



# EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS HANDBOOK

Prepare your family,  
home and workplace  
for all hazards.



# EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS KIT

**EMERGENCY SUPPLIES** | It can take several days or weeks for government services and assistance to reach you and your family depending on the severity of the disaster and your geographic location. An emergency kit is vital to sustaining your family after a disaster.

Use this checklist to build your emergency supply kit over time by adding a few items each week or month. Many of these products are eligible for Virginia's tax-free weekend held annually in August. Regularly replace items that go bad such as water, food, medication and batteries, and remember to keep in mind your family's unique needs as you build your kit.



## FOOD + SUPPLIES

- At least a 3-day supply of water and non-perishable food
- Infant formula and diapers
- Pet food and supplies (see next page)

## MEDICAL NEEDS

- Medications for at least one week and copies of prescriptions
- Medical equipment, assistive technology and backup batteries
- First aid kit and antibiotic ointment
- Sunblock

## TOOLS + SAFETY ITEMS

- Flashlight and batteries
- Multipurpose tool

## PROTECTIVE GEAR + CLOTHING

- Extra warm clothing
- Sturdy shoes
- Blankets or sleeping bags

## EMERGENCY FUNDS

- Emergency cash funds should be able to sustain your family for several days at a minimum. Government assistance and resources take time.
- Plan for funds to cover fuel, lodging and meals as well as pet boarding costs if you're asked to evacuate.
- Do not rely on credit cards or debit cards as critical networks such as internet or electrical infrastructure may be damaged. Be sure to withdraw plenty of cash before the storm.

## HYGIENE + SANITATION

Maintaining good hygiene can stop the spread of bacteria and infectious disease.

- Antibacterial soap and disinfectant
- Paper towels, toilet paper and towelettes
- Bleach and rubbing alcohol
- Toothbrush and toothpaste

## CRITICAL PAPERWORK

Prior to a storm or evacuation, collect and store your critical paperwork in a waterproof storage bag or container. Storing a password-protected backup of your records on a virtual cloud service is also recommended.

- Driver's license and passports
- Vehicle registration and proof of insurance
- Medical and vaccination records
- Prescription medicine labels
- Birth certificates and social security cards
- Marriage certificates
- Proof of residence (deed or lease)
- Business and personal tax records
- Wills
- Household inventory (photo or video)

## COMFORT + PRICELESS ITEMS

You may be away from your home for an extended period and your property may be damaged. Grab any items that are irreplaceable or may provide comfort to your family, especially children.

- Books, puzzles and favorite stuffed toys
- Photo albums
- Valuables and jewelry

## PET SUPPLIES



Not all shelters and hotels accept pets. Plan ahead to stay with family, friends or at other pet-friendly locations in case you need to evacuate your home.

### PET-SPECIFIC ITEMS

- ID tags on collars and micro-chip pets
- Description and current photos of pets
- Immunization and medical records
- 1.5 gallons of water and sufficient food and medicine for at least three days per pet
- Pet medication, copy of feeding and medication schedule for caregiver, shelter or boarding staff
- Serving bowls, pet toys and bedding
- Collar, leash and carrier to transport pets

## RETURN HOME SAFELY

Each year, a significant number of people are injured or killed in the aftermath of a hurricane. As you return home and begin the recovery phase, keep these safety tips in mind:

- » Do not wade in floodwaters, which can contain dangerous debris including broken glass, metal, dead animals, sewage, gasoline, oil and downed power lines.
- » Do not enter a building until it has been inspected for damage to the electrical system, gas lines, septic systems and water lines or wells.
- » Avoid drinking tap water until you know it is safe. If uncertain, boil or purify it first.
- » Watch for fallen objects and downed electrical wires; report downed power lines to your local utility provider.

### POST-HURRICANE CLEAN-UP

- » Wear protective equipment such as gloves, safety glasses, rubber boots and masks to protect you from debris and airborne particles, e.g., mold and dust.
- » Clean and disinfect everything that got wet. Mud left from floodwater can contain sewage, bacteria and chemicals.
- » Air out enclosed spaces by opening all doors and windows whenever you are present. Leave as many windows open when you are not present as security concerns allow.
- » Discard saturated porous materials such as mattresses or upholstered items, especially those with visible fungal growth.
- » Tear out flooring, paneling, drywall, insulation and electrical outlets saturated by floodwater.

## CAR SUPPLIES



Keep an emergency kit in your vehicle in case you need to leave quickly to evacuate from a disaster including flash flooding, wildfire, hurricane or you're stranded from winter weather conditions.

### CAR-SPECIFIC ITEMS

- Non-perishable food and bottled water
- Jumper cables and tools
- Fire extinguisher and flares
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- First aid kit and warm blankets



# HAZARD MITIGATION

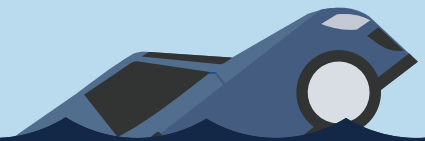
Planning and preparing before a hurricane strikes can help you manage the impact of high winds and floodwaters. Take the steps outlined below to keep you and your family safe while protecting your home and property. If you are a renter, talk with your landlord or property manager about additional steps you can take.

## PREPARE YOUR HOME

- Board up windows and close all storm shutters. Secure and reinforce the roof, doors and garage door.
- Bring loose, lightweight objects such as patio furniture, garbage cans and bicycles inside.
- Anchor objects that would be unsafe to bring inside (e.g., gas grills and propane tanks).
- Trim or remove damaged trees and limbs close enough to fall on structures.
- Secure loose rain gutters and downspouts and clear any clogged areas or debris to prevent water damage to your property.
- Purchase a portable generator or install a whole-house generator for use during power outages.
- Keep alternative power sources, such as a portable generator, outside, at least 20 feet away from the house, and protected from moisture.
- Document the condition of your home prior to the storm for insurance purposes: photos, video.

## PREPARE YOUR BUSINESS

- Document employee responsibilities and roles before a hurricane strikes and review with each employee.
- Conduct a drill to ensure staff members comprehend their roles and test your emergency plans. Follow up with an after action report and lessons-learned session.
- Contact your vendors to understand their preparedness plans and how a disaster will impact your supply chain.
- Move computers and other Information Technology (IT) systems away from large windows and doors.
- Relocate valuables and IT systems to the upper level of your facility or to a more secure location if needed.
- Ensure vital records are protected: analyze your off-site backup record storage, place valuable documentation and digital storage media in a waterproof, fireproof box.
- Cover all doors and windows.
- Purchase a flood insurance policy to protect your financial investment.



# FLOOD INSURANCE

## TALK TO YOUR INSURANCE AGENT ABOUT PURCHASING FLOOD INSURANCE AND REMEMBER:

Just one inch of water in a home or office can cost thousands in cleanup costs, including replacing drywall, baseboards, floor coverings and furniture. Buying flood insurance is the best way to protect your home, your business and your family's financial security from the costs associated with flood damage.

- » Contact the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) call center at 888.379.9531 to request an agent referral or visit [www.floodsmart.gov](http://www.floodsmart.gov).
- » There is a 30-day waiting period before a flood insurance policy takes effect. Don't wait!
- » Most property insurance policies do not cover flood losses, so you will need to purchase separate flood insurance.
- » Annual premiums for a policy start at \$112 per year and increases according to the level of flood risk and the amount of coverage needed.
- » If you rent or own a condominium unit, it is a good idea to purchase both building (if you own the unit) and contents coverage. If you are a tenant, contents-only coverage is available.
- » Though flood insurance isn't federally required, nearly 25 percent of all NFIP flood claims occur in moderate-to-low risk areas.
- » There is at least a 26 percent chance you'll experience a base flood during the lifetime of your mortgage.

# STAY INFORMED

**EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS** | Your emergency communication plan should include extra cell phone charging devices and batteries as well as additional communication tools: AM/FM radio and a NOAA Weather Radio with extra batteries are recommended.

## HOUSEHOLD INFORMATION

Write down phone numbers and email addresses for everyone in your household and other contacts including extended family, friends, neighbors or coworkers. This information will help you reconnect with others even if you don't have your mobile device with you or if the battery runs down.

If you have a household member who is deaf or hard of hearing, or who has a speech disability and uses traditional or video relay service (VRS), include information on how to connect through relay services on a landline phone, mobile device or computer.

## OUT-OF-TOWN CONTACT

Identify someone outside of your community or state who can act as a central point of contact to help your household reconnect. In a disaster, it may be easier to make a long-distance phone call because local phone lines can be overwhelmed or impaired.

## SCHOOL, CHILDCARE, CAREGIVER AND WORKPLACE EMERGENCY PLANS

Make sure your household members with phone and email accounts are signed up for alerts and warnings from their school, workplace and local government agencies including: police, fire, ambulance services, public health department, public works, public utilities, school system and your local emergency management office. Following these official agencies on social media will provide you with an additional avenue to access convenient and critical information.

## OTHER IMPORTANT NUMBERS AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Write down, store or have convenient access to phone numbers for emergency services, utility and service providers, medical providers, veterinarians, insurance companies and other critical services.

**Visit [data.gov/disasters/apps-tools/](https://www.data.gov/disasters/apps-tools/) for a list of apps and tools you can use during severe weather and other disasters!**

Download the FEMA app to receive alerts, safety reminders, tips, local shelter info and more.



## Ready ADDITIONAL PLANNING RESOURCES

For a comprehensive list of planning resources and services, visit [www.ready.gov/make-a-plan](https://www.ready.gov/make-a-plan).

## DISASTER CLEAN-UP



### As you begin the disaster recovery phase, keep the following in mind:

- » Do not enter a building until it has been inspected for damage to the electrical system, gas lines, septic systems and water lines or wells.
- » Watch for fallen objects and downed electrical wires; report power outages and downed power lines to your local utility provider.
- » Use caution or seek professional assistance when removing fallen trees, cleaning up debris or using equipment, such as chain saws.
- » Contact your local emergency management office or locality to learn about organizations that will assist with residential cleanup efforts.
- » If you lost power, report it to Dominion Energy, Appalachian Power or your local electrical provider or cooperative.
  - » **Dominion Energy** | Visit [dominionenergy.com/outages](http://dominionenergy.com/outages) to report outages and check your status. Report downed lines and other safety hazards by calling 866.366.4357.
  - » **Appalachian Power** | Visit [appalachianpower.com/outages](http://appalachianpower.com/outages) to report outages and check your status. Report downed lines and other safety hazards by calling 1.800.956.4237.
- » **If your property is damaged after a disaster:**
  - » Take photos of the damage to your property,
  - » Contact your insurance provider to report damage, and
  - » Report damages to your city or county's office of emergency management, reporting damage allows your locality to include your losses in its damage assessment.

## FOOD + WATER SAFETY

### In the case of an electrical outage, it is important to take careful precautions to ensure food safety. The risk of food poisoning is heightened when refrigerators and ovens are inoperable.

- » A full cooler or freezer will maintain its cold temperatures longer than one that is partially filled, so it is important to pack plenty of extra ice, dry ice or freezer packs to insure a constant cold temperature if the power is going to be out for a prolonged period of time.
  - » The refrigerator will keep food cold for about 4 hours if it is unopened.
  - » A full freezer will keep the temperature for approximately 48 hours (24 hours if half full) if the door remains shut.
- » Discard any food that has been at room temperature for over two hours, and any food that has an unusual odor, color or texture. **When in doubt, throw it out!**
- » Cook food to the proper temperature to assure that any foodborne bacteria that may be present is destroyed. If at any point the food was above 40° F for two hours or more — discard it.
- » Visit [vdh.virginia.gov/drinking-water/](http://vdh.virginia.gov/drinking-water/) for information on the safety of public water sources and “Boil Water” procedures.
- » Residents and facilities that provide water to the public from private wells or septic systems submerged by floodwaters should take extra precautions. Visit [vdh.virginia.gov/environmental-health/onsite-sewage-water-services-updated/before-and-after-the-storm-private-wells-and-onsite-sewage-systems/](http://vdh.virginia.gov/environmental-health/onsite-sewage-water-services-updated/before-and-after-the-storm-private-wells-and-onsite-sewage-systems/) for more information.
- » Information regarding food safety for restaurant operators is available online at [vdh.virginia.gov/environmental-health/food-safety-in-virginia/food-operators/restaurant-preparedness/](http://vdh.virginia.gov/environmental-health/food-safety-in-virginia/food-operators/restaurant-preparedness/).

# POSSIBLE RECOVERY RESOURCES

## LOCAL

Report disaster damage to your home and business to your locality's Office of Emergency Management. Contact your city or county's department of Social Services, Human Services, Community Services Board, Public Health, Housing and local Office of Emergency Management to access additional resources and information.

## FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY (FEMA)

### *Individuals and Households Program (IHP)*

If a Presidential disaster declaration is made, FEMA's Individuals and Households Program **may** provide financial help or direct services to those who have necessary expenses and serious needs if they are unable to meet these needs through other means. Contact the FEMA Individuals and Households Program at 800.621.FEMA.

### *Public Assistance: Local, State, Tribal and Private Nonprofit*

FEMA's Public Assistance (PA) grant program **may** provide federal assistance to government organizations and certain private nonprofit (PNP) organizations if a Presidential disaster declaration is declared.

PA provides grants to state, tribal, territorial, local governments and certain types of PNP organizations, so that communities can quickly respond to and recover from major disasters or emergencies. Contact the FEMA Public Assistance Division at 202.646.3834.

## SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (SBA)

The SBA **may** loan money to homeowners, renters and business owners. Homeowners may borrow up to \$200,000 for disaster-related home repairs. Homeowners and renters may borrow up to \$40,000 to replace disaster-damaged personal property including vehicles. The SBA may not duplicate benefits from your insurance or FEMA. You may receive an SBA referral when you apply with FEMA. Contact the SBA at 800.659.2955 from 8 a.m. - 9 p.m., Mon. - Fri. or email [disastercustomerservice@sba.gov](mailto:disastercustomerservice@sba.gov).

## U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (USDA)

Visit the USDA Disaster Resource Center at [USDA.gov](http://USDA.gov) where you will find information about specific disasters and emergencies, how to prepare, recover, and help build long-term resilience, as well as information about USDA assistance following disaster events.

## WHO TO CALL

**2-1-1**

24/7, statewide trained professionals who listen to your situation and offer sources of help using one of the largest databases of health and human services in Virginia. Visit [www.211virginia.org](http://www.211virginia.org) for more information.

**3-1-1**

In select localities throughout the Commonwealth, 3-1-1 connects callers to their local government, non-emergency, citizen services including information, services, key contacts and programs.

**5-1-1**

**"Know Before You Go,"** offers real-time traffic information throughout the Commonwealth. Anytime you need it, anywhere you are. For more information, visit [www.511virginia.org](http://www.511virginia.org).

**8-1-1**

**"Call Before You Dig - It's the Law,"** is a free Virginia communications center for excavators, contractors, property owners and those planning any kind of excavation or digging. When recovering from a disaster, an individual or business may plan to excavate. Participating utilities will locate and mark their underground facilities and lines in advance to prevent a possible injury, damage or fines.

**9-1-1**

For emergencies only, including fire, medical, reporting accidents, crimes in progress and suspicious individuals or events. 9-1-1 is not to be used for traffic or weather updates and information request, please keep the lines clear for those seeking emergency support.



## RECOVERY ORGANIZATIONS

Visit [vaemergency.gov/get-involved](http://vaemergency.gov/get-involved) to find out how you can help after a disaster.

National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster | [www.nvoad.org](http://www.nvoad.org)

Virginia Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster | [www.vavoad.org](http://www.vavoad.org)

Virginia Disaster Relief Fund | [www.vaemergency.gov/get-involved/virginia-disaster-relief](http://www.vaemergency.gov/get-involved/virginia-disaster-relief)