Emergency Preparedness Plan for Seniors

A simple, calm plan for power outages, storms and the unexpected

A large-print guide for adults 55+

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Start Here

Emergencies are rarely about dramatic gear. They are about small, ordinary problems that pile up: the power is out, the medicine is running low, the road is closed, or you can’t reach anyone. The best protection is a simple plan made on a calm day.

This guide keeps it practical. You will build a short plan, a small supply kit, a contact sheet and a check-in routine. Do one section at a time. A little preparation done is far better than a perfect plan never finished.

Three ideas that guide this plan

- **Keep it simple.** Plans you can remember work better than plans that live in a binder.
- **Have a backup.** For each important need (light, water, medicine, contact) have a second way.
- **Don’t go it alone.** A neighbor who checks on you is worth more than any gadget.

Think Through the Risks

You don’t need to prepare for everything. Start with what is most likely where you live: storms, a power outage, extreme heat or cold, a flood, a wildfire, or a fall at home.

The three emergencies most likely where I live:

The things I depend on every day that could stop working (power, phone, medical equipment, transportation):

Under stress, decisions get harder

When you are frightened or rushed, even simple choices feel hard. That is normal. This is why you decide now. Write down the answers in advance, and put the paper where you can find it quickly.

Your Supply Kit

Public emergency-preparedness agencies, such as Ready.gov, generally suggest having at least three days of food and water on hand for each person. Many people choose to keep a bit more. Use the list below as a starting point and adapt it to your needs.

- [ ] Water: plan on about one gallon per person per day
- [ ] Non-perishable food that needs little or no cooking, and a manual can opener
- [ ] Flashlights and extra batteries (a flashlight is safer than candles)
- [ ] Battery-powered or hand-crank radio
- [ ] Phone charger and a fully charged portable battery
- [ ] First-aid supplies
- [ ] Basic toiletries, glasses, and hearing-aid batteries if you use them
- [ ] Warm clothing or a blanket, and a whistle to signal for help
- [ ] Copies of important papers in a waterproof bag
- [ ] A little cash in small bills

Medicines and health supplies

Talk with your doctor or pharmacist about the best way to keep a reasonable extra supply of your regular medicines, and ask how your insurance handles early refills. Keep a current list of your medicines, doses, allergies and your doctors' phone numbers in your kit and in your wallet.

- Ask your doctor how to store medicines that need refrigeration if the power goes out.

- If you use medical equipment that needs electricity, ask the company and your local utility about backup options and any program that flags your address for priority help.
- Keep an extra pair of glasses and any mobility aids in easy reach.

Your Contact Sheet

In an emergency your phone might be dead or you might be too stressed to scroll. Write the key numbers on paper.

Who	Name	Phone
Emergency contact #1		
Emergency contact #2		
Neighbor I trust		
Doctor		
Pharmacy		
Out-of-area relative (easier to reach in a local outage)		
Utility company		

Quick medical card (keep in your wallet)

- Name and date of birth
- Medicines and doses
- Allergies
- Medical conditions you want responders to know
- Emergency contact
- Insurance information

Decide in Advance

The hardest part of an emergency is deciding what to do. Make these choices now.

If the power is out for more than a day, I will:

If I am told to leave my home, I will go to (two places, in different directions):

How I will get there, and who can help me if I can’t drive:

If I fall and can’t get up, I will:

Make a go-bag

If you might need to leave, pack a small bag: medicines, medical card, phone charger, a change of clothes, glasses, papers and cash. Keep it by the door or in a closet you can reach without bending.

Community Beats Going Alone

People who have someone looking out for them tend to do better in a crisis. Ask a neighbor or family member to be your check-in partner, and offer to be theirs.

- [ ] Pick a check-in partner and agree on how they will contact you
- [ ] Agree on a signal (a light in the window, a note on the door) that means “I’m okay”
- [ ] Give a trusted neighbor a way into your home if you can’t answer
- [ ] Tell your family where you keep your kit and contact sheet
- [ ] Ask if your town or county has an emergency alert sign-up and a registry for residents who need extra help

Make Safety a Habit

A short monthly routine keeps the kit fresh without becoming a chore.

- [ ] Check batteries in flashlights and smoke alarms
- [ ] Replace water and food that is near its date
- [ ] Review the medicine list with any changes
- [ ] Walk through your plan out loud
- [ ] Practice the route out of your home
- [ ] Stay active within what your doctor recommends, since strength and balance help in any emergency

You can’t predict what will happen, and you don’t have to. You only need to be a little more ready than you were yesterday.

The first three things I will do this week:

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