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public health and natural disasters



# EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS Get Ready Guide 2025-2026



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## Emergency Preparedness Get Ready Guide 2025-2026

Preparation is vital to ensuring the safety of our families, neighbors, and community in times of uncertainty. This annual emergency preparedness guide provides information about planning for natural disasters, power outages, wildfires, and more. Helping you plan and stay prepared for any unexpected situation. Have an emergency plan for your family and loved ones. Planning can make all the difference tomorrow—let's get prepared today together!

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# Resilient communities prepare together

**ERIN MCMAHON**  
*Guest Column*

Disasters and emergencies can happen anywhere, and without warning. In Oregon, we deal with wildfires, floods, heat domes, ice and snowstorms. Then there is the ever-present threat of a Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake. It's important for everyone to know what to do, and how to care for one another.

This is why the Oregon Department of Emergency Management (OEM) worked with Governor Tina Kotek's office to officially proclaim September as Preparedness Month in Oregon. This proclamation aligns with FEMA's National Preparedness Month and reinforces the state's commitment to resilience.

As director of OEM, it's a top priority for me to help people living in Oregon be ready for disasters, and this proclamation serves as a rallying point for the Oregon Department of Emergency Management (OEM) and its partners to amplify preparedness messaging and activities statewide. It also invites all Oregonians to take proactive steps to safeguard their families, homes, and communities against future disasters by participating in the Great ShakeOut on October 16 and the Great Camp-in October 17-19 and downloading the Be 2 Weeks Ready Toolkit.

That toolkit is a community-based initiative OEM launched last year. It is available at [Oregon.gov/OEM](http://Oregon.gov/OEM) in 6 languages (including American Sign Language) and is designed to help individuals and their communities prepare for emergencies and practice their skills as a group.

We encourage people to work through the toolkit on their own but have found that disaster preparedness is most effective when done as a community. For this reason, OEM offers support and training for volunteer Be 2 Weeks Ready program coordinators who offer community tailored presentations and preparedness training. If you are interested in becoming a program coordinator or to find a program near you, email [community.preparedness@oem.oregon.gov](mailto:community.preparedness@oem.oregon.gov).

Another great way to strengthen community resilience is by joining or forming a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT). CERT programs empower everyday residents with basic disaster response skills—like fire safety, light search and rescue, and emergency medical care—so they can support their neighborhoods during crises.

There are four types of CERT programs: Community, Workplace, Campus, and Teen. Each is backed by a sponsoring organization,



COURTESY PHOTO  
**Erin McMahon**

which can be a local fire department, emergency management agency, or city council. These sponsors provide training, resources, and coordination to help volunteers respond effectively when it matters most.

Oregon is home to over 50 active CERT programs, and many communities have local teams ready to welcome new members. To find a CERT program near you or learn how to start one, visit the Oregon Office of Emergency Management (OEM) website or connect with your local office of emergency management.

In all of this, it's important to note that being two weeks ready doesn't have to be expensive or happen all at once. There are a lot of effective and low-cost to no-cost actions you can take to be better prepared for disasters. And remember, you are probably already more prepared than you think.

- Use the Be 2 Weeks Ready toolkit to create an emergency plan. Talk with family or members of your household about

where you will go if told to evacuate.

Sign-up for alerts at [ORAlert.gov](http://ORAlert.gov) and enable Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) on your cell phone.

- Learn Oregon's evacuation levels.
- Familiarize yourself with evacuation routes and [TripCheck.com](http://TripCheck.com).
- Build your kit overtime. Start with the basics and add to your emergency kit gradually.

- Use community resources. Check with local organizations and community groups for free resources.

- Work with your neighbors to build a community emergency preparedness pantry similar to a community food pantry.

- Organize and equipment swap. People bring extra shelf-stable food and camping gear and trade for things they don't have.

- Shop smart. Look for deals at garage sales, thrift stores, and online marketplaces. You can find useful items like camping gear, tools, and cookware at a fraction of the retail price.

- Learn basic skills. Take free or low-cost classes to learn essential skills like CPR, first aid, and basic survival techniques.

- Make go bags with survival essentials for every member of your family, including pets.

- Store copies of important information or documents in a password-protected online drive or on a flash

drive in a waterproof container in your go bag.

- Participate in the Great Oregon ShakeOut and Camp-in. More information about those events can be found at [Oregon.gov/OEM/Community-Preparedness](http://Oregon.gov/OEM/Community-Preparedness).

Finally, make sure your preparedness planning includes a personal recovery plan. Connect annually with your home/renter's insurance agent and make sure you are covered for all hazards in your area. If your home is damaged or destroyed in a disaster, insurance will be the main way you fund your recovery. More info about disaster insurance can be found on the Division of Financial Regulation's webpage, [dfr.oregon.gov](http://dfr.oregon.gov).

Please remember to also look to your local leaders for additional tips on how your community is preparing. Connect with your local emergency management office, search and rescue teams, and sheriff's office, or Tribal police and follow them on social media to stay up to date during quickly changing emergencies.

In the end, what I most want for the people of Oregon is to feel empowered, not frightened, when thinking about how they will respond in an emergency.

I know this new Be 2 Weeks Ready Toolkit and preparedness events will help them build

## Communities

Continued on Page A5



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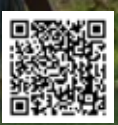


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# Tsunami 101 roadshow stops in Tillamook County

**Will Chappell**  
*Headlight Editor*

Oregon's Department of Emergency Management hosted the first of a series of Tsunami 101 presentations at the Pine Grove Community House in Manzanita on June 4, drawing a full house.

At the presentation, which was repeated later in the day in Tillamook, experts from Oregon's Department of Geology and Mineral Industries (DOGAMI), the National Weather Service (NWS) and the Oregon Department of Emergency Management discussed the tsunami situation in Oregon and how residents can be prepared and will be alerted if one occurs.

Laura Gabel, a geologist with DOGAMI based in Newport, kicked off the presentations by discussing the science behind tsunamis.

Gabel said that tsunamis are generated in areas called subduction zones where tectonic plates are pushing against each other and that the entire Pacific Basin is ringed by these zones, each of which can generate tsunamis.

Oregon's local subduction zone is known as the Cascadia Subduction Zone. It extends from northern California to Vancouver Island and runs roughly parallel to the Oregon's entire coastline between

60 and 70 miles offshore.

The zone exists where the Juan de Fuca plate is slowly slipping underneath the North American Plate, pulling the North American Plate downwards at a rate of around one and a half inches a year. The pressure created by this subduction builds up in a stuck or locked zone and will eventually be released when the North American Plate springs back up, causing an earthquake and tsunami.

Gabel explained that while Oregon could be affected by tsunamis generated elsewhere around the Pacific, these distant tsunamis would take hours to arrive and would be much less impactful and easier to prepare for than a local tsunami generated by the Cascadia Subduction Zone.

The good news is that the Cascadia Zone is by far the least active in the ring of fire, Gabel said, leading scientists to discover it relatively recently, with its existence first theorized in the 1980s. Initially, researchers believed the zone might be dormant but thanks to research by paleo seismologists in the 1990s, it was discovered that the zone is still active.

Those same paleo seismologists were eventually able to create a record of tsunamis caused by the subduction zone dating back 10,000 years.

In that period, the zone has experienced 19 full-margin ruptures resulting in magnitude 9.0 or greater quakes, and 22 partial ruptures causing less powerful quakes. Research showed quakes have been separated by 100 to 1,100 years and that in the last 3,000 years, the average time between them has been 510-540 years.

The last full margin earthquake and tsunami occurred on January 26, 1700, with the tsunami hitting Oregon beaches around 9 p.m., according to Gabel, who said that the information had been determined by looking at tsunami records in Japan, where the waves had been recorded with no related earthquake.

Given the 325 years that have elapsed since the last rupture, Gabel said that the latest projections estimate that there is a 16-22% chance of a full-margin rupture in the next 50 years and a 37-43% chance of a partial-margin rupture in southern Oregon or northern California.

Grabel then discussed the experience of going through an earthquake and tsunami, explaining that the ground would shake for up to five minutes in a full-margin rupture, causing damage to infrastructure, ground liquefaction during the

## Tsunami

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## Tsunami

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shaking and landslides.

If the shaking in a quake lasts longer than 30 seconds, Grabel said that it is safe to assume that a tsunami has been generated, and that residents in Manzanita would have about 20 minutes from the beginning of a quake to the arrival of a wave, with residents on the south coast having less time, due to their closer proximity to the fault.

Grabel said that the initial wave could be as high as 50 to 60 feet at the beach in a worst-case scenario and inundate areas up to 100 feet above sea level, depending on an area's topography. Grabel said that a quake could generate multiple waves, which would arrive at the shore at 30-to-60-minute intervals, and that impacts could last for 12-24 hours, making it important for residents to check for an all clear with authorities.

Adam Schaaf from the NWS then spoke about his organization's alert efforts in the event of a tsunami, which are coordinated with the National Tsunami Warning Center in Palmer, Alaska.

The center, which monitors quakes around the Pacific, works with the United States Geological Survey to evaluate those quakes and determine the risk of tsunamis to warn impacted areas.

Schaaf said that in the event of local quakes, the NWS would immediately put out a warning before analysis is complete but that for distant quakes, analysis would precede communication.

Analyzing data preliminarily takes around five minutes, according to Schaaf, after which the warning center and NWS decide whether to issue a tsunami watch, advisory or warning. Watches are reserved for distant quakes, while advisories and warnings are used for local events, depending on the situation.

NWS's primary means of communication are through weather radios, but in the event of a tsunami, the warning center will send alerts to every phone in impacted counties on the coast.

After the initial evaluation and warnings, the center will monitor data transmitted by a network of deep ocean assessment and reporting of tsunamis



**Laura Gabel of DOWAMI addresses a packed house at a Tsunami 101 presentation hosted by the Oregon Department of Emergency Management at the Pine Grove Community House.**

buoys, which measure wave action, and update warnings or advisories as needed.

Once the potential for further wave activity has subsided, the warning center will send an all clear, at which point warnings will be canceled, though Schaaf cautioned that did not mean that danger was over, as dangerous currents would still be present in local waters.

Following Schaaf's presentation, Althea Rizzo, Local Geological Hazards Program

Coordinator at the Oregon Department of Emergency Management discussed the importance of emergency preparation in the face of disasters.

Rizzo discussed the need for go bags containing food, water, medicine and other supplies, which she said residents should have in their homes and cars. Rizzo said that these bags should contain supplies for three days, with people stocked up for two weeks at home.

Rizzo also said

that residents should look into seismically retrofitting their houses, which she said was

surprisingly affordable and could help a structure survive an earthquake.

## Communities

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meaningful connections with one another that will lead to better outcomes for everyone when disaster strikes. And, for those in the Salem area, I'd like to extend an invitation to OEM's first ever Ready Fair from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday,

Oct. 11, 2025, at 3930 Fairview Industrial Dr. SE, Salem, Oregon 97302. This free, family-friendly event is designed to help our communities build resilience and preparedness and will bring together subject-matter experts and community partners to share practical tips and resources aligned with OEM's Be 2 Weeks Ready program.

*Erin McMahon is the Oregon*

*Department of Emergency Management (OEM) Director appointed in September 2023. She came to the agency as a retired U.S. Army brigadier general, attorney and combat veteran with 24 years of experience advising state and national leaders on emergent and active emergencies requiring operational and civilian support.*



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# Oregon boosts emergency preparedness with evacuation software

Oregon Emergency Mangers already seeing significant reduction in time to communicate evacuation information.

Salem, Ore. - In honor of National Preparedness Month, the Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) is excited to announce a new contract that will provide advanced evacuation software to all of Oregon's 36 counties and nine Tribes. The software, from Genasys Inc., will help manage emergency evacuations more effectively across the state.

As Oregon deals with more frequent and severe disasters, it's essential to have a clear plan for evacuations and support services. While law enforcement handles the immediate evacuation of people, the ODHS Office of Resilience and Emergency Management (OREM) works with local communities to help identify people who need evacuation assistance and ensure people are evacuated to a location that meets their needs.

"Even well-prepared communities face challenges with evacuations, especially when multiple areas are affected. We're thrilled to offer this new software to all our counties and Tribes," said Ed Flick, Director of OREM. "This tool will help emergency managers make quick and informed



decisions to keep everyone safe. Over the last week the tool was used to coordinate evacuations for the Rail Ridge Fire in Grant, Crook and Wheeler Counties, which is Oregon's top priority wildfire. National Preparedness Month is a great time for everyone to review their own emergency plans and supplies. For tips, check out Ready.gov."

The Genasys EVAC software helps with planning and managing evacuations. It allows emergency services to quickly create and update evacuation plans, run realistic simulations, and respond faster during an emergency.

Nick Vora, Emergency Manager for Union County, shared his enthusiasm: "Changing, exporting, and adding evacuation zones for alerts used to be slow and complicated. While there are many great mapping tools out there, they often made it time-consuming to update evacuation zones and get them ready for emergency alerts. It could take 15 to 30 minutes to make these changes and load them into the alert system. With Genasys, however, the process is much faster. You can select and adjust an area and get it ready for alerts in just a few minutes. This quick turnaround makes managing emergency alerts much easier and more efficient."

"Genasys Protect was instrumental in notifying community members of evacuations during the Falls and Telephone Fires in Harney County. When time is of the essence, being able to instantly notify community members of updated evacuation levels is crucial. We loved the ease of use and the ability to train new staff members on how to use it under one minute. This is an essential tool during wildfires," said Melinda Todd, Harney County Emergency Manager.

Ken Kehmna, a retired fire chief and advisor at Genasys, added, "After Oregon's severe fires

in 2020, we tested this software in Deschutes and Jackson counties. Both counties saw great results and adopted the software, leading to its statewide use."

Michael Smith, Senior Vice President at Genasys Protect, emphasized the benefits: "EVAC's planning and real-time communication features are vital for managing emergencies in any community, from small towns to large cities."

This new software represents a significant step forward in making sure Oregon is ready for emergencies and can respond quickly and effectively.

**About the ODHS Office of Resilience and Emergency Management**

ODHS holds four distinct roles through its Office of Resilience and Emergency Management, all of which reduce the impact of disasters on people.

- **Mass care:** Planning for and supporting people in the early stage and immediate aftermath of emergencies. Our work includes things like coordinating evacuation assistance, the distribution of life-sustaining goods and services, including hydration, feeding, sheltering, reunification, and distribution of emergency supplies.
- **Social services recovery:** Helping people and social services agencies recover. Our Social Services Recovery Coordinators work with survivors and their families to identify barriers to recovery, make a plan to address those barriers, and support the survivors on their journey. Our role also includes helping local social services agencies that may be impacted by the disasters to return to full functioning as soon as possible.
- **Continuity of operations:** Ensuring communities' ongoing access to ODHS services. This includes making sure our offices are open and essential services continue, as well as supporting the agency programs and the case managers who ensure the safety of the tens of thousands of Oregonians who may need extra and early help in an emergency.
- **Legislatively directed resilience work:** Warming, cooling and cleaner air shelters; water distribution and resilience hubs. These situations don't fit what's traditionally been considered emergencies, but they can have significant impacts on people. The Legislature made OREM the lead for this type of work to help people.

Across all these roles, ODHS develops and relies on partnerships and coordination with public and private organizations at the local and regional levels and with our state and Tribal Nation partners.



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# Earthquake

Did you know that during a major earthquake you may be without utilities for weeks or even months?

## Before

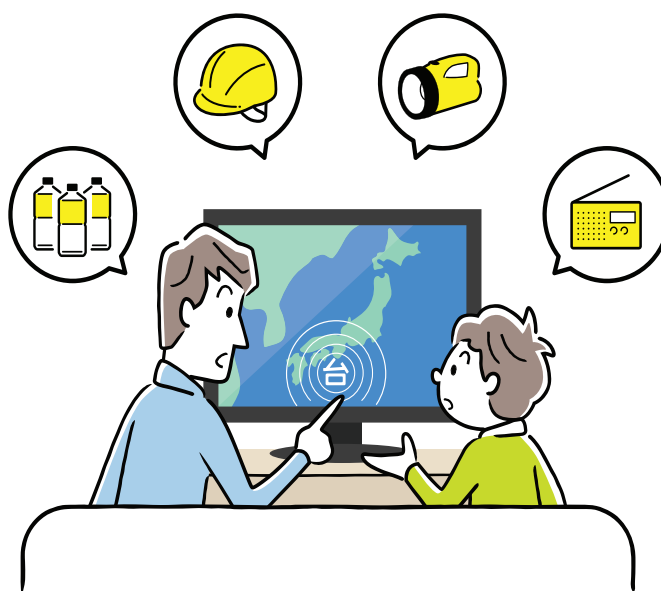
- Make an escape plan and build a kit.
- Identify safe places in each room of your home, workplace and/or school. A safe place could be under a piece of sturdy furniture or against an interior wall away from windows, bookcases or tall furniture that could fall on you.
- Practice "drop, cover and hold on" in each safe place. If you do not have sturdy furniture to hold on to, sit on the floor next to an interior wall, and cover your head and neck with your arms.
- Keep a flashlight and sturdy shoes by your bed in case an earthquake strikes in the middle of the night.
- Make sure your home is securely anchored to its foundation.
- Bolt and brace water heaters and gas appliances to wall

- studs.
- Bolt bookcases, china cabinets and other tall furniture to wall studs.
- Hang heavy items, such as pictures and mirrors, away from beds, couches and anywhere people sleep or sit.
- Brace overhead light fixtures.
- Install strong latches or bolts on cabinets. Large or heavy items should be close to the floor.
- Learn how to shut off the gas valves in your home and keep a wrench handy for that purpose.
- Learn about your area's seismic building standards and land use codes before you begin new construction.

## During

### If you are inside when the shaking starts

- Drop, cover and hold on. Move as little as possible.
- If you are in bed, stay there, curl up and hold on. Protect your head with a pillow. Don't try to get under your bed.
- Stay away from



windows to avoid being injured by shattered glass.

- Stay indoors until the shaking stops and you are sure it is safe to exit. When it is, use stairs rather than an elevator in case there are aftershocks, power outages or other damage.
- Be aware that fire alarms and sprinkler systems frequently go off in buildings during an earthquake, even if there is no fire, but take appropriate precautions if an alarm sounds.

### If you are outside

### when the shaking starts

- Find a clear spot (away from buildings, power lines, trees, streetlights, etc.) and drop to the ground. Stay there until the shaking stops.
- If you are in a vehicle, pull over to a clear

location, and stop. Avoid bridges, overpasses and power lines if possible. Stay inside your vehicle with your seatbelt fastened until the shaking stops. Then, if you can, drive carefully, avoiding bridges and ramps that may have been damaged.

- If a power line falls on your vehicle, do not get out. Wait for assistance.
- If you are in a mountainous area or near unstable slopes or cliffs, be alert for falling rocks and other debris.
- Landslides are often triggered by earthquakes.

## After

- After an earthquake, the disaster may

continue. Expect and prepare for potential aftershocks, landslides or even a tsunami.

- Look for and extinguish small fires. Fire is the most common hazard after an earthquake.
- Each time you feel an aftershock, be sure to drop, cover and hold on. Aftershocks frequently occur minutes, days, weeks and even months following an earthquake.
- Check yourself for injuries and get first aid, if necessary, before helping injured or trapped persons.
- Put on long pants, a long-sleeved shirt, sturdy shoes and work gloves to protect against injury from broken objects.



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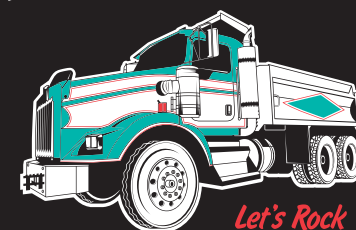
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# How pet owners can prepare for disasters in advance

The need to prepare for natural disasters is never more apparent than right after an especially harsh storm touches down. But disaster preparation should be a proactive endeavor, as taking action before a storm can make confronting the storm that much easier.

Pet owners must give extra thought to disaster preparedness to ensure their pets can make it through harsh storms unscathed. Natural disasters like storms and fires can put pets in jeopardy, so it's vital that pet owners take the steps necessary to protect their furry friends before such disasters strike.

• **Place a rescue alert sticker on your front door or window.** Rescue alert

stickers alert first responders to the presence of pets in a home. The ASPCA recommends placing the sticker on the front door or window (visit [aspc.org](http://aspc.org) to receive a free sticker). Include the types and numbers of pets in the home as well as the name and phone number of your veterinarian.

• **Learn about local safe havens.** If pet owners must evacuate in the case of a coming storm, their pets must evacuate as well. Some animal shelters provide emergency shelter for pets and/or can arrange for pets to be fostered until their owners can safely return home. It's vital to conduct this research in advance, as the ASPCA notes that not all

shelters can accommodate pets during storms or other emergencies. Knowing which ones do can ensure pets have a safe place to go should disaster strike.

• **Stock up on emergency supplies.** The ASPCA recommends pet owners plan as if they won't be allowed to return home for several weeks, even if they suspect their time away will be much shorter. Speak with your vet about what to include in a pet first-aid kit, and be sure to bring at least several days'

worth of canned (pop-top) or dry food. Disposable litter trays, liquid dish soap and disinfectant and an extra collar or harness and extra leash are some additional emergency supplies to pack. A full list of recommended emergency supplies can be found at [aspc.org](http://aspc.org).

• **Make sure pets wear collars and tags at all times.** Disaster can strike at any time, so it's vital that pets wear their identification tags and collars at all times. The ASPCA urges pet owners to include pets' names and

any urgent medical needs on the tags. A telephone number where owners can be reached at all hours of the day should be included on tags as well.

• **Take location into account.** The ASPCA advises pet owners who live in regions prone to certain disasters to find rooms in their homes which can serve as safe havens during storms. Many storms do not require evacuations, but that does not mean pets won't be frightened. Safe rooms should be clear of windows and be easily accessible and easy to clean.

Disaster preparedness includes strategies to keep pets safe in the wake of storms or other potentially hazardous situations.



## Durable foods to stock for emergencies

Public health emergencies or inclement weather can spiral out of control rather quickly. Emergency situations have the potential to derail shipping or delivery schedules or impede shoppers' ability to get to the store for necessary supplies. Individuals should keep a stock of emergency provisions just in case weather or another adverse situation compromises their ability to get the items they need to survive.

Different types of foods spoil at different rates depending on how they are stored. While there is no such thing as an entirely nonperishable food, packaging foods in air-tight containers can increase their life expectancy. Here's a look at which nonperishable foods to keep on hand for emergencies.



**Protein sources**

Protein can provide sustained nutrition and energy, but many protein sources in raw forms require refrigeration to prevent spoilage. However, canned and freeze-dried meats, seafood and poultry

have extended shelf life. Freeze-drying, also known as lyophilization, is a water-removal process typically used to preserve perishable materials, according to Millrock Technology, a company that produces freeze dryers.

Canned or freeze-dried chicken, tuna, salmon, and beans are durable protein sources. Vegetarians will find that navy beans are high in protein. Freeze-dried items are more common in pre-packaged, bulk emergency food supply kits sold at popular retailers, including Costco. However, they also can be purchased at camping retailers or Army/Navy stores.

**Fruits and vegetables**

Fruits and vegetables are necessary to ensure your body gets essential vitamins

and minerals. Fresh items will spoil in a matter of days, so canned varieties are better for stocking up. Canned vegetables and fruits come in many varieties. The healthiest canned fruit options are those packed in their own juices rather than heavy syrups. Root vegetables like potatoes, turnips and parsnips can endure in cool areas of a home, but canned equivalents may be more practical.

**Whole grains and other carbohydrates**

A balanced diet consists of a healthy mix of proteins, fruits and vegetables, and carbohydrates. According to Kelly Jones, MS, RD, a board-certified sports dietitian, whole grains are vital sources of

carbohydrates and fiber, and most come in dried, non-perishable forms. Oats, rice, quinoa, barley, and whole-grain dried pastas can be used in emergency food kits. Packaged granola or trail mix bars also are good to have on hand.

FEMA and the American Red Cross advise keeping food in a dry, cool, dark spot. Carefully open resealable containers so they can be closed tightly after each use. Nuts, dried fruits and sugar packets can be put into airtight canisters for protection from pests. Inspect cans for bulging, denting or corrosion before use. During a disaster, it is wise to eat at least one well-balanced meal every day. Remember to also stock bottled water with emergency foods supplies.



# How businesses can prepare for natural disasters

Disaster preparedness strategies can help communities overcome floods, fires, hurricanes, and storms. Many of these strategies focus on helping residents of communities that are prone to storms protect themselves and their homes. But it's equally important that local business owners take steps to ensure their businesses survive natural disasters.

Local businesses can play vital roles as communities try to recover from natural disasters. Such businesses can provide supplies like food and water to residents in need. In addition, businesses that

are able to simply open their doors to customers can create a sense of normalcy in a community at a time when that normalcy can be comforting. However, in order to provide such services, businesses must first make it through disasters unscathed, and that takes planning.

• **Create a formal written plan.** Business owners to create formal written plans that detail how the business will respond to and recover from a disaster. This plan may include temporary relocation. Business owners should know where they



can go if they need to temporarily set up shop elsewhere in the wake of a disaster.

• **Make sure employees know the plan and their roles.** Once the plan has been developed, business owners should share it with their employees and go over each employee's role. Assign responsibilities to staff members and train

them so they are fully equipped to handle their role and confront disaster if the need arises. Periodically revisit the plan and go over it again with staff members, conducting drills at each review so everyone is in the best position to respond quickly and effectively.

• **Keep emergency supplies on hand.** The Insurance Information Institute recommends business owners store flashlights, first-aid kits and battery-powered radios in their businesses. It may also be wise to store food, water and blankets if the business is in a remote or potentially inaccessible location, such

as the top of a high-rise. The III also notes that keeping generators on hand may help businesses return to operations more quickly than waiting for utility companies, which tend to be overwhelmed with service calls in the wake of disasters or heavy storms, to address power issues.

• **Back up key information and data off-site.** Cloud computing has made it easier than ever for businesses to protect important data from natural disasters, and business owners should make use of such services. Make sure to store important disaster-

specific information that you might need, such as insurance policies and staff phone numbers, on cloud storage or somewhere else off-site so it is not destroyed.

• **Do your best to protect the building.** Heed warnings from the weather service and board up entry points if a storm figures to be especially violent. Doing so can protect the building where your business is housed as well as everything therein.

Businesses that plan ahead for natural disasters can typically get back on their feet quickly after storms come and go.

## Emergency preparedness tips for seniors and their families

Natural disasters can strike at any time, and when they do, the damage is often considerable. Various preventive measures can protect people and their homes from the potentially devastating impact of natural disasters. Another way to prevent tragedy related to natural disasters is to develop an emergency preparedness plan before the next storm strikes. That's important for everyone, but especially so for seniors, many of whom live with mobility issues that can compromise their ability to escape the eye of oncoming storms.

The American Red Cross offers the following tips to seniors and their families so aging men and women can make it through such situations safe and sound.

• **Make arrangements to contact loved ones.** Prior to an emergency, seniors and their support

network should make arrangements to make immediate contact once a disaster strikes. Determine who will make initial contact and how that contact will be made (i.e., via phone, text message, etc.), as well as who will be responsible for providing assistance if necessary. Such a plan lets everyone within the support network know their precise responsibilities, which limits confusion in the sometimes hectic hours and days after disaster strikes.

• **Exchange keys.** Make sure everyone in the support network has keys to seniors' homes. In so doing, support networks are increasing the chances that someone will be able to reach potentially vulnerable seniors if the primary contacts are incapable of doing so.

• **Let others know where emergency supplies are kept.** Everyone should have emergency supplies in

their homes. Seniors should not take it for granted that such supplies can be easily found if they become incapacitated during a storm. Make sure such information can be easily accessed during a storm by emailing it to your support network and/or posting the information in a convenient location in your home, such as on the refrigerator.

• **Share your evacuation plans.** In the wake of recent disasters, many communities that did not previously feel vulnerable to natural disasters have devised evacuation plans for residents. Seniors should share these plans with their support networks. Doing so makes it easier for relatives to find you if you must evacuate your home before help arrives.

• **Share important medical information.** Seniors should share medical information, such as healthcare providers and

a list of the medications they're taking. TMore

information about how seniors can prepare for

emergencies is available at [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org).



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# Wildfire

Images of the wildfires that struck areas throughout Los Angeles in early 2025 were compared to something moviegoers might see in a big-budget Hollywood production. But the images of devastated

communities in Pacific Palisades, Altadena, Pasadena, and elsewhere were all too real, prompting an outpouring of support for the tens of thousands of displaced individuals who were forced to evacuate.

The wildfires also led millions to investigate how to prepare for situations like the ones that unfolded across Los Angeles in January. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security ([ready.gov/wildfires](https://www.dhs.gov/wildfires)) offers an array of

wildfire preparation tips that might prove lifesaving should such a tragedy unfold again.

- Be ready to receive warnings and alerts. Images of abandoned cars on roadways out of Pacific Palisades and stories of coastal evacuations on foot along sandy beaches were among the most startling to emerge from the LA wildfires.

The DHS urges everyone to be ready to recognize warnings and alerts and to arrange for several ways to receive such notifications. The DHS recommends downloading the FEMA app and signing up to receive real-time alerts from the National Weather Service. The Emergency Alert System (EAS) and the Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) are additional ways to receive wildfire notifications.

- Prepare an emergency plan. The LA wildfires forced hundreds of thousands of southern California residents to evacuate, and it's imperative that everyone prepare an emergency plan and make sure each person in their household recognizes and understands what to do if they need to quickly evacuate. The DHS notes it's important to develop an evacuation plan for home but also for the office, children's daycare facilities, schools, and any other locations people visit in a typical day. The DHS also urges individuals to know their evacuation zone and learn their local evacuation routes, even practicing them from time to time to ensure familiarity should a fire occur.

- Go over important

documents. Periodically examine insurance policies to ensure they're up-to-date and offer sufficient coverage. In addition, make sure personal documents like a primary form of identification, such as a driver's license, are current. The DHS recommends making copies of such documents and storing them in a password-

protected digital space that can be accessed from a remote location should the physical forms perish in a fire or prove difficult to access.

- Strengthen your home. The DHS recommends using fire-resistant materials when building, renovating or making repairs.

Locate an outdoor water source that can reach any area of a property and designate a fire-resistant area that is free of leaves, debris or flammable materials for at least 30 feet from your home.

- Gather supplies. The DHS recommends individuals maintain a first aid kit and store a go bag in a vehicle trunk as part of a wildfire preparation strategy. Ensure each person has his or her own N95 mask at home and in a go bag to protect against smoke inhalation. Extra chargers for devices also can increase the chances individuals can stay connected in the case of evacuation. Chargers may not be storable in a car trunk, as warm temperatures may affect how they function, but store them near the door that you would likely use to exit your home during an evacuation.

Wildfires can appear suddenly, which only underscores the need to prepare in advance.



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# Disaster Prep Essentials

Preparation can pave the way to professional success, and that utility extends beyond one's career. Preparation also is a vital component of personal safety, particularly in relation to natural disasters. Knowledge of storms and weather-related events such as hurricanes, tornadoes and floods can be lifesaving, and various government agencies encourage adults and children alike to learn what they can do to stay safe should a storm strike. But it's equally vital to personal safety to assemble a disaster supplies kit. Ready.gov, the official website of the United States Department of Homeland Security, recommends individuals gather and maintain the following items as part of a basic emergency supply kit.

- **Water (one gallon per person per day for several days).** Keep in mind that the water is not only for drinking, but also for sanitation.

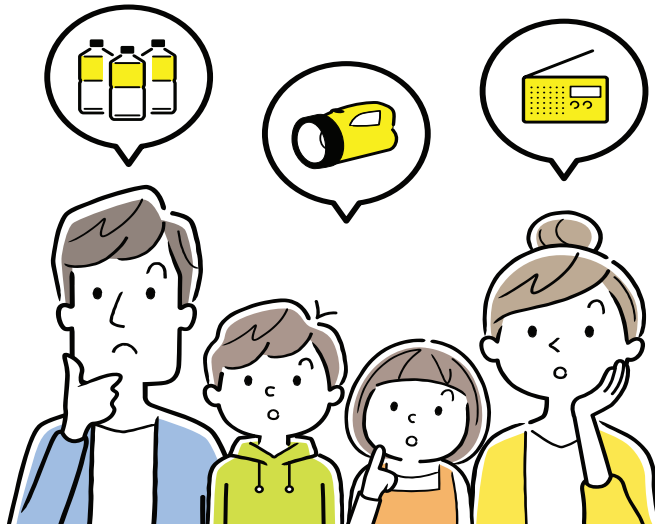
- **Food:** Each person in your household should have a several-day supply of non-perishable food.

- **Battery-powered or hand crank radio** and a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Weather Radio with tone alert. Various retailers carry NOAA radios, which typically cost \$50 or less.

- **Flashlight:** A flashlight for each person in the household is ideal.

- **First aid kit**

- **Extra batteries:**



Enough extra batteries to keep flashlights and radios operational during a potentially days-long power outage is recommended.

- **Whistle:** A power whistle that's loud and carries for a significant distance can be used to signal for help, if necessary.

- **Dust mask:** Air can become contaminated during a natural disaster, so a dust mask for each person in the household can ensure everyone can safely breathe.

- **Plastic sheeting, scissors and duct tape:** These materials can be employed to stay safe and warm or cool when ordered to shelter in place.

- **Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties:** Personal sanitation items such as these can help people stay healthy and keep an area sanitary when services such as garbage pickup and water utilities are not operating normally.

- **Wrench or pliers:** Tools such as a wrench and pliers can be used to

turn off utilities when it's necessary to do so, such as during a flood.

- **Manual can opener:**

A manual can opener can open canned goods during power outages.

- **Local maps:** Local maps of areas around your home, place of business and children's schools can help you get around if roads are closed. Even people who feel they know the areas where they live, work and attend school like the back of their hand are urged to keep maps of such regions readily available.

- **Cell phone with chargers and a backup battery:** Backup chargers and batteries can make it possible to maintain access to potentially lifesaving information and facilitate staying connected with loved ones and neighbors.

A well-stocked disaster preparation kit can keep people and their loved ones safe should a weather-related storm or other dangerous event strike and present potentially dangerous living situations.

## Get ready for the Great Oregon ShakeOut

### Staff Report

On October 16, more than 420,000 residents across Oregon are registered to participate in the Great Oregon ShakeOut, an annual exercise practicing the response to a Cascadia subduction zone temblor.

At 10:16 a.m. on the October 16, those participating in the drill organized by the Oregon Office of Emergency Management will pretend a megaquake has struck by dropping, covering and holding on until the "shaking" stops. Residents on the coast should then



grab their go bag and proceed to their nearest tsunami assembly site.

Participants need to evacuate on foot, as after a quake roads may well be impassable due to downed trees or power lines. In participating communities, neighborhood captains will give further instructions at assembly sites for next steps.

Evacuating helps ensure safety and access to critical supplies such as water, shelter, food, and communication tools that have been assembled by local emergency preparedness groups and aid coordinated by outside groups.

Visit [shakeout.org](http://shakeout.org) to find local assembly points and more information about the event.

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# Common home emergencies, and how to prevent them

Dorothy Gale said “there’s no place like home” in “The Wizard of Oz.” But what about when homes are no longer safe?

Household emergencies can occur at any time. When disaster strikes, knowing how to proceed effectively can make a world of difference and potentially save lives. Fortunately it’s easy to prevent or reduce a wide range of household dangers by embracing some simple safety measures.

**• Accidental falls:** The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says that accidental falls are the leading cause of nonfatal injury among nearly every age group. Roughly three million adults age 65 and older



experience falls that result in emergency room visits each year in the United States. Falls can be prevented by removing tripping hazards, installing steady handrails and other supports and adding lighting in and around a home. If a fall should occur, stabilize

the limb or injured area of the body and seek medical assistance.

**• Kitchen fires:** The potential for danger exists whenever cooking with heat or over open flames. Kitchen fires may occur, but they don’t have to spread or cause serious issues if fast action is

taken. Never use water to put out a grease fire — it will only spread it and make it worse. Cover the fire with a lid to suffocate the flames, or use baking soda to douse the fire. Always have an all-purpose fire extinguisher on hand, and know how to operate it.

**• Burst pipes:** Burst pipes or leaking plumbing can quickly cause major damage in a home. Dwell Residential Group says to locate the water main, which is usually in the basement or garage on the “street side” near the water meter. Turn off the main to save the home and your wallet. Make the water main visible, mark which way is off, and instruct others in the house on how to use it.

**• Tipping furniture:** Tip-over incidents send thousands of people (especially young children) to emergency rooms each year, says the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission. Top-heavy items, like dressers, TV stands and televisions, bureaus, and bookcases should be anchored to the wall.

**• Unintentional poisoning:** People may inadvertently consume household poisons. State Farm advises calling 9-1-1 if the victim is unconscious or not breathing. If the person is alert, consult with the American Association of Poison Control Centers at 1-800-222-1222 (or the Ontario Poison Centre at 1-800-268-9017) and

await instructions. Keep the bottle or packaging of the assumed poison on hand and be prepared to discuss symptoms and personal information about the victim.

**• Fire or other danger:** No one ever thinks an emergency situation necessitating escape from the home will take place. But to play it safe, residents should designate emergency exits that are the quickest and safest ways out of every room in the house. Practice this plan and pick a specific meeting spot outside.

Safety at home involves knowing how to act fast in an emergency and how to reduce your risk of being in potentially dangerous situations.



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Approximately **30%** of people worry about disasters affecting them or their families,

and **57%** feel they are not prepared for a disaster.



Source: FEMA 2024 National Household Survey on Disaster Preparedness



# Flood

Did you know that floodwaters as little as six inches deep can be strong enough to sweep a person off their feet?

Floods are among the most frequent and costly natural disasters. When heavy or steady rain saturates the ground over several hours or days, flood conditions may occur. Flash floods occur suddenly due to rapidly rising water along a stream or low-lying area.

## Before

- Know your flood risk and locations where flooding may occur.
- Make an escape plan and build a kit.
- Listen to area radio and television stations and a NOAA weather radio for possible flood warnings and reports of flooding in progress or other critical information from the National Weather Service (NWS).
- Because standard homeowner's insurance does not cover flooding, it's important to have protection from floods associated with hurricanes, tropical storms, heavy rains and other conditions that impact the U.S. For more flood safety tips and information on flood insurance, please visit the National Flood Insurance Program website at FloodSmart.gov.
- Raise your furnace, water heater and electric panel to floors that are less likely to be flooded. An undamaged water heater may be your best source of fresh water after a flood.
- Install check-valves (valves that allow fluid to flow through in only one direction) in plumbing to prevent floodwater from backing up into the drains in your home.
- Seal walls in basements with waterproofing compounds to avoid seepage through cracks.
- If a flood is expected, some communities might offer free sandbags to residents. Listen to the news or contact local emergency management agencies to learn more about these resources.
- Fill your car's gas tank in case you need to evacuate.
- Move your furniture and valuables to higher floors of your home.
- Move livestock to higher ground. If using a trailer to evacuate animals, move animals sooner rather than later.

## During

- When a flood or flash flood warning is



issued for your area, head for higher ground and stay there. Avoid walking or driving through floodwaters. As little as six inches of moving water can knock you down, and two feet of moving water can sweep a vehicle away.

- Stay away from floodwaters. If you come upon a flowing stream and the water is above your ankles, stop, turn around and go another way.
- If you encounter a flooded road while driving, turn around, don't drown. If you are caught on a flooded road and waters are rising rapidly around you, get out of the car quickly, and move to higher ground.
- Avoid contact with floodwater. It may be contaminated with sewage or contain dangerous insects or animals.
- Dispose of any food that has come into contact with floodwater.

## After

- Let friends and family know you're safe.
- Do not enter your home until officials say it is safe to do so.
- Report downed power lines to your utility company and do not step in puddles or standing water.
- Wear protective clothing, including rubber gloves and rubber boots, and be cautious when cleaning up.
- Wear protective clothing, including rubber gloves and rubber boots, and be cautious when cleaning up.
- Disinfect anything that flood water touches.

More information about repairing your flooded home is available online at [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org).

Additional information, including maps about flooding, are available on the Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries ([oregongeology.org](http://oregongeology.org)) or Washington Department of Natural Resources ([dnr.wa.gov](http://dnr.wa.gov)) websites.

## Business as Usual. No Matter What.



You've finally achieved your dream. Don't lose it to a power outage, hacker disruption, fire, earthquake or other disaster. If you're not prepared, a disaster could put you and your employees at risk, possibly shutting down your business forever.

Roughly **40 to 60 percent** of small businesses never reopen their doors following a disaster. But you can.

Disaster planning and preparedness can be your lifeline to staying in business. With proper **education, planning, testing** and **disaster assistance**, you will be able to stay in business through any interruption and beyond.

Here are five preparation steps the Red Cross recommends for all small business owners.

1. Purchase essential safety equipment
2. Plan emergency communications
3. Prepare evacuation routes and shelter
4. Back up essential business data
5. Develop a continuity of operations plan

***The time you spend preparing will ensure that you can weather the storms or other disasters.***



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Source: <https://www.business2community.com/crisis-management/5-disaster-preparedness-tips-for-small-businesses-0514039>





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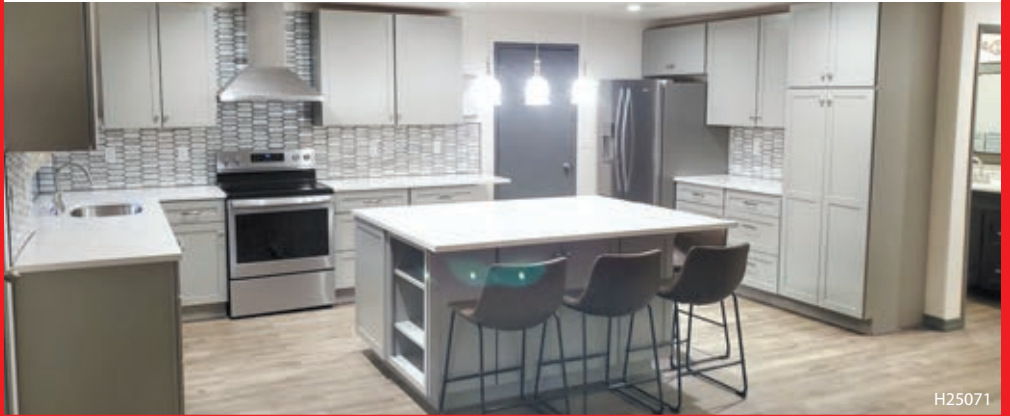
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## Power outage

Power outages are most commonly caused by bad weather, trees contacting electric lines or equipment, motor vehicle crashes affecting electric equipment, equipment failure or damage caused by animals. Faulty wiring and equipment in your buildings can also cause a localized power outage.

Investigate your home or business to determine if any electrical hazards are present. If there are, notify your local power company. If you see or smell any signs of an electrical flash or fire, call 911.

Look to see if your neighbors are also without power. Streetlights may be the best indication of this.

**Prepare in advance:** assemble an emergency preparedness kit, with supplies such as water, non-perishable food, a flashlight, extra batteries, first aid kit and more; create a household evacuation plan that includes your pets; and stay informed about your community's risk and response plans.

**Protect yourself during a power outage:** keep



freezers and refrigerators closed, only use generators outdoors and away from windows and understand the risks of carbon monoxide poisoning, do not use a gas stove to heat your home, disconnect appliances and electronics to avoid damage from electrical surges, and check on neighbors, use flashlights instead of candles, eliminate unnecessary travel.

To keep your food from spoiling during a power outage, keep a cooler, ice and a digital thermometer on hand. Have at least a half tank of gas in your car and fill extra containers. If power is out for an extended time, gas supply

may be limited.

**Be safe after:** throw away food that has been exposed to temperatures 40 degrees or higher for two hours or more, or that has an unusual odor, color or texture; if the power is out for more than a day, discard any medication that should be refrigerated, unless the drug's label says otherwise.

If electrical power lines are down, do not touch them. Report downed lines to your utility company.

To report a power outage, call your local electric service.

Information was gathered from Tillamook PUD, Department of Homeland Security, and American Red Cross.

## Create a family emergency plan

Chaos can quickly set in when natural disasters strike. People who are in the eye of the storm or those with loved ones who are potentially in danger may spend hours, if not days, trying to get in touch with friends and family to determine if everyone is alright. However temporary it may be, the period between a storm touching down and speaking with loved

ones can be agonizing. But there is a way to facilitate communication with loved ones during a natural disaster, and all it takes is some simple planning. Unfortunately, there's no guarantee that communication networks like mobile phones and computers will be reliable during disasters, when electricity may be interrupted and mobile towers might be

compromised. As a result, it's imperative that people develop communication plans with their families so they can reach one another in the wake of natural disasters.

Gather and distribute a list of names and contact information of all family members, making sure to create a paper copy that will be accessible whether the electricity or mobile tower goes out or not.



# Landslide

Did you know that landslides take place most often where they've occurred in the past? They're also more common in areas that have recently been burned by a wildfire.

## Before

- Make an escape plan and build a kit.
- Be aware of warning signs of possible landslides:
  - > Increased pooling of water or newly wet ground.
  - > New cracks or unusual bulges in the ground, street pavements or sidewalks.
  - > Soil moving away from foundations.
  - > Tilted or bent trees.
  - > Sagging or taught utility lines.
  - > Sunken or broken road beds.
  - > Leaking or broken water pipes.
- Reduce the chances of landslides by:
  - > Draining water from surface runoff, downspouts and driveways well away from slopes.
  - > Planting native groundcover on slopes.
  - > Refraining from adding water to steep slopes.
  - > Avoiding placing fill soil and yard debris on steep slopes.

## During

- If you suspect imminent danger, evacuate immediately. Inform affected neighbors if you can, and contact your public works, fire or police department.



- Listen for unusual sounds that might indicate moving debris, such as trees cracking or boulders hitting one another.
- If you are near a stream, be alert for any sudden increase or decrease in water flow and notice whether the water changes from clear to muddy. Such changes may mean there is debris flow activity upstream so be prepared to move quickly.
- Be especially alert when driving—watch for collapsed pavement, mud, fallen rocks and other indications of possible debris flow.
- If you are ordered to or decide to evacuate, take your animals with you.
- Watch for flooding, which may occur after a landslide or debris flow. Floods sometimes follow landslides and debris flows because they may be started by the same event.
- Look for and report broken utility lines to appropriate authorities. Reporting potential hazards will get damaged utilities turned off as quickly as possible, preventing further hazard and injury.
- Check the building foundation, chimney and surrounding land for damage. Signs of damage may help you assess the safety of the area.
- Replant damaged ground as soon as possible since erosion caused by loss of groundcover can lead to flash flooding.

## After

- Stay away from the slide area. There may be danger of additional slides.
- Check for injured and trapped persons near the slide without entering the direct slide area. Direct rescuers to the person's location.
- Listen to local radio or television stations for the latest emergency information.

Additional information about landslides is available on the Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries ([oregongeology.org](http://oregongeology.org)) and the Washington Department of Natural Resources ([dnr.wa.gov](http://dnr.wa.gov)) websites.

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