a caregiver is that you cannot do it all by yourself. So, it is important to look at preparedness not only through the limitations the person you care for has but also to look at what can they do to help in preparing. Think through preparedness tasks that your care recipient can do. These tasks should fit within your care recipient's abilities and should not add additional stress or anxiety to either you or your care recipient. Including your care recipient in the preparedness process will let them see that they are valued in this relationship and they, too, can play an important role in disaster preparedness.

- Engage in a conversation with your care recipient to understand their abilities and limitations. This collaborative approach can make disaster preparedness a team effort.
- Discuss roles and responsibilities during disasters and ensure your care recipient feels included in the process.
- Identify tasks your care recipient can handle, such as checking food expiration dates or ensuring equipment is functioning correctly.





## With Your Support Network:

Work with your support network and make a plan for your care recipient during a disaster. Consider the strengths, abilities, and strategies that are unique to your situation and your care recipient.

|                       | Care Recipient's Strengths and Abilities   | Strategies to Maintain Strengths and Abilities in an Emergency   |
|-----------------------|--|--|
| <b>Communication</b>  | Example: Visual images help care recipient understand and process information.         | Example: A picture board could help communication.   |
|                       |  |  |
|                       |  |  |
| <b>Medical Needs</b>  | Example: Daily prescription medications.   | Example: List of prescriptions and a list of specialty pharmacies in case of evacuation.                             |
|                       |  |  |
|                       |  |  |
| <b>Independence</b>   | Example: Is accompanied to the store and on errands with a caregiver or family member. | Example: Knows how to contact caregiver or family member.  |
|                       |  |  |
|                       |  |  |
| <b>Supervision</b>    | Example: Uses a visual schedule to adapt to routine changes and ease anxiety.          | Example: Visual schedule is updated in case of evacuation to a shelter.  |
|                       |  |  |
|                       |  |  |
| <b>Transportation</b> | Example: The care recipient needs a wheelchair-accessible van.                         | Example: Identify back-up transportation services if the regular service provider cannot assist during an emergency. |
|                       |  |  |
|                       |  |  |



## Solo Caregiver:

As a solo caregiver, preparing for a disaster rests with you. This can be overwhelming, but there are strategies to help you get started.

- Identify preparedness activities you can integrate into your daily routine, such as calming techniques to adjust to new environments or practicing your evacuation route on your way to routine appointments.
- Recognize that as a caregiver, you have handled emergencies before. Look for the lessons learned from those experiences and apply it to your preparedness planning.
- Divide preparedness actions into smaller steps. An example can be creating a kit over time instead of all at once.
- Ask trusted individuals in your life what their preparedness plan is. You may learn something new, or this can be the start of your support network.
- If your care recipient undergoes routine treatments from a clinic or hospital, find out their emergency plans and ask about backup service providers.

## PREPARE YOUR SERVICE ANIMALS

If your care recipient has a service animal, make sure to also include items such as food, water, medications, and identification for the animal in the emergency kit. For more information on preparing service animals for disasters, visit [ready.gov/pets](https://www.ready.gov/pets).

In an emergency, a service animal must be allowed to come inside a shelter, clinic, or any other facility related to the emergency with their owners. If you have a pet and cannot bring them with you, make sure to plan for who will care for your pet if you leave your home.



# BUILD A KIT

Building an emergency kit is an essential step in preparedness. Start with the resources on Ready.gov to make a [communications plan \(ready.gov/plan-form\)](https://www.ready.gov/plan-form) and [build your emergency kit \(ready.gov/kit\)](https://www.ready.gov/kit). Then, use the checklist below to help you address the unique needs of your care recipient.

## PREPAREDNESS KIT CHECKLIST FOR CARE RECIPIENTS

- Note in go-bag identifying communication preferences.
- Visual schedule.
- Contact information of care team and their responsibilities during a disaster.
- Copies or cloud backups of Power of Attorney and advanced directives.
- Complete list of medications and specialty pharmacies. *Make a personalized wallet card documenting prescriptions and medical information through Healthcare Ready's Rx on the Run.*
- Cooler and ice packs to keep refrigerated medications cool.
- Medical supplies:
  - G-tube supplies
  - Incontinence supplies
  - Formula
  - Oxygen
  - Syringes
  - Heart monitors
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
- Patch kit, sealant, or extra inner tube for wheelchair repair.
- Serial numbers of assistive technology.
- Contact information for back-up transportation services.
- Assistive devices and spare batteries:
  - Hearing aids
  - AAC/Communication device
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
- Change of clothes.
- Battery backups or extra chargers for assistive technology and comfort items.
- Folding chair and pillows/supports if a wheelchair is damaged or unavailable.
- Mobility aids:
  - Wheelchairs
  - Stenders
  - Braces
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
- Preferred foods and snacks:
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
- Comfort items:
  - Fidget toys (spinners, cubes, etc.)
  - Weighted blanket
  - Noise-cancelling headphones or earplugs

# DURING A DISASTER

## MAKE A PLAN TO LEAVE

As a caregiver, it is essential to be prepared for evacuation scenarios. In some disaster situations, leaving your current location for a safer location is the best course of action for you and your care recipient.



### With Your Care Recipient:

- Planning your evacuation route ahead of time is crucial. Practice this route with your care recipient to reduce uncertainty and stress.
- Involve your care recipient in the process. Research and identify the best route together and update it as circumstances change.
- If your care recipient cannot accompany you, show them how to plan a route on a map or using pictures.
- Identify a meet up spot and an alternative contact in case you get separated from your care recipient.



### With Your Support Network:

- Collaborate with your support network to identify evacuation routes that suit your care recipient's needs. This could mean evacuating to a friend or family member who can provide suitable accommodations. Or this may look like evacuating to a friend in a nearby town who has a backup generator or a family member in another state whose home is accessible for your care recipient and their needs.
- If needed, identify a place to stay that will accept pets. Most public shelters allow only service animals.
- Discuss roles and responsibilities during an evacuation, considering the barriers members of your support network might face.



### Solo Caregiver:

- Consult with local emergency management officials for advice on the best evacuation route that considers your caregiver role.
- Plan and practice your evacuation route.
- Honestly assess your capacity and make an evacuation plan that is reasonable for you.

For more information on evacuation planning, visit [ready.gov/evacuation](https://www.ready.gov/evacuation).



## MAKE AN EMERGENCY SHELTERING PLAN

In some situations, you may need to take your care recipient to a local/community shelter. Emergency sheltering, also known as congregant sheltering, is an unfamiliar situation to most people. Knowing what to expect will help you develop a plan that meets the unique needs of your care recipient. There are some important things to consider about emergency or congregate sheltering:

- Understand that a congregate shelter is a facility designed to provide safety and security for a large number of people during disasters. These facilities could be churches or convention centers in non-disaster times.
- Congregate shelters mean that you and your care recipient will be sharing living spaces, restrooms, and showers with other people in your community.



### With Your Care Recipient:

- Discuss with your care recipient any accommodations that could make the sheltering experience more comfortable. Share these with shelter authorities.
- Schedule a meeting with your local emergency management office to determine the locations of your designated congregate shelter and possibly arrange a tour with your care recipient.
- Download the [FEMA App](#) for a list of open shelters during an active disaster in your local area.
- Work with your care recipient to pack and bring a well-prepared kit for yourself, your care recipient, and any service animals, if needed.



### With Your Support Network:

- Engage your support network to identify which congregate sheltering locations you, your care recipient, and your support network will use during a disaster.
- With your support network, identify which accommodations your care recipient may need at a congregate shelter and communicate these to shelter authorities.
- Plan how to receive updates and communicate with your support network, especially if you are sheltering in a different location.



### Solo Caregiver:

- Discuss your caregiver role with the shelter authorities to see if there are quieter spaces or accommodations that can make the experience more comfortable.
- Schedule a meeting with your local emergency management office to determine the locations of your designated congregate shelter and possibly arrange a tour.
  - Download the [FEMA App](#) for a list of open shelters during an active disaster in your local area.
- Ensure you bring a well-prepared kit for both yourself and your care recipient (and your service animal, if needed).
- Familiarize yourself with the shelter's rules and regulations to know what comfort items you can bring.



## MAKE A PLAN TO STAY INSIDE

Sometimes the best way to stay safe in an emergency is to get inside and stay inside a building or vehicle until danger has passed. This is also known as sheltering in place and there are ways to prepare for this possibility.



### With Your Care Recipient:

- With your care recipient, identify the safest place to seek shelter based on the disasters you may face.
- Together, ensure the room or area you are in has an emergency kit, as it may not be safe to move during an active disaster.
- Considering the potential stress of sheltering in place with your care recipient, identify comfort items and stress management strategies.
- Plan how to receive updates and communicate them to your care recipient, remaining reassuring and calm.
- If there is electricity, keep phones and communication and medical devices fully charged.



### With Your Support Network:

- Engage your support network to help you identify the safest place to seek shelter during a disaster.
- With your support network, discuss the impacts and challenges of being alone with your care recipient. Prepare your safe space with the necessary supplies.
- Build an emergency kit and store it in the safe space you have identified with your support network.
- Plan how to receive updates and communicate with your support network.
- If there is electricity, keep medical devices fully charged, as well as phones and communication devices so you can stay in contact with your support network.



### Solo Caregiver:

- Identify the safest place to seek shelter knowing the disasters you may face.
- Ensure the room or area you are in has an emergency kit, as it may not be safe to move during an active disaster.
- Consider the potential stress of sheltering in place and with your care recipient and identify comfort items and stress management strategies to support you and your care recipient during this time.
- Learn how to receive updates from local emergency management officials.
- If there is electricity, keep phones and communication and medical devices fully charged.



For more information on sheltering in place, including guidance for 10 different types of hazards, visit

[FEMA's Shelter-in-Place Pictogram \(www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema\\_shelter-in-place\\_guidance.pdf\)](http://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema_shelter-in-place_guidance.pdf).

One resource you can use during a disaster is [Healthcare Ready's Alert Hub \(healthcareready.org/alert-hub/\)](https://healthcareready.org/alert-hub/). This tool provides situation reports, important contact information for government resources, trusted communications, and disaster response information. Use this information to make informed decisions during a disaster to minimize the impacts of the event on your care recipient.



# RESOURCES

## **Medical Resources:**

- CDC State Emergency Prescription Laws: <https://blogs.cdc.gov/publichealthmatters/2019/09/prescription-preparedness/>
- Rx Open: Locate an open pharmacy or healthcare facility during and after a disaster: <https://rxopen.org/>
- HHS: Emergency Prescription Assistance Program: <https://aspr.hhs.gov/EPAP/Pages/default.aspx>
- Healthcare Ready: Disaster Tip Sheets: <https://healthcareready.org/disaster-tip-sheets/>
- Healthcare Ready: Rx on the Run: <https://healthcareready.org/rx-on-the-run/>
- Healthcare Ready: A Review of State Emergency Prescription Protocols: <https://healthcareready.org/a-review-of-state-emergency-prescription-protocols/>
- Pass It On Center Find Reuse Locations: [https://pioc.gatech.edu/pioc/reuse\\_locations.php](https://pioc.gatech.edu/pioc/reuse_locations.php)
- Create a profile that can help first responders learn about the needs of your care recipient: [Smart911](#) or [RapidSOS Home \(EmergencyProfile.org\)](#)

## **Disaster Preparedness Resources:**

- Ready.gov: <https://www.ready.gov/>
- FEMA Disaster Preparedness Guide for Older Adults: Take Control in 1, 2, 3: FEMA Disaster: [https://www.ready.gov/sites/default/files/2023-09/ready-gov\\_disaster-preparedness-guide-for-older-adults.pdf](https://www.ready.gov/sites/default/files/2023-09/ready-gov_disaster-preparedness-guide-for-older-adults.pdf)

## **Preparedness Guide for Older Adults**

- FEMA Ready Make a Plan Form: <https://www.ready.gov/plan-form>
- FEMA Ready Build a Kit Resources and Checklist: <https://www.ready.gov/kit>
- FEMA Ready Prepare Your Pets for Disasters: <https://www.ready.gov/pets>

## **Emergency Alert Resources:**

- FEMA Ready Emergency Alerts Information: <https://www.ready.gov/alerts>
- FEMA App: <https://www.ready.gov/fema-app>

## **Veterans Resources:**

- VA Emergency Management Resources: <https://www.va.gov/VHAEMERGENCYMANAGEMENT/veterans/index.asp>
- Prepared Caregivers: A Toolkit for Caregivers of Veterans for Disaster Preparedness: [https://rosalynncarter.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Prepared-Military-Caregivers\\_Disaster-Relief-Toolkit\\_Final.pdf](https://rosalynncarter.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Prepared-Military-Caregivers_Disaster-Relief-Toolkit_Final.pdf)

## **Older Adult Resources:**

- National Association for Area Agencies on Aging: <https://www.usaging.org/> or call 202-872-0888
- ACL Elder Care Resources: <https://eldercare.acl.gov/Public/Resources/Topic/Caregiver.aspx>

## ***Dementia and Disability Resources:***

- ACL Aging and Disability Resources: <https://acl.gov/programs/aging-and-disability-networks/aging-and-disability-resource-centers>
- Alzheimer's Association 24/7 Helpline: <https://www.alz.org/help-support/resources/helpline> or call the Helpline at 1-800-272-3900

## ***Evacuation, Sheltering, and Disaster Recovery Resources:***

- FEMA Ready Evacuation Planning and Resources: <https://www.ready.gov/evacuation>
- FEMA Shelter-in-Place Information: [https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema\\_shelter-in-place\\_guidance.pdf](https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema_shelter-in-place_guidance.pdf)
- Ready.gov: <https://www.ready.gov/recovering-disaster>
- Disaster Recovery Center (DRC): <https://egateway.fema.gov/ESF6/DRCLocator>, 1-800-621-3362

## ***Get Involved:***

- FEMA Get Involved with Community Emergency Response Team (CERT): [https://community.fema.gov/PreparednessCommunity/s/welcome-to-cert?language=en\\_US](https://community.fema.gov/PreparednessCommunity/s/welcome-to-cert?language=en_US)
- American Red Cross Until Help Arrives Course: <https://www.redcross.org/take-a-class/first-aid/first-aid-training/first-aid-classes/until-help-arrives>



# Take Control in 1, 2, 3–Disaster Preparedness Guide for Caregivers

[www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)

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