



Don't Get Left Behind: How to Evacuate When Disaster Strikes

Real evacuations occur more frequently than most people realize and can take place for many different reasons ranging from natural disasters to traffic or industrial accidents. Know what protective measures to take before, during and after an evacuation.

The type of disaster and how extreme it is can both impact the time you have to prepare for an evacuation. You may have several days to prepare for a hurricane, while an industrial accident could leave you with very little time to get out.

It is essential to have an emergency plan in place and your disaster kit ready in order to be prepared for an evacuation of any type. Emergency preparedness includes being ready for any type of disaster. Follow the tips below to make sure you're prepared:

- **Become familiar with your area's potential disasters.** These include hurricanes, tornadoes, volcanoes, flash floods, winter storms or even manmade disasters such as chemical emergencies, nuclear explosions, oil spills, toxic waste, etc. Your [Military and Family Support Center](#) or the [local Red Cross](#) can be a great source of information.
- **Find out the emergency procedures on your installation or within the community where you live.**
- **Sign up for alerts.** When conditions are severely hazardous, military and community authorities *require* evacuation. In less extreme circumstances, they'll only advise. Find out how they will alert you and under what conditions they will evacuate.
- **Follow the installation emergency management representative's guidelines and instructions.** Every military unit has an emergency management representative who will guide you during an emergency.
- **Check in with your unit after an emergency for accountability purposes.** You can do this through your Personnel Accountability and Assessment System. Each service has its own: [Army](#), [Marine Corps](#), [Navy](#) and [Air Force](#)

The following are helpful tips on what to do before, during, and after an evacuation.

Be prepared for an evacuation:

- **Create a [family emergency plan](#).** There is no time like today to get started.
- **Create an [emergency communication plan](#).** Create a list of emergency contacts as well as how and when you will contact them. Consider creating an emergency phone tree with phone numbers of family and friends you will need to notify.
- **Assemble your [disaster kit](#).** It can make life bearable when a disaster hits and provide peace of mind.
- **Keep your gas tank at least half full.** If there is even a remote possibility of an evacuation, keep your gas tank full, as gas stations may not be open during an emergency.
- **If you do not have a car, include transportation in your [evacuation plan](#).** Make arrangements with a friend or family member to drive you to safety in an emergency. Check with your local government, as they may provide transportation during evacuations.

Learn

more about the [steps to take after any natural disaster](#).

During an evacuation:

- **Leave early.** Be ready. Don't wait to see if conditions improve. You may regret it.
- **Bring your disaster supply kit.** Make sure you pack your supply kit, unless it's been contaminated during the disaster.
- **Be alert for road hazards.** Follow recommended evacuation routes and watch for washed out roads or downed power lines and don't drive in flooded areas.

Assemble

your [disaster kit](#). It can make life bearable when you need it and can provide great peace of mind when you don't.

Returning from an evacuation:

- **Use caution when you return home.** Watch for dangers in your home and community such as downed power lines, broken gas lines, floodwater and unstable structures.
- **Go to your local Red Cross.** They help disaster victims by providing safe shelter, hot meals, essential relief supplies, emotional support and health services like first aid.
- **Support your community and installation.** Assess your family's situation then consider helping others. If you want to help your community and installation, consider donating time, money or supplies.

For additional tips, information and resources on disaster prep specific to your installation, visit your local Military and Family Support Center. You can find contact information through [MilitaryINSTALLATIONS](#). If you live off the installation, your [local Red Cross](#) can provide the information you need to stay safe before, during and after a disaster.