



Five Ways to Ensure Your Family Is Ready for a Natural Disaster

No one wants to think that a natural disaster could strike, but they are inevitable parts of life. Fortunately, with the right preparations, you can improve the safety of your family. Here are some things you can do to be ready when natural disasters occur.

Plan It Out

Thankfully, making a plan can be as easy as following checklist resources provided by government websites like [FEMA](#) and [ready.gov](#). These must include emergency contact numbers, meeting places, evacuation routes, and what to do in the event of a family member being separated. It's vital that everyone is involved, including your [little ones](#), so they know exactly what to do. Of course, that's easier said than done since a natural disaster is a frightening thing. Yet, you can make the process less intimidating by having a conversation with them and breaking down the steps they need to take. You could even [draw layouts](#), with easy to understand symbols and pointers, so that memorizing doesn't become overwhelming.

Practice Makes Perfect

Being familiar with an emergency plan is important, but drills are a great teaching opportunity for the whole family. They help us understand what must be done, turning a plan from theory into action. So, try to make drills a monthly event, and consider experimenting with different scenarios. Through regular practice, you can see what works and what could benefit from adjustment. By involving your children, you will not only help them stay calm during an emergency, but you can also ensure everyone knows the steps they need to take.

Have an Emergency Kit

One of the essential aspects of any natural disaster plan is a family emergency kit. After all, we cannot predict what might happen when disaster strikes. The basis of a [kit](#) must contain enough non-perishable food to last every family member three days, as well as a gallon of water per person per day. Beyond consumables, your kit will benefit from gear like a crank flashlight and [radio](#), can opener, pot for sanitizing water or cooking, emergency blanket, and basic tools — you can even purchase [preassembled kits](#) from retailers such as Amazon for around \$40. However, your kit will not help you if it isn't [stored safely](#) to prevent damage during the year; look for something waterproof, such a canvas duffel bag or a large sealable tub.

Batten Down the Hatches

Our families deserve a home that can withstand a disaster. To be certain your house can weather the storm, you must stay on top of regular home maintenance. For instance, a loose [fence](#) or dead branches from a tree might go flying in high winds, so keep fences secured and trees trimmed. Still, because pruning a tree can be dangerous, get a professional to take care of this task. In New York City, the cost of trimming branches or removing trees and shrubs is [\\$933 on average](#), but it's worth the expense. Lastly, for the stormy season, consider adding plywood protection to your windows to prevent shattering.

Get Signed Up

To keep your family safe during a natural disaster, you must be prepared. The best way to do so is by having advanced warning, so sign up for [automatic alerts](#) on your phone. There are plenty of apps available that will send a message when a storm is heading your way, such as the Red Cross, AccuWeather, and FEMA. With these apps, you'll also have up-to-date information from the government about nearby shelters, local emergency services, and much more. After all, the more time you have to prepare for a storm, the safer you'll be when it finally hits.

Don't be caught in a panic when the next natural disaster comes to your area. Take the steps to be ready by trimming your trees, packing emergency kits for the whole family, and signing up for alerts. Yes, storms can be scary — especially for little ones — but you can be ready for them.

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