



Make a Plan

Week 1: September 1-5 Make a Plan

Make a plan today. Your family may not be together if a disaster strikes, so it is important to know which [types of disasters](#) could affect your area. Know how you'll contact one another and reconnect if separated. Establish a Family meeting place that's familiar and easy to find.

Step 1: Put together a plan by discussing these 4 questions with your family, friends, or household to start your emergency plan.

1. How will I receive [emergency alerts and warnings](#)?

Public safety officials use timely and reliable systems to alert you and your family in the event of natural or man-made disasters. This page describes different warning alerts you can receive and the types of devices that receive the alerts.



During an emergency, alert and warning officials need to provide the public with life-saving information quickly. Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEAs), made available through the [Integrated Public Alert and Warning System \(IPAWS\)](#) infrastructure, are just one of the ways public safety officials can quickly and effectively alert and warn the public about serious emergencies.

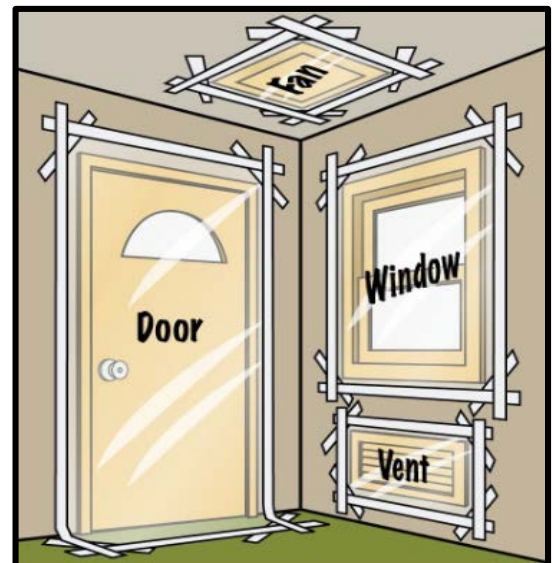
What you need to know about WEAs:

- WEAs can be sent by state and local public safety officials, the National Weather Service, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, and the President of the United States
- WEAs can be issued for three alert categories – imminent threat, AMBER, and presidential
- WEAs look like text messages, but are designed to get your attention and alert you with a unique sound and vibration, both repeated twice
- WEAs are no more than 90 characters, and will include the type and time of the alert, any action you should take, as well as the agency issuing the alert
- WEAs are not affected by network congestion and will not disrupt texts, calls, or data sessions that are in progress
- Mobile users are not charged for receiving WEAs and there is no need to subscribe
- To ensure your device is WEA-capable, check with your service provider

2. What is my [shelter](#) plan?

Choosing to take shelter is necessary in many emergencies.

Taking appropriate shelter is critical in times of disaster. Sheltering is appropriate when conditions require that you seek protection in your home, place of employment or other location when disaster strikes. Sheltering outside the hazard area could include staying with friends and



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relatives, seeking commercial lodging or staying in a mass care facility operated by disaster relief groups.

To effectively shelter, you must first consider the hazard and then choose a place in your home or other building that is safe for that hazard. For example, for a tornado, a room should be selected that is in a basement or an interior room on the lowest level away from corners, windows, doors and outside walls.

The safest locations to seek shelter vary by hazard. [Be Informed](#) about the sheltering suggestions for each hazard.

There may be situations, depending on your circumstances and the nature of the disaster, when it's simply best to stay where you are and avoid any uncertainty outside by "sheltering in place". The length of time you are required to shelter may be short, such as during a tornado warning, or long, such as during a winter storm or a pandemic. It is important that you stay in shelter until local authorities say it is safe to leave. Additionally, you should take turns listening to radio broadcasts and maintain a 24-hour safety watch.

During extended periods of sheltering, you will need to manage water and food supplies to ensure you and your family have the required supplies and quantities. Read more about [Managing Water](#) and [Managing Food](#).

3. What is my [evacuation](#) route?

A wide variety of emergencies may cause an evacuation. In some instances you may have a day or two to prepare, while other situations might call for an immediate evacuation. Planning ahead is vital to ensuring that you can evacuate quickly and safely, no matter what the circumstances.

- Learn the types of disasters that are likely in your
- community and the local emergency, evacuation,
- and shelter plans for each specific disaster.
- [Plan](#) how you will leave and where you will go if you are advised to evacuate.
 - Identify several places you could go in an emergency such as a friend's home in another town or a motel. Choose destinations in different directions so that you have options during an emergency.



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- If needed, identify a place to stay that will accept [pets](#). Most public shelters allow only service animals.
- Be familiar with alternate routes and other means of transportation out of your area.
- Always follow the instructions of local officials and remember that your evacuation route may be on foot depending on the type of disaster.
- [Develop a family/household communication and re-unification plan](#) so that you can maintain contact and take the best actions for each of you and re-unite if you are separated.
- Assemble supplies that are ready for evacuation, both a “go-bag” you can carry when you evacuate on foot or public transportation and supplies for traveling by longer distances if you have a personal vehicle.
- If you have a car:
 - Keep a full tank of gas in it if an evacuation seems likely. Keep a half tank of gas in it at all times in case of an unexpected need to evacuate. Gas stations may be closed during emergencies and unable to pump gas during power outages. Plan to take one car per family to reduce congestion and delay.
 - Make sure you have a portable [emergency kit in the car](#).
- If you do not have a car, plan how you will leave if needed. Make arrangements with family, friends or your local government.

What is my [family/household communication plan](#)?

Emergencies can happen at any time. Do you know how to get in touch with your Family if you are not together?

Let them know that you are OK! Pick the same person for each Family member to contact. It might be easier to reach someone who’s out of town.

Unless you are in immediate danger, send a text. Tests often have an easier time getting through during emergencies, and you don’t want to tie up phone lines needed by emergency responders (like 911). Memorize your home and parent’s cell phone numbers.

Know where to go and how to get there. Pick a meeting spot. Where will you meet up with your Family if you have to get out of your house quickly? Where will you meet if your neighborhood is being evacuated and you’re not at home? Pick a place to meet (like a big tree in your yard or your neighbors house). You should also pick a place out of your neighborhood (such as the library or house of worship).

Know two exits out of your house or your school. Do you know two ways out of every room in your house in case of a fire. Draw the floor plan of your bedroom on a piece of paper and circle the two ways to get out. Hint: one may be the door.

