

# Other Emergencies/Safety Tips (Tornado, Flood, Wildfire)

In times of crisis, having access to reliable emergency resources is crucial. Across the United States, a comprehensive network of National, Federal, and State resources is available to assist individuals and communities in navigating emergencies.

## Tornado

- To stay safe during a tornado, prepare a plan and an emergency kit, stay aware of weather conditions during thunderstorms, know the best places to shelter both indoors and outdoors, and always protect your head.
- To protect yourself and your family from harm during a tornado, pay close attention to changing weather conditions in your area. If you know thunderstorms are expected, stay tuned to local radio and TV stations or an NOAA weather radio for further weather information. Some tornadoes strike rapidly without time for a tornado warning. The following weather signs may mean that a tornado is approaching:
  - A dark or green-colored sky
  - A large, dark, low-lying cloud
  - Large hail
  - A loud roar that sounds like a freight train
- If you notice any of these conditions, take cover immediately, and keep tuned to local radio and TV stations or to a NOAA weather radio or check the internet.
- Know when to shelter. Falling and flying debris causes most deaths and injuries during a tornado. Although there is no completely safe place during a tornado, some locations are much safer than others.
- Go to the basement or an inside room without windows on the lowest floor (bathroom, closet, center hallway).
- If possible, avoid sheltering in a room with windows.
- For added protection get under something sturdy (a heavy table or workbench). Cover your body with a blanket, sleeping bag or mattress. Protect your head with anything available.
- Do not stay in a mobile home.

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## Flood Safty Tips – During a Flood Watch or Warning

- Gather emergency supplies, including non-perishable food and water. Store at least 1 gallon of water per day for each person and each pet. Store at least a 3-day supply.
- Listen to your local radio or television station for updates.
- Have immunization records handy (or know the year of your last tetanus shot).
  - Store immunization records in a waterproof container.
- Bring in outdoor items (lawn furniture, grills, trash cans) or tie them down securely.
- If evacuation appears necessary, turn off all utilities at the main power switch and close the main gas valve.
- Leave areas subject to flooding such as low spots, canyons, washes, etc. (Remember: avoid driving through flooded areas and standing water.)
- After you return home, if you find that your home was flooded, practice safe cleaning.

## Flood Safety Tip – After Flooding Occurs

- Avoid driving through flooded areas and standing water. As little as six inches of water can cause you to lose control of your vehicle.
- Do not drink flood water, or use it to wash dishes, brush teeth, or wash/prepare food. Drink clean, safe water.
- If you evacuated, return to your home only after local authorities have said it is safe to do so.
- Listen for boil water advisories. Local authorities will let you know if your water is safe for drinking and bathing.
  - During a water advisory, use only bottled, boiled, or treated water for drinking, cooking, etc.
- When in doubt, throw it out! Throw away any food and bottled water that comes/may have come into contact with floodwater.
- Prevent carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning. Generators: Use at least 20 feet from doors, windows, or vents; Pressure Washers: Keep engines outdoors, 20 feet from openings; Vehicles: Never run inside an attached garage, even with the door open.
- Floods pose risks beyond the initial damage. Standing floodwater can spread diseases, introduce chemical hazards, and cause injuries. If your home was flooded, practice safe cleaning by discarding contaminated drywall and insulation. Dispose of items like mattresses, pillows, carpeting, and stuffed toys that cannot be cleaned with bleach. Consider storing items outside temporarily until you can file insurance claims. See recommendations by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).
- Clean walls, hard-surfaced floors, and other household surfaces with soap and water and disinfect with a solution of one cup of bleach to five gallons of water.

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## Wild Fire Safty Tips

Wildfires affect everyone. They can spread fast and harm us. Wildfires are getting bigger and more dangerous. More people are living in areas at risk for wildfires, but we can take action to prepare. Learn how to prepare your household and community.

### Protect yourself from smoke.

When wildfires create smoky conditions it's important for everyone to [reduce their exposure to smoke](#). [Wildfire smoke](#) irritates your eyes, nose, throat, and lungs. It can make it hard to breathe and make you cough or wheeze. [Children](#), [pregnant women](#), and people with [asthma](#), chronic obstructive pulmonary disease ([COPD](#)), or heart disease, need to be especially careful about breathing wildfire smoke.

### Keep smoke outside.

- Choose a room you can close off from outside air.
- Set up a portable air cleaner or [indoor air filtration](#) to keep the air in this room clean even when it's smoky in the rest of the building and outdoors. If you use a [do-it-yourself box fan](#) filtration unit, never leave it unattended.

### Reduce your smoke exposure by wearing a [respirator](#).

- A respirator is a mask that fits tightly to your face to filter out smoke before you breathe it in.
- You must wear the right respirator and wear it [correctly](#). Respirators are not made to fit children.
- If you have heart or lung disease ask your doctor if it is safe for you to wear a respirator.
- Avoid using candles, gas, propane, wood-burning stoves, fireplaces, or aerosol sprays and don't fry or broil meat, smoke tobacco products, or vacuum.
- If you have a central air conditioning system, use high efficiency filters to capture fine particles from smoke. If your system has a fresh air intake, set the system to recirculate mode or close the outdoor intake damper.

### Pets and other animals can be affected by wildfire smoke too.

- Learn how to [protect your pets](#) and [livestock](#).
- Some evacuation centers do not accept animals. Check [Petfinders](#) for shelters or [RedRover](#) for information on local animal shelters and rescue groups.

### Keep track of fires near you so you can be ready.

- AirNow's "[Fires: Current Conditions](#)" page has a map of fires throughout North America.
- NOAA's "[Fire weather outlook](#)" page maps fire watches and warnings.
- Listen to the Emergency Alert System (EAS) and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio for emergency alerts.



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## Wild Fire Safty Tips - con't

### Pay attention to any health symptoms.

If you have [asthma](#), [COPD](#), [heart disease](#), or are [pregnant](#). Get medical help if you need it. Learn more about protecting yourself from [wildfire smoke](#).

### Evacuate safely.

You may be asked by public authorities to evacuate or you may decide to evacuate. Read about how to [evacuate safely](#) and how to [develop a family disaster plan](#), including:

- Finding out what could happen to you
- Making a disaster plan
- Completing the checklist
- Practicing your plan

### Stay healthy during power outages.

Large fires can cause long-term power outages. Read about [what to do if your power goes out](#), including:

- Preventing carbon monoxide poisoning
- Food safety
- Safe drinking water
- Power line hazards