

PERSONAL PREPAREDNESS IN 30 DAYS

Welcome to the Northwest Healthcare Response Network's *Personal Preparedness in 30 Days* program!

Personal preparedness is important for everyone—especially healthcare workers who provide essential patient care and services as a part of disaster response. Taking steps to prepare yourself and your families can make it easier for you to focus on providing patient care and services when disaster strikes.

The *Personal Preparedness in 30 Days* program provides you with information and tips to get you and your family personally prepared. Our goal is to make these activities and tips as simple as possible.

We invite you to follow along and build your preparedness plan for you and your family.

We've divided our preparedness tips into five sections that address critical steps, information and activities you can do to develop your personal preparedness plan and supplies:

1. **Get Ready!**
2. **Situational Awareness and Communications Plan**
3. **Emergency Supply Kit**
4. **What to Do During and After an Emergency or Disaster**
5. **Testing Your Plan & Ongoing Preparedness**

Section 1: Get Ready!

Day 1: What's my role in a disaster? Talk with your manager about your role in disaster response for your department and/or organization. Once you understand what your role is during a disaster, you can better prepare yourself and your family.

Day 2: Get everyone on board! Who should you include in your preparedness planning? Do you live alone or have a family with kids and grandparents? What about pets? Decide who to include in your family preparedness plans and talk with them about being prepared. Maybe you will need help from extended family members or friends to support your family while you are at work. Consider where you might need preparedness supplies: home, car and work?

Make a List and Identify:

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- Who is included in your family plan
- Places to include in your plan (home, car, work)
- Support from outside your family (extended family or friends – share your plans with them)

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Day 3: Start creating a Family Disaster Plan. A Family Disaster Plan will help you to identify what you need to do in a disaster, including:

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- Developing disaster plans for home, school, work and the car
- Identifying a meeting place outside the home
- Establishing an out-of-town emergency contact to gather or share essential information

Here are two online family disaster plan templates to get you started:

- [Ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov) (e-form pdf)
- [Redcross.org](https://www.redcross.org) (pdf)

Day 4: Planning resources are available to help you. There are many websites to help build your preparedness plan. Review additional preparedness websites for information. We recommend the following:

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- [MakeltThrough.org](https://www.makeltthrough.org)
- [CDC Emergency Preparedness Making A Plan](https://www.cdc.gov/emergency-preparedness-making-a-plan)
- [mil.wa.gov/preparedness](https://www.mil.wa.gov/preparedness)

Tips for building a plan during a pandemic at [redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies](https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies).

Also, the Red Cross and Disney have teamed up to produce a Disaster Preparedness Activity Book, so children can learn how to be better prepared for the unexpected in a safe and stress-free environment:

- [redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies](https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies) (pdf)

Day 5: Do your homework – threats and hazards. What kinds of hazards or risks do you and your family need to prepare for? In the Pacific Northwest, hazards include flooding, windstorms, earthquakes, and wildfires.

Section 2: Situational Awareness and Communications Plan

Are there other possible risks or hazards? Hunt through your home to find possible hazards, such as bookcases that could fall, and then reinforce or fix them.

Take Action

List the hazards and risks you need to plan for. Talk with your family about different hazards and risks you and your family might experience. The various hazards and risks may require different plans or preparedness items. Your county's emergency management agency may offer local hazard information to help you get started.

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Day 6: Get connected with emergency alert systems. Many communities, emergency management agencies, schools and employers are using alert notification systems to send out urgent information with instructions on what to do in case of or as a result of an emergency or disaster. Many municipalities have their own public alerting systems. There may also be alert systems tied to a particular threat, such as a Flood Alert system. Many of these alert systems use social media to communicate urgent information.

Take Action

Identify the emergency alert systems for your family’s home, school, and work locations, and sign up for alerts. Have everyone in your family sign up, and discuss what you will do when you receive an alert.

This website provides links to many of our state’s alert and notification warnings at www.mil.wa.gov/preparedness.

Day 7: Add a communications plan to your Family Disaster Plan. When a disaster occurs, everyone wishes to contact their loved ones. Would your family members know how to reach one another? Communication systems can go down with everyone trying to make phone calls at the same time.

Take Action

Create a family emergency communication plan so your family will know how to reach one another when a disaster occurs. Make sure everyone knows how to text; text messaging may be more reliable than voice calls during a disaster.

- Emergency Contact Card Template is available online at redcross.org.
- Other templates are just for kids at ready.gov (pdf) and Scholastic.com.

Day 8: Designate an out-of-town contact for your Family Disaster Plan. When a disaster occurs, everyone will want to call family and friends. Unfortunately, this can overload local communications capabilities and make it challenging for calls to go through. It may be easier to make a long distance call than a call across town. Identify an out-of-town friend or relative to be the contact point person for your family. Everyone should call the out-of-town contact to check in and say where they are, if they are okay, and to share plans.

Take Action

Choose an out-of-town friend or family member as your family’s long distance contact point. Be sure to let that person know their important role in your family disaster plan. Share the person’s phone number with all your family members and add it to your phone contacts.

Day 9: Letting others know “I’m OK” when all communications are down. How do you let others know you are okay if you can’t call? Letting family and friends know you are okay will reduce worry.

Take Action

The [Contact Loved Ones](http://redcross.org) info page at redcross.org can help families and friends re-establish contact with loved ones after they have been separated because of a disaster. Discuss how you would notify your extended family that you are okay. Familiarize yourself, your family and your out-of-town contact with the tips and resources.

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Section 3: Emergency Supply Kit

Day 10: What do you need for supplies? Let's talk about what you need to have for your family disaster supply kit. Current recommendations are that you should have enough supplies for each family member for two weeks. Start with planning for three days and work up from there. Many people worry they can't afford everything on the supply lists all at once. We suggest you assemble the items you want a little at a time and add to the supply kit each week. Maybe you already have some of the items in your house.

Take Action

Take a look at sample online disaster supply lists. Here are some great ones to help you get started:

- [Ready.gov/kit](https://www.ready.gov/kit)
- [CDC Prepare Your Health Paperwork Checklist](#)
- [WA State EMD Prepare in a Year](#) (pdf)

Day 11: Family members with specialized needs. Do you have family members with particular needs? Maybe you have infants, young children or others who may need diapers and specific food. Your pets are members of the family, as well. What supplies do they need?

Take Action

Review these online disaster supply lists for those with special needs, children and seniors:

- **Infants and Children:**
 - ◇ [CDC Emergency Kit Checklist for Kids and Families](#)
 - ◇ [Ready.gov/kids](https://www.ready.gov/kids)
- **Older Adults:**
 - ◇ [Red Cross](#) (pdf)
 - ◇ [Ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov)
- **Access & Functional Needs:**
 - ◇ [Ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov)
 - ◇ [WA State Emergency Management Division \(EMD\)](#)

Take Action

Here are some online resources for disaster preparedness for pets, companion animals and larger animals:

- [ASPCA Pet Disaster Preparedness](#)
- [Rover.com's Guide to Pet Disaster Preparedness](#)
- [Red Rover Pet Disaster Preparedness](#)
- [USDA Disaster Planning for Animals in Disaster](#)

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Day 12: Water...lots of water. Having a supply of clean water for drinking, cooking and hygiene is vital during an emergency. Assume a minimum of one gallon per person, per day. For each gallon of water, assume you will need two quarts for drinking and two quarts for food preparation and sanitation. Don't risk dehydration by rationing water, especially for pregnant women, those who are sick, the young or the elderly.

Take Action

Figure out how much water you will need for your family during a disaster. Remember to plan for two weeks. Review these resources for information on preparing an emergency water supply, storing water, how to find 'hidden' water in your home, and how to make water safe:

- [FEMA and Red Cross Food and Water in an Emergency](#) (pdf)
- [CDC Storage of Safe Water](#)

Day 13: What about personal care, medications and first aid? How will you provide for the unique personal care needs for your family members during a disaster? Do you or family members wear glasses, contact lenses, or take prescription medication daily? What about personal sanitation? Planning ahead will mean you aren't scrambling to get medications or medical supplies, but remember to rotate them as they can expire.

Take Action

Compile first aid supplies, personal care items and medications that each family member will need during a disaster and add those items to your emergency kit.

Here are some good lists:

- [Ready.gov Emergency Build A Kit](#)
- [American Red Cross Survival Kit Supplies](#)
- [National Weather Service - Build a Preparedness Kit](#)

Day 14: What's for dinner? In the event of a disaster, consider how quickly food supplies could run out. You will eat what you have on hand. Refrigerated or frozen items will spoil because there's no electricity, and grocery stores shelves will empty when trucks are unable to make deliveries. Having a supply of safe, non-perishable foods that require little preparation will help you answer the question of what's for dinner. Think about how and where to store food supplies so they will be ready when you need them. Remember to pack cups, plates and utensils, plus cleaning supplies to ensure food preparation and serving surfaces are clean. Store your emergency supplies in rodent-proof containers.

Take Action

Read these resources for information on food supplies, how to store food safely and tips on sanitation:

- [Ready.gov/food](#)
- [FEMA and Red Cross Food and Water in an Emergency](#) (pdf)
- [Foodsafety.gov—Food Safety During a Disaster or Emergency](#)

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Day 15: Think beyond the absolute necessities. Having emergency supplies on hand will help make surviving a disaster easier. Consider the needs of your family beyond food, water and health care needs.

Take Action

Consider adding items to your kit such as a hand-crank or battery-operated radio, flashlight with extra batteries, whistle, dust mask, plastic sheeting, duct tape, wrench or pliers, manual can opener for canned food, local maps, solar phone charger, sleeping bag or blanket, extra clothing, books, games or entertainment activities for kids, pencil and paper, matches in a waterproof container, and a fire extinguisher.

- [MakeItThrough.org](https://www.makeltthrough.org) has some additional ideas

Day 16: Key financial and personal documents. How would you prove that you owned your home or car if you were not able to get the original documents? What would happen if you lost your driver's license or insurance cards during a disaster? Would you know what your bank account numbers are if you couldn't find a statement or access it online? What if you can't get to your doctor and need access to health records or your pet's vaccination records? By having copies of important documents in a waterproof and portable container or bag, you can begin your recovery more easily after a disaster. Be sure to include some cash, as cash machines might not be working.

Take Action

Make copies and compile all the items or accounts that you might need to identify after a disaster, including account numbers, contact information and photographs, and add this to your kit.

- [Ready.gov securing documents and valuables checklist](#) (pdf)

Day 17: Safety and utilities. We all need utilities like water, electricity or gas for daily living. However, in a disaster, these utilities could become damaged and threaten harm to you, your family, home or neighborhood. Know the utilities in your home and how to shut them off, including the tools to shut them off. Teach each family member where the utilities are and how to shut them off. If a family member is not strong enough, teach them to recognize which utilities need to be shut off and to find someone who can do it for them.

Take Action

Make a list of all the utilities around your home. If you don't know how to shut them off or disconnect them, ask your utility company to show you what to do in case of an emergency.

- [Ready.gov Utility Shut-Off and Safety](#)
- [The Allstate Blog How to Shut Off Utilities in an Emergency](#)
- [NW Natural Gas Shutoff Information](#)

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Section 4: What to do during and after an emergency or disaster

Day 18: Your health and safety. Addressing your and your family’s health and safety needs could be quite different after the disaster than before. Your own safety should be your first priority, then administer first aid and seek medical attention for others, if needed. If anyone in your family has pre-existing health or safety concerns, those needs will continue after the disaster, so be prepared to maintain their care.

Take Action

Here are websites with various health and safety guidelines to consider for your family preparedness. Talk with your family about these topics and how to prepare now. Build your family first aid kit. Ensure you and your family members get any necessary vaccinations.

- [Vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov)
- [CDC Vaccines & Immunizations](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/imz/)
- [CDC Health and Safety Concerns for All Disasters](https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/)
- WA State Independent Living Council - [Coalition on Inclusive Emergency Planning \(CIEP\)](https://www.wa-ilc.org/)
- Refer to [Local Health Jurisdiction](https://www.localhealthjurisdiction.org/) or [Tribal](https://www.tribalhealth.gov/) websites for specific recommendations.

Day 19: Returning home. If you have left your home because of a disaster, returning to your home can be physically and mentally challenging. The physical structure may be damaged and unsafe to enter. If you have experienced a flood or water damage, mold may be growing in places you can’t see. Food and water that was in your home before the disaster may no longer be safe to eat or drink. Be aware of wild or stray animals and insects.

Take Action

Play the “What if...” game with your family and talk through different things that could happen to your home because of disaster, and what you should do to protect your health and safety as you begin to resume normal life. Here are some websites to consider checking out:

- [Ready.gov Recovery from Disaster](https://www.ready.gov/recovery-from-disaster)
- [FEMA Recovering from Disaster](https://www.fema.gov/recovering-from-disaster) (pdf)
- [CDC preparations for natural disasters, severe weather and COVID-19](https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/)
- [USA.gov - Disasters and Emergencies](https://www.usa.gov/disasters-and-emergencies)

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Day 20: Is there help to get back to normal? The idea of recovering and restoring things to the way they were before the disaster can seem monumental. Maybe you don't have a home to return to right away. Maybe you need help with damage assessment, clearing debris, or financial help to begin restoring things to normal. Knowing what types of resources are available before the disaster will help provide peace of mind after the disaster.

Take Action

Review these websites to learn about different resources that might be available to you and your family for disaster recovery. You could also contact your [county's emergency management agency](#) to ask about disaster recovery resources.

- [Ready.gov Recovering from Disaster](#)
- [American Red Cross Disaster Relief & Recovery Services](#)
- [FEMA Help After a Disaster](#)
- [DisasterAssistance.gov](#)

Day 21: Coping with disaster: mental health and well-being. The effects of a disaster can be hard to accept emotionally. Different people will cope with these emotional impacts in different ways. Some people may bounce back quickly and others may have long-lasting emotional trauma. Children may have a hard time with an altered routine and missing friends or school. By knowing the signs and symptoms of emotional distress and emotional trauma before a disaster, you can be ready to help family and friends who may have trouble coping after a disaster.

Take Action

Review these websites for information and tips on identifying and coping with the emotional trauma of disaster:

- [Healthier Washington Collaboration Portal](#)
- [WA Recovery Help Line](#)
- [2·1·1 Washington Mental Health Line](#) Mental Health support and hotlines
- [WA State DOH Behavioral Health Resources & Recommendations](#)
- [NASP Resources: Helping Children Thrive](#)
- [WA State Emergency Management Division—Access & Functional Needs](#)
- [Ready.gov Coping with Disaster](#)
- [American Red Cross Recovering Emotionally](#)
- [CDC Coping With a Disaster or Traumatic Event](#) - Fact Sheet
- [The Counseling Team International](#) - Mental Health & Wellness Resources

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Day 22: Helping others. If you are not called in to fill your role as a healthcare worker, you may be inclined to help others. Sometimes the best way to help others is to donate money. Other times, it may be best to donate your time through volunteering. By training or volunteering to help others who are affected by a disaster, you may develop a better understanding of the need for personal disaster preparedness. Only donate requested items to a disaster response agency, or send money.



Talk with your family about an interest in helping others who are experiencing disasters and how to get involved. Here are some websites that can help you get started in volunteering:

- [Ready.gov Get Involved](#)
- [FEMA Volunteer & Donate Responsibly](#)
- [Washington Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster](#)
- [American Red Cross Disaster Training](#)

Day 23: Helping yourself. As a healthcare worker, you are used to helping others, but remember to also help yourself. Everyone who experiences a disaster, trauma or a crisis is touched by it, and that includes healthcare workers. We all need support sometimes.



Review the following resources, and discuss with a colleague, supervisor or loved one.

- [WA State DOH Behavioral Health Resources and Recommendations](#)
- The Counseling Team International - [Resources for Those Who Serve](#) and [Wellness Library](#)
- [Healthier Washington Collaboration Portal](#)

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Section 5: Testing Your Plan & Ongoing Preparedness

Day 24: Practice your family disaster plan. Now that you have spent the month thinking about and preparing your family's disaster plan, it is time to practice it! Just like you practice a fire drill, you practice emergency response. By practicing and using the supplies you have gathered, you will know whether your plans and kit are right for your family's disaster response needs. You may want to consider reviewing your disaster plan and supplies regularly throughout the year.

Take Action

Choose a disaster scenario you have planned for and talk through your family's response. Practice calling your family contacts (local and distant). Consider making a whole meal for your family from the food supplies you have gathered (and then restock your kit).

Day 25: Identify improvements. Ask each person in your family what they learned from the disaster plan practice and their suggestions for improving the plan or supplies.

Take Action

Write down the suggested improvements, assign someone to complete the task and a date for completion. Review these websites for reminders of things to include in a family emergency plan or supply kit:

- [Ready.gov Family Emergency Plan Template](#) (e-form to PDF)
- [American Red Cross Family Disaster Plan Template](#)
- [FEMA Ready.gov Emergency Supply List](#) (pdf)
- [CDC Take Action](#)

Day 26: Update your plan. Take this time to incorporate suggestions for improving the plan or supplies. Locate and order items you still need, make copies of records and documentation, stock up on non-perishable food, designate a good location to store your kit and make a list of what is in your kit and expiration dates for future reference.

Take Action

Build/Update Your Plan and Kit:

- [Ready.gov Build A Kit](#)
- [Ready.gov Plan](#)

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Day 27: Maintain your emergency kit supplies. Ensure your preparedness supplies are ready when you need them by making it a goal to review your kit twice a year. Whether it is when the clocks change or on specific birthdays or anniversaries, commit to checking and rotating your disaster preparedness supplies. Consider marking the supplies with the date they were added to your kit so you know how old they are.

Take Action

If you haven't used anything in your kit for the last six months, move those disaster items to your regular household supplies where you will use them, and replenish your kit with new items (this is called rotating your items). Take a month to review your family disaster plans and to update your disaster supplies. Here's some information about maintaining your supplies:

- [WA State Prepare in a Year Guide](#)
- [WA State Emergency Management Division Preparedness Tips](#)

Day 28: Train to help yourself and others. Acquiring new skills that supports your preparedness is vital to being ready when disaster strikes.

Take Action

Consider signing up for local training opportunities such as CPR, Stop the Bleed, Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), HAM radio, and/or other safety/disaster-related topics.

- [Community Emergency Response Team \(CERT\)](#)
- [American Red Cross CPR Training](#)
- [Stop the Bleed Training](#)
- [FCC Amateur Radio Service](#)

Day 29: Volunteer in your community. One of the most important things you can do to support your preparedness is getting to know your neighbors and community. Volunteering is a great way to build those connections while supporting your community to become more disaster resilient.

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A few disaster-related volunteering opportunities:

- [Community Emergency Response Team \(CERT\)](#)
- [The Medical Reserve Corps](#)
- [Grassroots community mutual aid groups](#)

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Day 30: Stay prepared! Congratulations for participating in a month of preparedness! Now that you know your family is prepared at home, you will be better able to help others in a crisis.

Take Action

Consider extending your preparedness to your commute and workplace, using the same steps you used to prepare your home disaster plan and kit. Here are websites to help you through the process:

- [Allstate's The Ultimate Emergency Car Kit](#)
- [Ready.gov Car Safety](#)
- [DMV's How to Pack an Emergency Kit](#)
- [Red Cross Commuter Safety](#)
- [More Prepared – Workplace Disaster Supplies](#)

We hope this preparedness guide has inspired you and your family to become and stay more personally prepared!