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Disaster Can Strike at Any Moment: Are You Ready?

No meteorologist can predict with 100 percent accuracy the severity of a storm. Seismologists can guess the intensity of an earthquake, but its strength won't be known until it's over. Currently, no one can truly predict when a disaster will happen. For the sake of your family, it's best to be prepared.

Home

Your disaster preparedness plan should start by reviewing your home and making sure it's structurally sound. If you have a concrete foundation, make sure it's in good condition and reinforced. HomeAdvisor reports that the average price for concrete [foundation repair](#) in the Chicago area is between \$468 and \$1,815 and usually only take a day. If you are building a home or will be moving soon, you may want to consider fire-resistant materials for your home's frame. (Or look for an apartment/condo built of non-combustible materials.) According to the Portland Cement Association, wood-frame construction provides fuel for flames, while [non-combustible](#) masonry materials, such as concrete and rebar, do not. In addition to flame resistance, these types of structures stand up better to stress and, under most circumstances, won't succumb to wind or rain.

Food

In a widespread emergency situation, your number one priorities are equally food, water, and shelter. Learning how to garden and grow your own vegetables is an exceptional way to stave off hunger when disaster strikes. You can grow everything from lettuce and tomatoes to peppers and potatoes right in your own backyard, even if you don't have a great deal of space to devote to gardening. Many crops even work [indoors](#) and can be grown and harvested year-round and canned for longevity. If you don't have a green thumb, FEMA recommends keeping a [two-week supply](#) of non-perishable food and water on hand at all times.

You and your family should know how to hunt and fish, build a fire, and design a shelter in the unlikely event you become stranded in an accessible area such as a large national forest or mountain.

Hopefully, you'll never be in a situation where you can't access fresh food and water for weeks on end. However, it is possible, as evidenced by 2005's [Hurricane Katrina](#), which left behind \$125 billion in damages and hundreds of thousands of Gulf Coast residents without basic amenities for months.

Unnatural Disasters

Not all disasters come at Mother Nature's hands. You will also need to formulate a plan for [active shooters](#), nuclear explosions, and hazardous material incidents in order to keep your family safe. Ready.gov explains that your first order of responsibility during an active shooter situation is to get away as soon as possible. In the case of a nuclear explosion or hazardous material leak, you'll need to stay inside for at least 24 hours or until cleared by local authorities.

You should also be trained in first aid and CPR in case of an automobile accident, house fire, or other medical emergency. This type of medical training will give you the skills and confidence to save a life if emergency personnel are not available. Additionally, a well-stocked first aid kit will help keep yourself and your family safe. This should include an assortment of dressings, bandages, and adhesive cloth tape, along with antibiotic/antiseptic ointment and wipes, latex gloves, a cold compress, and a first-aid instruction booklet, which is available through the Red Cross or your local bookstore. You should have a first aid kit available at home and in your vehicle at all times.

You can never be too prepared. By taking steps to secure your home and learning how to handle a variety of emergencies, you will be able to ride out the worst of situations without succumbing to fear and panic.



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