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## Ten Ways to Help Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Prepare for Disaster

Here are 10 ways that seniors, individuals with disabilities, their families and caregivers can prepare for a natural disaster, according to [Home Instead Senior Care](#) and the [American Red Cross](#).

- 1. Be informed.** Contact the local emergency management office or American Red Cross chapter to learn about the most likely natural disasters to strike your area.
- 2. Complete a personal assessment.** Determine what he or she can or can't do before, during and after a disaster. Make a list of those needs and resources that can meet them.
- 3. Make a plan.** Schedule a family meeting to assess your needs in an emergency and develop a plan of action. Include in your plan key people in your life - such as neighbors, friends, relatives and professional caregivers - who could help. Remember to consider the needs of pets in your plan as well.
- 4. Know where to get information during an emergency,** either through the local television, radio or National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) weather radio. Have available a battery-operated radio. Different alarms are available to notify people with medical conditions of impending disaster, such as a strobe alarm for the hearing-impaired.
- 5. Discuss multiple escape routes.** Like all families and households, seniors and individuals with disabilities should develop at least two escape routes, one out of their home in case of a fire when they need to get out of the home quickly and out of the area in case they need to evacuate their community. Designate a place to meet other relatives or key support network people outside the house, as well as a second location outside the neighborhood, such as a school or church. Practice the plan at least twice a year.

- 6. Know when to go or to stay and how to make the decision to stay or leave.** When deciding to evacuate, older adults and those with disabilities should go sooner rather than later. By waiting too long, they may be unable to leave if they require assistance from others.
- 7. Assemble a disaster supplies kit.** Have an easy-to-carry kit with three days non-perishable food and water with an additional four days of food and water readily accessible at home. Have at least one gallon of water per person per day. Bottled water may be easier to store and carry.
- 8. Remember medications and other essentials.** Copies of prescriptions, extra eyeglasses and hearing-aid batteries, along with paper products such as toilet paper, should be part of your disaster supplies kit.
- 9. Make a list of contact telephone numbers.** The list should include people on a senior's support network as well as doctors and other important health-care professionals. Log on to [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org) for a sample contact card that can be used.
- 10. Call a professional caregiver if you or your loved one needs extra help.** If he or she needs assistance and you can't be there, you may want to seek help from a home care agency. Use [this website](#) to search for home care in your area by using the topic "In-home Assistance" and your zip code.
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**Home Instead Senior Care** is the world's largest provider of comprehensive, companionship and home care services for seniors. These services are provided through a network of franchise offices located throughout the United States, Canada, Japan, Portugal, Australia, Ireland, New Zealand and the United Kingdom.

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<https://www.homeinstead.com>

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