

When faced with an emergency, it can be difficult to think clearly about what you need to take with you. Both state and federal disaster response agencies recommend planning for a potential evacuation before they happen. What does that mean to you? It means it is time to create a checklist, and to note where each item is in case you need to go. Here are the things (from CDC.gov and Ready.gov) recommended you take from your home if you're ever forced to evacuate.



## **Pets**

Pets are a part of the family. So, it goes without saying that they should be at the top of the list when it comes to what you take with you to safety. To save time when an emergency strikes, the Humane Society recommends creating a pet evacuation kit in advance. Stock it with food for your pet and any other supplies you may need for them like a leash, carrying kennel, water, toys, and blankets – as well as any medications your pet takes.

## **Identification**

Most of us carry our driver's license every day. But it can be easy to forget the other types of identification that might be needed and are very hard to replace. It is vitally important to bring multiple forms of identification with you should you have to flee. Pack your driver's license, passport, and any other critical identification documents you have. Name change documents, social security cards and marriage licenses are examples of important documents to take - especially if your ID and your name have ever changed.

Experts at Everplans, a tech tool designed to help users create secure, digital archives, also recommend keeping some form of proof of address — such as a utility bill — in your evacuation pack. You may be required to show it when looking to gain help or access to your neighborhood after the disaster has passed.

## **Cash & Credit**

The Department of Homeland Security, which runs the website Ready.gov, is a national public resource to help Americans prepare for and respond to emergencies. The Department recommends keeping cash on hand for emergency situations. ATMs may not be available, there may not be power, buildings (like banks and stores) may be closed up. Additionally, stores may not have connectivity to be able to accept credit cards – so keeping cash on hand is key. It's also recommended to take your checkbook and credit cards with you in case you need to check into a hotel or make any emergency purchases.

### Important Documents

Be sure to grab any important documents like birth or marriage certificates, social security cards, wills, property deeds, or rental leases, and any other legal, financial, or insurance-related paperwork on your way out the door. While you may not need all of these documents in the immediate aftermath of an emergency, you may find them difficult to replace.

### Medications Or Medical Supplies

While it may sound obvious, medicine can easily slip people's minds while evacuating. Taking any and all needed prescription medication for you, your family members, and your pets is critical, according to Ready.gov.

Any prescription or over-the-counter medicine used regularly, semi-regularly, or strictly in emergency situations by anyone in your family should be taken in an evacuation. This includes EpiPens, inhalers, birth control, insulin, or hormones. You should also take any needed eyeglasses or contact lens supplies.

### Hygiene Supplies

While you won't want to weigh yourself down with every item in your bathroom, it's not a bad idea to have a few basic hygiene supplies ready to go in your evacuation kit. Pack things like wet wipes or hand sanitizer, a toothbrush, extra underwear, tampons or menstrual pads, and diapers, if needed, in your preparedness kit so they're easily accessible in an emergency situation.

### Keys

When evacuating, you should try to bring any important keys with you, such as those to your home, vehicles, office, storage units, or safe deposit boxes.

### Basics

Other basic supplies that Ready.gov recommends you take with you in an evacuation include some food and water, comfortable shoes, at least one change of clothing, a jacket for each family member, flashlights, batteries, a hand-crank radio, and sleeping bags or blankets. Don't forget spare masks, both N95 with valves that block dust, as well as cloth or disposable face coverings that prevent the spread of coronavirus.

### Electronics

While it's not recommended to risk your personal safety for a few electronic items, grabbing your phone, tablet, laptop, external hard drive, and any needed chargers if time allows could save you a headache in the future. It may also make it easier for you to contact others.

### Irreplaceable Comfort Items Or Keepsakes

Grab comfort items and sentimental keepsakes if time allows. Focus on things that are irreplaceable, like photos with no digital copies, family heirlooms, a child's favorite toy, or valuable collectibles. If your area is under threat of evacuation, keep these articles packed and ready to go so you're not searching for them in an emergency situation.

