

Emergency Preparedness for Seniors

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It's the time of year for winter storms and power outages. It is our responsibility to be prepared. Here are some thoughts from the Red Cross.

The importance of a Personal Support Network

The American Red Cross recommends that senior citizens create a personal support network made up of several individuals who will check in on you in an emergency, to ensure your wellness and to give assistance if needed. This network can consist of friends, roommates, family members, relatives, personal attendants, co-workers and neighbors.

Ideally, a minimum of three people can be identified at each location where you regularly spend time, for example at work, home, school or a volunteer site. There are seven important items to discuss and implement with a personal support network:

1. **Make arrangements**, prior to an emergency, for your support network to immediately check on you after a disaster and, if needed, offer assistance.
2. **Exchange important keys.**
3. **Show them where you keep emergency supplies.**
4. **Share copies** of your relevant emergency documents, evacuation plans and emergency health information card.
5. **Agree on, and practice, methods of contacting each other** in an emergency. Do not count on the telephones working.
6. You and your personal support network should always **notify each other** when you are going out of town and when you will return.
7. **The relationship should be mutual.** You have a lot to contribute! Learn about each other's needs and how to help each other in an emergency.

The Red Cross booklet “**Disaster Preparedness for Seniors by Seniors**” includes information about:

The Three Steps to Preparedness

1. Get a Kit

- Assemble enough supplies to last for at least three days
- Store your supplies in one place, in one or more easy-to-carry containers with ID tag(s).
- Label any equipment you would need with your name, address and phone numbers.

2. Make a Plan

- Address communications with family and friends, your community’s response and evacuation plans, escape routes, etc.

3. Be informed

- Assess what hazards are most likely to affect you.
- Know how you can stay informed (local authorities, fire department, TV and radio alerts, internet sites, etc. When alerted, **follow their instructions.**

For more details, download the Red Cross booklet, available on this page of the Summerplace website.