

7 Musts for a Family Emergency Plan

1. Identify Potential Risks

The first step in preparing for emergencies is understanding what you're up against. The risks vary by location, but common threats include earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes, and floods. Research local hazards and consider your family members' needs to understand potential threats clearly.



2. Create a Communication Plan

When disaster strikes, you don't want your family scattered and unable to reach each other. Everyone should know who to call and how to check in. Start by making a contact list with local emergency numbers, a trusted neighbor, and an out-of-state relative. Make sure everyone in your house has these numbers saved or written down and within easy access.

3. Designate Meeting Places

If your family gets separated, you don't want to be left guessing where to go. Choose a few safe spots where everyone can regroup. A space like a basement or interior bathroom works well as a shelter inside your home for storms and tornadoes. Pick a familiar landmark, like a large tree or a neighbor's house, as a meeting spot for quick evacuations.



4. Assemble an Emergency Kit

A well-stocked emergency kit is compact, versatile, and capable of making a bad situation just a little less miserable. Stock yours with the basics like water, non-perishable foods, first aid supplies, lightning, and tools. Don't just pack it and forget it—check the ready-for-an-apocalypse kit every so often to swap out expired items.

5. Develop an Evacuation Plan

If you ever need to leave in a hurry, you don't want to be figuring things out on the go. Map out exit routes from different rooms of your home and make sure everyone knows them. Keep a "go-bag" packed with essentials by the door so you're not scrambling at the last minute.



6. Teach Safety Skills

Even the best-laid plans won't help if nobody has specific crisis training. Every family member should have a basic understanding of emergency skills. To go a step further, look into local emergency response training programs. Learning these skills in advance means fewer panicked Google searches when the unexpected happens.

7. Document the Plan

A plan isn't much good if it's only in your head. Write down the key details and stick a copy on the fridge. Save digital versions on your phones for quick access and editing. Keep essential documentation handy in a folder that's easy to grab. Go over the plan every so often and tweak it as needed.

