

Are You Prepared for the Next Emergency?

What would you do if there was an incident in your area? Do you have a plan?

The devastating hurricanes and wildfires of 2017 are a reminder of the importance of preparing for disasters. Often, community members will be the first ones to take action after a disaster strikes before first responders arrive, so it is important to prepare in advance to help yourself and your community. Earthquakes, hurricanes, flooding and severe weather are only a handful of events that can impact on you, your family and community. Are you prepared?

Do you know how to prepare yourself and your family? Have you taken the time to learn lifesaving skills such as CPR and basic first aid? Have you checked your insurance policies and coverage for the predominate hazards in your area such as floods, earthquakes, wildfires and tornados? Do you have a 3-day emergency supply of food, water and medication for every family member? Do you have a communication plan? If you had to evacuate your home, do you know what safety steps to take ahead of time such as shutting off the water and gas?

If not, now is the time to focus on this important topic. September was **National Preparedness Month**. Sponsored by FEMA, this effort encourages all of us to prepare for emergencies at home, at work and in our communities. Bank of the West believes that preparedness begins at home.

One of the most basic items to prepare yourself and your family in the event of a disaster is to have an emergency kit already stocked and ready "to go" in the event of a sudden evacuation or other disaster. The following checklist includes basic supplies.

Store items in airtight plastic bags to protect against the elements. Try to keep your entire disaster kit in one or two easy to carry containers like a duffel bag or rolling backpack. According to FEMA, a basic emergency supply kit should include:

Basic Disaster Kit

- Water - one gallon of water per person per day for at least three days, for drinking and sanitation
- Food - at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food
- Battery-powered or hand crank radio and a NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert
- Flashlight
- First aid kit
- Extra batteries
- Whistle to signal for help
- Dust mask to help filter contaminated air and plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter-in-place
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation
- Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities
- Manual can opener for food
- Local maps
- Cell phone with chargers and a backup battery

Once you have created your basic kit, consider what unique needs your family might have such as supplies for pets or seniors. FEMA recommends considering adding the following items to your kit:



- Prescription medications
- Non-prescription medications such as pain relievers, anti-diarrhea medication, antacids or laxatives
- Glasses and contact lense solution
- Infant formula, bottles, diapers, wipes, diaper rash cream
- Pet food and extra water for your pet
- Cash or traveler's checks
- Important family documents such as copies of insurance policies, identification and bank account records saved electronically or in a waterproof, portable container
- Sleeping bag or warm blanket for each person
- Complete change of clothing appropriate for your climate and sturdy shoes
- Household chlorine bleach and medicine dropper to disinfect water
- Fire extinguisher
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Feminine supplies and personal hygiene items
- Mess kits, paper cups, plates, paper towels and plastic utensils
- Paper and pencil
- Books, games, puzzles or other activities for children

Other helpful hints include keeping your kit in a designated place making it easy to grab in the event you and your family need to leave in a hurry. Also remember to revisit your kit regularly to replace expired items, re-think your needs each year, update medications and ensure that you preparedness plans are up to date.

You can also find more information on personal and community preparedness efforts on the [Ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov) website as well as your county and state Emergency Management Department websites.

Additional Resources:

[FEMA.gov](https://www.fema.gov)

[Ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov)

[Red Cross.org](https://www.redcross.org)