



## EXTREME WEATHER

Flash floods. Tornadoes. Hail storms. These are just a few of the severe weather phenomena we encounter across America each spring. Hundreds are killed each year by these events, but their damage can be limited by awareness and planning. Most severe weather preparedness plans involve three things: (1) Identification of a safe place to shelter, (2) an emergency assembly point (EAP), needed if your group becomes separated, and (3) an emergency preparedness kit.

## Extreme Weather Risk Management

If a severe weather alert has been received early enough to safely permit it, evacuation is a way to avoid the injury. An evacuation order may be issued. If evacuation is not safe or hasn't been ordered, you should know where in your structure you can avoid harm - where you can safely shelter in place. That spot can differ depending on the event. If the risk is a flood, the lower areas of the structure, like the basement, are to be avoided. If the risk is an incoming tornado, the basement (or a dedicated storm shelter) is the place to go. In a structure with no basement, go to the lowest floor and find the smallest, most central enclosed space, like a closet or a bathroom. Crouch as low as you can and cover your head with your hands. The aim is to make yourself the smallest possible target for flying debris while positioning yourself so the greatest amount of structure surrounds you. In all severe weather events, windows are to be avoided.

An emergency assembly point becomes relevant if disaster strikes. In a flood, it may be days before your group can reach an assembly point. In a tornado or other aerial weather event, that time might come much sooner. Before setting out, you should try to assess if it is safe to move toward the EAP.

An EAP should be out of harm's way and feature sufficient space for your group to gather. In many communities, school gyms have been designated as EAPs. An EAP positioned at high elevation is most useful in a flood. If your community has no designated EAP, take the time to develop one for your own preparedness plan.

Whether it's for your family or a different group, there are some basic things that an emergency preparedness kit should contain:

1. Water, which will be needed for drinking and cooking.
2. Food (about three days' worth, and non-perishable).
3. Radio, either battery powered or hand cranked.
4. First Aid Kit
5. Map, with highlighted evacuation routes.
6. Money, because banks and ATMs might be closed.
7. Clothing, for warmth.
8. Sanitary Supplies, including toilet paper, feminine supplies and bleach.
9. Tools, such as a knife, a can opener, plastic sheeting, garbage bags, and duct tape.

If the emergency preparedness kit you're preparing is for a family, remember to add your family's medications, identification (such a copies of passports and birth certificates), and an index card with contact numbers for family members.

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