

Disaster situations can be intense, stressful, and confusing. In some incidents, warnings may be issued to allow time for you to gather basic necessities when evacuating. In many cases, local authorities will have limited time to issue an evacuation order and you will need to evacuate immediately.

Before an Evacuation

- † Assemble a disaster supplies kit. See the “Emergency Supply Kit Checklist” section for a complete list.
- † Ask your local emergency management office or police department about community evacuation plans.
- † Plan where you would go if you had to leave the community. Determine how you would get there.
- † Discuss the possibility of evacuation with your family and friends.
- † Agree on a pre-designated meeting place in the event you are separated from one another.
- † Ask a friend or relative outside your area to be the “checkpoint” so that everyone in the household can call that person to report they are safe.
- † Prior to any incident, identify and map your evacuation routes and alternate routes.
- † While planning, consider different scales of evacuations for different incidents. Some incidents may require either an entire neighborhood to be evacuated or a much smaller immediate area.
- † Establish a plan for what you will do with your pets. (see “Pet Preparedness” section)
- † Keep at least $\frac{3}{4}$ of a tank of gas in your car at all times in the event an evacuation is necessary. Remember gas stations may be closed during emergencies and unable to pump gas during utility outages.
- † If you do not own a car, make transportation arrangements with friends or neighbors. In many instances emergency transportation may be made available by local officials, so listen for alerts on pick up locations. However, it is best to have your own plans in place and not to rely on emergency officials.
- † Find out from school officials where the pre-designated location would be to pick up children if schools are evacuated.
- † Learn how to shut off your home’s utilities at main switches and valves and make sure you have the proper equipment.

Local officials do their best to notify the public and to provide emergency instructions and alerts through either the local media and through the use of other methods, such as bullhorns, warning sirens and emergency service PA systems. While these communications will explain pertinent evacuation procedures, you should be prepared in advance so that you are not dependent on them.

During an Evacuation

If alerted to evacuate, do so immediately and follow these tips:

- † Take your emergency and pet supplies kit. (see “Emergency Supply Kits Checklist” and “Pet Preparedness” sections)
- † Secure your home by closing and locking all doors and windows.
- † Take one car per household when evacuating to keep your household together and reduce traffic congestion and delay.
- † Tell others where you are going.
- † Leave early enough to avoid being trapped by severe weather.
- † Follow recommended evacuation routes and do not take shortcuts - alternate routes may be blocked.
- † Do not drive into flooded areas.
- † Avoid downed power lines.
- † Seek shelter with a relative or friend. If this is unavailable, listen to your local media for information on the nearest emergency shelter. (see “Sheltering” section for additional information)

After an Evacuation

- † Adhere to emergency notifications to make sure it is safe to go back to your home and what routes to take.
- † Refer to the “Recovering from Disaster” section for more information about what to do when you return home.