

PLAN. PREPARE.

10 ways

you can improve
your readiness

HOW YOU CAN REDUCE THE IMPACT OF AN EMERGENCY OR DISASTER

It could be in a movie theater, in a classroom, at work, in a train station or airport, or as we recently saw in Orlando, Fla., having a night out with friends. When an emergency or disaster happens, we don't usually see it coming.

Even if you aren't trained as an emergency responder, there are important steps you can take to prepare before the unthinkable strikes.



1 Always Have a Plan. Preparation and planning reduce panic in an emergency situation. A plan provides a helpful structure in a chaotic situation. No matter where you are, always think about a plan.

2 Be Alert and Observant. First signs of an impending disaster or emergency are often encountering something odd or out of place. If you see something, say something. Always trust your instincts. And make it a habit to observe your surroundings and know where exit doors are located no matter where you are.

3 Have an Alternate Communications Plan. Telephone and Internet will be overwhelmed or no longer in-service. Use social media provided alternatives such as the Facebook emergency check-in feature or develop an emergency text group to have the ability to contact key people with one text. Having an out-of-state contact number to check-in sometimes may be easier to reach than a local number.



4 Establish a Meeting Place. Choose a safe, familiar place for family members and friends to go in the event of an emergency. Even when out for the day or night with a group of family or friends, agree on a meeting location.

5 Be Prepared to Evacuate. Always be prepared to evacuate your location with your car and house keys, wallet and phone. Always keep them accessible for a quick exit. Always train—take these items even during drills. Don't find yourself stranded.

6 Maintain Basic Supplies. Personal phones are everyone's lifeline. Keep a spare phone charger in your pocketbook, briefcase or office. Ensure you have a car charger for your phone in case of a loss in power.

7 Don't Be a Social Media Hound. During a disaster or emergency situation, don't stop or delay your escape by taking a video, tweeting or Snapchatting. Protect yourself by leaving the danger area immediately. Seconds count.



8 Learn Basic First Aid and CPR. During an emergency, first responders may be delayed and hospitals may be swamped with the seriously injured. Knowing basic first aid can keep you and others alive until professional assistance can reach you. Learn the next level of first aid for how to control bleeding.

9 Stay Informed. Authoritative information will be critical during an emergency. Have a means to stay connected to a reliable, accurate information source so you can act accordingly. Be cautious of acting on rumors. Question non-professionals giving advice or direction.

10 Stay Calm. Resist Panic. If an emergency comes up, take a quick moment and stop, assess and form a plan of action. Panic always makes a bad situation worse. You can act with urgency while not being in panic mode.