



Original Content

State Emergency Preparedness Public Information Campaign (*approximately 1,400 words*)

STATE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY "BE READY" - Personal Emergency Preparedness Guide Protecting Yourself and Your Family During Emergencies

Introduction: Why Preparedness Matters

Natural disasters and emergencies can strike without warning. From hurricanes and floods to winter storms and power outages, our state faces various threats that can disrupt normal life for days or even weeks. The difference between those who weather emergencies successfully and those who struggle often comes down to one factor: preparation.

This guide provides essential information every resident needs to ensure they can respond effectively when disaster strikes. Taking the time now to prepare means you'll be ready to act decisively when seconds count.

Part 1: Building Your Emergency Kit

Every household should maintain an emergency kit capable of sustaining all members for at least 72 hours without external assistance. This means being self-sufficient while emergency responders focus on life-threatening situations and critical infrastructure restoration.

Essential Supplies:

- Water: One gallon per person per day (3-day minimum supply)
- Non-perishable food requiring no refrigeration or cooking
- Manual can opener
- Battery-powered or hand-crank radio (NOAA Weather Radio recommended)
- Flashlights with extra batteries
- First aid kit with comprehensive supplies
- Prescription medications (7-day supply minimum)
- Important documents in waterproof container (insurance policies, identification, bank records)
- Cash in small denominations
- Cell phone with backup charging options

Additional Recommended Items:



- Hygiene supplies and personal sanitation items
- Plastic sheeting and duct tape for shelter-in-place situations
- Tools including wrench for turning off utilities
- Bleach for water purification
- Pet supplies if applicable
- Entertainment items for managing stress during extended emergencies

Kit Maintenance: Review your emergency kit twice yearly (we recommend daylight saving time changes as reminders). Check expiration dates on food, water, and medications. Test batteries in all devices and replace as needed. Update documents to reflect current information.

Store your kit in an easily accessible location that all household members know. Ideally, supplies should be portable—stored in a large wheeled container or duffel bags that can be quickly moved if evacuation becomes necessary.

Part 2: Creating Your Family Emergency Plan

Having supplies is essential, but equally important is having a clear plan that everyone understands and can execute under stress.

Communication Strategy: Emergencies often disrupt local phone networks. Establish an out-of-state contact person whom all family members can call to check in and relay messages. Ensure everyone has this contact information memorized—don't rely solely on cell phone contacts that may be inaccessible if devices are lost or damaged.

Identify multiple ways to receive emergency alerts:

- Sign up for local emergency notification systems (typically text and email)
- Download your state's emergency app for real-time updates
- Monitor local news and NOAA Weather Radio
- Follow official social media accounts

Meeting Points: Designate two meeting locations:

1. A spot immediately outside your home for sudden emergencies like fire
2. A location outside your neighborhood in case you cannot return home

Choose locations everyone can walk to if necessary. Practice traveling to these locations so all family members know the route.

Evacuation Planning: Know your evacuation routes and have alternatives mapped. During actual emergencies, follow official evacuation routes—attempting shortcuts can lead you into dangerous situations or blocked roads. Keep your vehicle at least half-full of gas during seasons when emergencies are more likely. If evacuation orders are issued, leave immediately rather than waiting



until the last moment. Traffic congestion during evacuations can turn a one-hour drive into a six-hour ordeal.

If you don't have a vehicle, identify neighbors or friends who might provide transportation, or familiarize yourself with public evacuation resources in advance. Don't wait until an emergency is imminent to solve transportation challenges.

Household Drills: Practice your emergency plan at least twice yearly. Run through different scenarios:

- Fire evacuation (everyone should be able to exit the home within 2 minutes)
- Severe weather sheltering (everyone should know the safest interior room)
- Communication plan testing (actually call the out-of-state contact and practice the protocol)

Include all household members in drills. Children should understand the plan appropriate to their age and be prepared to act independently if separated from adults.

Part 3: Staying Informed During Emergencies

When disaster strikes, information saves lives. However, not all information is reliable, and rumors can spread quickly during chaotic situations.

Official Information Sources:

- Local emergency management agency (sign up for alerts in advance)
- National Weather Service and NOAA Weather Radio
- Local news broadcasts and official websites
- Official social media accounts (verify you're following legitimate agency accounts)
- Emergency Alert System broadcasts on radio and television

During emergencies, monitor these sources continuously. Conditions can change rapidly, and new threats can emerge. Keep your battery-powered or hand-crank radio readily available—don't assume internet and cellular networks will remain operational.

Attending Community Meetings: Many jurisdictions hold annual emergency preparedness fairs and community meetings. These events provide opportunities to:

- Meet emergency management staff and first responders
- Ask questions about local-specific risks and response plans
- Pick up free preparedness materials
- Participate in hands-on demonstrations



Attendance at these events demonstrates civic engagement and ensures you have the most current information about local emergency protocols. Bring household members so everyone hears information firsthand rather than through secondhand relay.

Part 4: Special Considerations

Certain situations require additional planning beyond basic preparedness.

Households with Infants or Young Children:

- Maintain extra supplies of diapers, formula, and baby food
- Include comfort items to manage stress during emergencies
- Prepare to explain situations in age-appropriate terms
- Ensure children can communicate basic information (name, address, parent contact) if separated

Pet Preparedness:

- Assemble pet emergency kit (food, water, medications, veterinary records)
- Research pet-friendly evacuation shelters in advance (many general shelters cannot accommodate animals)
- Ensure pets have identification tags and are microchipped
- Keep pets' vaccination records current and in your emergency kit

Financial Preparedness: Emergencies can disrupt banking systems and ATM networks. Maintain emergency cash reserves in small denominations. Keep photocopies of credit cards and important financial documents in your emergency kit.

Part 5: Community Resilience

Prepared communities recover faster from disasters. Your personal preparedness contributes to overall community resilience by ensuring you won't need emergency resources that could be directed to more vulnerable residents.

Getting Involved:

- Attend local Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training
- Participate in neighborhood preparedness groups
- Volunteer with local emergency management during non-emergency periods
- Share preparedness information with neighbors and coworkers

CERT training provides hands-on experience in disaster response skills including basic medical care, light search and rescue, fire safety, and disaster psychology. The program runs for 20 hours over several weeks, teaching ordinary citizens how to assist professional responders during large-scale emergencies.



Checking on Neighbors: During and after emergencies, check on elderly neighbors and those who live alone. Your quick check could make a life-saving difference. However, never put yourself in danger—if situations seem beyond your capability, contact emergency services immediately.

Conclusion: Taking Action Today

Emergency preparedness isn't complicated, but it does require commitment. Set aside time this weekend to begin building your emergency kit. Within a month, have your complete family emergency plan documented and practiced.

Don't wait for warnings to start preparing. By the time an emergency is imminent, stores will be crowded, supplies will be depleted, and you'll be making decisions under stress rather than through careful planning.

Remember: Emergency responders will prioritize life-threatening situations. Your preparedness means you can weather the initial crisis independently, allowing first responders to focus on those most in need. Every prepared household makes the entire community more resilient.

For more information, attend one of our regional preparedness workshops held quarterly at locations throughout the state. Visit our website for schedules and to register for these informative sessions.

Your safety is your responsibility. Be ready.

Analysis

Flag 1: "...disrupt normal life for days or even weeks."

- **Risk:** Low
- **Category:** Tone / Assumptions
- **Why it may be problematic:** Using "normal" implies a standard way of living, which can inadvertently exclude the lived experiences of persons with disabilities whose routines may differ.
- **Alternatives:**
 1. "...disrupt daily routines and essential services..."
 2. "Natural disasters can significantly impact our daily lives and access to community resources for days or even weeks."

Flag 2: "The difference between those who weather emergencies successfully and those who struggle often comes down to one factor: preparation."

- **Risk:** Medium



- **Category:** Framing / Assumptions
- **Why it may be problematic:** This framing places the entire burden of survival on individual preparation, potentially overlooking systemic barriers (like inaccessible shelters or power-dependent medical equipment) that contribute to why some individuals "struggle" more than others.
- **Alternatives:**
 1. "Preparation is a critical factor in successfully navigating emergencies."
 2. "While community systems play a vital role, individual preparation is a key component of a successful emergency response."

Flag 3: "This means being self-sufficient while emergency responders focus on life-threatening situations..."

- **Risk:** Medium
- **Category:** Framing / Assumptions
- **Why it may be problematic:** An emphasis on total "self-sufficiency" can be exclusionary for individuals who rely on caregivers, specialized medical equipment, or community support, framing their needs as a burden on emergency responders.
- **Alternatives:**
 1. "...being prepared to manage independently or with your established support network..."
 2. "This means having the supplies and support plans in place to sustain your household while emergency responders prioritize critical infrastructure and life-saving efforts."

Flag 4: "Choose locations everyone can walk to if necessary."

- **Risk:** High
- **Category:** Assumptions / Ableism
- **Why it may be problematic:** This assumes that walking is the universal or default mode of emergency transit, which directly excludes wheelchair users, people with mobility impairments, or those with chronic pain.
- **Alternatives:**
 1. "Choose locations that are accessible to everyone in your household."
 2. "Select meeting points that all family members can reach safely and independently, ensuring the route is accessible for those using mobility aids."

Flag 5: "Fire evacuation (everyone should be able to exit the home within 2 minutes)"



- **Risk:** High
- **Category:** Assumed incompetence / Normative baselines
- **Why it may be problematic:** Setting a rigid, time-based physical requirement does not account for individuals with mobility, sensory, or cognitive disabilities who may require more time or specific assistance to evacuate.
- **Alternatives:**
 1. "Practice your evacuation plan to ensure everyone can exit safely and efficiently."
 2. "Develop and practice a personalized evacuation exit strategy; for those with mobility challenges, this may include staged evacuation points or the use of specialized equipment to ensure a timely exit."

Flag 6: "Attendance at these events demonstrates civic engagement..."

- **Risk:** Low
- **Category:** Tone / Assumptions
- **Why it may be problematic:** This phrasing may inadvertently shame individuals who cannot attend in-person meetings due to chronic illness, sensory disabilities, or lack of accessible transportation by questioning their "civic engagement."
- **Alternatives:**
 1. "Attending these events is a great way to stay informed..."
 2. "Participating in these community events helps ensure you have the most current information about local protocols."

Flag 7: "Bring household members so everyone hears information firsthand rather than through secondhand relay."

- **Risk:** Medium
- **Category:** Assumptions / Other
- **Why it may be problematic:** The phrase "hears information firsthand" assumes auditory processing as the primary mode of receiving information, which may be exclusionary for individuals who are Deaf, hard-of-hearing, or have sensory processing sensitivities.
- **Alternatives:**
 1. "so everyone receives information directly"
 2. "Encourage all household members to attend so they can engage with the information directly and ask questions in a format that works best for them."

Flag 8: "Part 4: Special Considerations"

- **Risk:** High



- **Category:** Terminology / Infantilization
- **Why it may be problematic:** The term "special" is often viewed as patronizing and suggests that the needs of certain groups are "extra" or outside the norm, rather than a standard part of inclusive planning.
- **Alternatives:**
 1. "Part 4: Specific Planning Needs"
 2. "Part 4: Inclusive Planning for Diverse Needs"

Flag 9: "...ensuring you won't need emergency resources that could be directed to more vulnerable residents."

- **Risk:** High
- **Category:** Deficit framing / Othering
- **Why it may be problematic:** This frames people with disabilities (often categorized as "vulnerable") as a drain on limited resources, implicitly positioning them as a burden on the state rather than as citizens with a right to equitable protection.
- **Alternatives:**
 1. "...allowing emergency resources to be prioritized for those with the most urgent needs."
 2. "By preparing your household, you contribute to a stronger community response, allowing local resources to be deployed effectively across all neighborhoods and specialized service centers."

Flag 10: "...teaching ordinary citizens how to assist professional responders..."

- **Risk:** Low
- **Category:** Tone / Assumptions
- **Why it may be problematic:** The term "ordinary" can imply that those with disabilities or specific needs are "extraordinary" or "other," creating a subtle divide in community membership.
- **Alternatives:**
 1. "...teaching community members..."
 2. "The program empowers residents with the skills to assist professional responders and support their neighbors during large-scale emergencies."

Flag 11: "Checking on Neighbors: During and after emergencies, check on elderly neighbors and those who live alone."

- **Risk:** Medium



- **Category:** Terminology / Erasure
- **Why it may be problematic:** The term "elderly" is an "othering" term that can promote ageist stereotypes, and focusing only on age or isolation misses younger people with disabilities who also benefit from community check-ins.
- **Alternatives:**
 1. "check on neighbors who may require additional assistance."
 2. "During and after emergencies, take a moment to check on older adults in your neighborhood and those who may have specific functional or access needs."

Flag 12: "Your preparedness means you can weather the initial crisis independently, allowing first responders to focus on those most in need."

- **Risk:** Medium
- **Category:** Framing / Assumptions
- **Why it may be problematic:** This framing creates a binary between "independent" citizens and those "in need," which can reinforce a deficit model of disability and make those who require assistance feel like a burden on emergency resources.
- **Alternatives:**
 1. "weather the initial crisis with your own supplies"
 2. "By preparing your household, you contribute to community resilience, which helps ensure that emergency resources are available for critical infrastructure and life-saving interventions."

Flag 13: "Your safety is your responsibility. Be ready."

- **Risk:** Medium
- **Category:** Framing / Other
- **Why it may be problematic:** An over-emphasis on individual responsibility can mask the systemic and environmental barriers (like inaccessible shelters or lack of paratransit) that prevent many disabled people from being "ready" despite their best efforts.
- **Alternatives:**
 1. "Preparedness is a shared goal. Be ready."
 2. "Safety is a community-wide effort. By taking these steps, you play a vital role in our state's collective emergency response and resilience."

Flag 14: "residents", "household members"

- **Risk:** Low
- **Category:** Terminology



- **Why it may be problematic:** The document consistently uses person-first language. While this aligns with many style guides, it is important to remember that some individuals may prefer identity-first language (e.g., "disabled person").
- **Alternatives:**
 1. Maintain person-first language as the default, but be aware of competing norms.
 2. Use a mix of person-first and identity-first language depending on the specific community being addressed.

Debiased Content

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Safety is a community-wide effort. By taking these steps, you play a vital role in our state's collective emergency response and resilience. Be ready.

Justification

I have reviewed the feedback from the General Framing Analyst, the NCDJ Style Guide Advisor, the Canadian Disability Communication Guide Advisor, and the APA Inclusive Language Guide Advisor.

The overall approach was to remove normative baselines, deficit framing, and ableist assumptions while maintaining the critical safety information and encouraging community preparedness.

Key changes by category:



- **Ableism / Assumptions:** Removed explicit requirements to walk ("Choose locations everyone can walk to") and rigid time-based physical requirements ("exit the home within 2 minutes"), replacing them with inclusive alternatives that highlight accessible routes and personalized evacuation strategies.
- **Deficit Framing / Othering:** Rephrased sections that framed individuals requiring assistance as a drain on resources ("ensuring you won't need emergency resources that could be directed to more vulnerable residents") to focus on how personal preparedness strengthens overall community resilience.
- **Terminology / Infantilization:** Replaced patronizing terms like "Special Considerations" with "Inclusive Planning for Diverse Needs" and "elderly" with "older adults".
- **Tone / Assumptions:** Softened language around "normal life" and "ordinary citizens" to be more inclusive of diverse lived experiences and community membership.
- **Assumptions / Other:** Adjusted language that assumed auditory processing ("hears information firsthand") to encourage engagement in formats that work best for all individuals.

Notes:

Where agents disagreed on risk tiers (e.g., "Choose locations everyone can walk to" was rated Medium by the Framing Analyst and NCDJ Advisor, but High by the Canadian and APA Advisors), I defaulted to the higher risk tier (High) to ensure maximum inclusivity and noted the rationale in the analysis. The document's use of person-first language was maintained as the default, with a note acknowledging competing norms regarding identity-first language.

