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**• Prepare for a Disaster**

- Determine Your Risk
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**Evacuation Plans**

When community evacuations become necessary, local officials provide information to the public through the media. In some circumstances, other warning methods, such as sirens or telephone calls, also are used. Additionally, there may be circumstances under which you and your family feel threatened or endangered and you need to leave your home, school, or workplace to avoid these situations.

The amount of time you have to leave will depend on the hazard. If the event is a weather condition, such as a hurricane that can be monitored, you might have a day or two to get ready. However, many disasters allow no time for people to gather even the most basic necessities, which is why planning ahead is essential.

**Evacuation: More Common than You Realize**

Evacuations are more common than many people realize. Hundreds of times each year, transportation and industrial accidents release harmful substances, forcing thousands of people to leave their homes. Fires and floods cause evacuations even more frequently. Almost every year, people along the Gulf and Atlantic coasts evacuate in the face of approaching hurricanes.

Ask local authorities about emergency evacuation routes and see if maps may be available with evacuation routes marked.

**Evacuation Guidelines**

Always:	If time permits:
Keep a full tank of gas in your car if an evacuation seems likely. Gas stations may be closed during emergencies and unable to pump gas during power outages. Plan to take one car per family to reduce congestion and delay.	Gather your disaster supplies kit.
Make transportation arrangements with friends or your local government if you do not own a car.	Wear sturdy shoes and clothing that provides some protection, such as long pants, long-sleeved shirts, and a cap.

<p>Listen to a battery-powered radio and follow local evacuation instructions.</p>	<p>Secure your home:</p> <p>Close and lock doors and windows.</p> <p>Unplug electrical equipment, such as radios and televisions, and small appliances, such as toasters and microwaves. Leave freezers and refrigerators plugged in unless there is a risk of flooding.</p>
<p>Gather your family and go if you are instructed to evacuate immediately.</p>	<p>Let others know where you are going.</p>
<p>Leave early enough to avoid being trapped by severe weather.</p>	
<p>Follow recommended evacuation routes. Do not take shortcuts; they may be blocked.</p>	
<p>Be alert for washed-out roads and bridges. Do not drive into flooded areas.</p>	
<p>Stay away from downed power lines.</p>	

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