



# Preparing for Storms and Tornadoes

## A Guide for Seniors and Caregivers

As residents of the Midwest, we are all too familiar with the need to prepare for bad storms and tornadoes. The lists below have been created with the needs of seniors, people with special needs, and those that take care of them in mind. The suggestions here are provided as a guideline only, your particular situation may require more or less preparation. Please use this as a starting point to develop your own to-do lists well before a storm is on the horizon. For more ideas, see the list of resources below.

### **Identify where to go to stay safe in your home:**

- Basement or storm shelter
- Interior room with few or no windows on the lowest floor, such as an interior hallway, bathroom or closet. If possible, choose a place that is big enough for all members of the household and any helpers or caregivers, plus pets

### **Get Ready**

- Rehearse going to the safe area. For seniors or those with special needs, rehearse reaching the safe area from different rooms.
- Print signs showing where to go using big letters and keep in a prominent place such as the refrigerator, or on the inside of the front door.
- If you live in an apartment or condo, obtain a copy of the building's disaster plan and read it. Make sure any friend or family member who would be helping in an emergency reads it as well.
- Get medical alert bracelets and make sure they are worn.
- Label all medical equipment with the user's name.

### **Create a Personal Information Packet**

Keep a large ziplock bag in your emergency kit, include the following items:

- Personal information sheet with name, address, date of birth, known allergies, pertinent medical information, special needs, physician's name and all contact numbers, social security number.
- Contact sheet with person's name, relationship, phone numbers and email address.
- List of all medications, prescription and non-prescription, including dosage and frequency and pharmacy phone number.
- Extra eye glasses
- Extra hearing aid batteries
- Copies of insurance and Medicare cards
- List of emergency and family names and numbers beyond the main contact name above, including an out-of-town contact person if possible.
- Names and phone numbers of close neighbors who can help
- List of brand/style and serial numbers of needed equipment
- List of important medical information
- Some cash
- A picture of the people living in the home, especially anyone with Alzheimer's or other special needs.

## **Create a Portable Emergency Kit**

Use a backpack, large tote, container with a lid, suitcase, or anything you or your helper can carry. Keep the following items in your kit:

- Battery powered radio, extra batteries
- Flashlight

In addition to items you keep in the bag, grab what you need if you have time, including the following:

- Prescription medication in their original bottles, related supplies, non-prescription meds. Keep your medications in a box or container so you can easily put that box in your portable kit. Include anything required for your medications, such as a cold pack for insulin and other things that need to stay refrigerated.
- Your wallet/purse with cash, credit cards, ID, insurance card
- Car and house keys

The things listed here are items you would grab in an emergency in addition to the things you store in your safe area. (See more for the safe area below.)

If you have a friend or family member who needs help and lives alone, identify a neighbor or a friend who lives close by who will stay with the person or take the person to their own home (with the kit). Make sure this person knows where safe area is, where the emergency kit is located, what medicines and special equipment/supplies are used and where it's all located. This person will need a key to get in.

## **Prepare Your Safe Area**

Stock your safe area with:

- Bottled water - 1 gallon per person per day, 3 days minimum
- Canned or dried food that will not spoil (see sample list below)
- A manual, easy-grip can opener
- Battery powered radio, extra batteries
- Flashlight and/or battery-powered lantern, extra batteries
- Book and night light, puzzles, games, toys for kids and pets if there are any in the home
- First aid kit (see below for contents)
- Extra battery for wheelchair, extra equipment such as walker or cane.
- Any necessary medical supplies such as incontinence items, syringes
- Spare set of keys
- Fire extinguisher

Check supplies regularly to make sure everything is working and items with expiration dates are still good.

### ***Sample List of Suitable Food Items:***

- Ready-to-eat canned meat, fruit and vegetables
- Protein or fruit bars
- Dry cereal or granola
- Canned juices

- Comfort food (chocolate and candy)
- Nuts
- Crackers
- Peanut butter
- Vitamins
- Dry or powdered milk

***First Aid Kit:***

- Adhesive bandages in different sizes
- Safety pins
- Soap
- Antibiotic ointment
- Latex gloves
- Washcloths
- Sunscreen
- Several 2-inch and 4- inch sterile gauze pads
- Several triangular bandages (2-3)
- 2 to 3 3-inch sterile roller bandages
- Scissors
- Tweezers
- Needle
- Moistened towelettes
- Antiseptic
- Thermometer
- Petroleum jelly
- Aspirin or non-aspirin pain relief medication
- Anti-diarrhea medicine
- Antacid
- Laxative

***Additional Items for Your Safe Area***

Keep the following items in containers in your safe area in addition to the things mentioned above:

- Clean clothes and sturdy shoes for everyone
- Rain gear such as a poncho for all
- Sleeping bags or blankets
- Coat, gloves, scarf for cold weather
- Eating utensils (disposable) such as plates, napkins, knives and forks, spoons
- Tent
- Duct tape or other heavy tape
- Scissors
- Trash bags (heavy duty), plastic sheets, regular garbage bags with ties
- Matches (place in water proof container)
- Needle, thread, paper and pens or pencils
- Toilet paper
- Moistened towelettes
- Liquid detergent
- Soap, toothpaste and brushes, deodorant,
- Household chlorine bleach
- Plastic bucket with tight lid to act as a commode

- A whistle to call for help
- Disinfectant
- Pre-paid long distance calling card

### ***Special items to include:***

- Pet food and supplies (will need water), extra feeding/water bowl, extra leash, collar, record of shots, a name tag to be placed on collar with contact numbers and pet's name, a muzzle if needed, favorite toy
- Baby supplies
- Feminine hygiene supplies
- Dental supplies
- A waterproof container with important documents: insurance information or policies, checking account (bank and number), birth certificates, a list of all family members, name, age, address, contact numbers

### **For Your Car**

Items to keep in each car include:

- Road maps
- Tire repair kit and pump
- Jumper cables
- Flares
- Flashlights and batteries
- Battery-powered radio and batteries
- Fire extinguisher
- A gallon of water
- Several cans of food and a manual can opener
- A sleeping bag or extra blanket
- Extra money
- First-aid supplies (see section on first aid kit)
- Pet supplies
- Copy of the personal information kit is helpful.

### **For More Information:**

Please see the following links for more ideas on how to prepare and react to tornadoes and other emergencies:

Emergency Preparedness and Response from the Centers for Disease Control:

*During a Tornado:* <http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/tornadoes/during.asp>

Red Cross – *Tornado Safety:* <http://www.redcross.org/prepare/disaster/tornado>

While you're there, check out the other disaster preparedness info they have on their site.

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