

Be Prepared - Make A Plan

Many disasters happen without warning. Take time to plan how to protect and provide for yourself, your family, and your pets in the event of an emergency or disaster. The best way to learn how to prepare yourself and your family is to enroll in the New Canaan CERT program (Community Emergency Response Team). The training is free of cost and over 200 residents have received this training.

A plan should have three important things:

A Meeting Place - Pick a location within walking distance of your home where your family members can meet in case you get separated or have to evacuate. For example, a local park or playground.

An Out of Area Contact - During a disaster, you may not be able to make local phone calls, but you CAN call out of the area. Pick a family member or friend to serve as your family's Out-of-Area contact. In the event of an emergency or disaster, you can call your Out-of-Area contact and tell them you're safe, where you are, and where you are going. Your Out-of-Area contact can then share this information with other family members who call. All family members should have the phone number of your Out-of-Area contact with them at all times.

An Emergency Supply Kit - Enough supplies to last three days as a minimum, but for even longer is better! Build a kit for home, for your car, and for your work. Remember to make sure your child is prepared for school.

Practice, practice, practice! The more you practice your emergency plan, the more likely you are to remember it in times of disaster.

Build a Kit

How comfortable do YOU want yourself and your family to be if First Responders can't get to you in an emergency? During a disaster, it takes at least three days or more for Emergency Officials to make sure the area is safe, and if it isn't, the First Responders may not be able to get to you even if you call 911. As a result, you and your family need to build a 72-hour Emergency Supply Kit so you will be safe in case of disaster.

Here's what you need:**Remember, emergency supply kits should be designed to fit your needs**

Water: 1 gallon per person per day

Food: nonperishable canned goods with can opener, granola bars, protein bars, "comfort" foods like cookies or hard candy

NOAA Tone Alert Weather radio

Extra set of clothes with sturdy shoes

Flashlight with extra batteries or light stick

Whistle

First Aid kit including a three-day supply of prescription drugs

Entertainment items like a deck of cards

Shelter-in-Place supplies like duct tape and plastic

Cash: ATM's won't operate if power is out

Put together small versions for the office, school and car

Shelter-in-Place

It is important to listen to Emergency Officials during a disaster because directions they give will likely save your life. One direction Emergency Officials may give is to "Shelter-in-Place". This is likely advised during a hazardous incident. Shelter-in-Place should only be enacted when directed by emergency officials.

Know what to do to Shelter-in-Place:

Pick out a designated interior "safe room" ahead of time. This room should have the fewest doors and windows. Your emergency supplies should be stored inside your safe room or be easily accessible nearby.

If directed by emergency officials to shelter-in-place, go inside immediately and close all doors and windows. Cover your mouth and nose with a wet cloth.

Turn off ventilation systems. Close fireplace dampers.

Go to your safe room and use plastic sheeting and duct tape to seal all windows, doors, and vents.

Dampen towels and place in the crack under door.

Listen for Emergency Alert System messages on radio or television outlets.

Wait for additional instructions. Emergency officials will tell you when it is safe to air out your building.

What to do during a Tornado:

Stay Weather-Ready: Continue to listen to local news or a NOAA Weather Radio to stay updated about tornado watches and warnings.

At Your House: If you are in a tornado warning, go to your basement, safe

room, or an interior room away from windows. Don't forget pets if time allows.

At Your Workplace or School: Follow your tornado drill and proceed to your tornado shelter location quickly and calmly.

Stay away from windows and do not go to large open rooms such as cafeterias, gymnasiums, or auditoriums.

Outside: Seek shelter inside a sturdy building immediately if a tornado is approaching. Sheds and storage facilities are not safe.

In a vehicle: Being in a vehicle during a tornado is not safe. The best course of action is to drive to the closest shelter. If you are unable to make it to a safe shelter, either get down in your car and cover your head, or abandon your car and seek shelter in a low lying area such as a ditch or ravine.

Know where to go if Shelter-in-Place order is issued:

If at home, work or school: stay inside and shelter-in-place.

If outdoors, go into a building or vehicle and shelter-in-place.

If in a parked car, shelter-in-place inside the vehicle. Do not start the engine. Close all doors, windows, vents, and ventilation systems. Turn your radio on to listen for Emergency Alert System messages.

If driving, continue to do so unless otherwise directed by emergency officials or traffic control. Shelter-in-place as you would for a parked vehicle. If your vehicle stalls, do not restart the engine.

Individuals with Special Needs - Preparing and Planning

If you or someone close to you has a disability or a special need, you may have to take additional steps to protect yourself and your family in an emergency.

Disability/Special Need - Additional Steps

Visually impaired - May be extremely reluctant to leave familiar surroundings when the request for evacuation comes from a stranger. A guide dog could become confused or disorientated in a disaster. People who are blind or partially sighted may have to depend on others to lead them, as well as their dog, to safety during a disaster. Identify an out-of-state friend or relative as a contact person for everyone to call.

Mobility impaired - May need special assistance to get to a shelter.

Single working parent - May need help to plan for disasters and emergencies.

Non-English speaking persons - May need help to plan for and responding to emergencies. Community and cultural groups may be able to help keep people informed.

People with special dietary needs - Should take special precautions to have an adequate emergency food supply.

People with mental disabilities- May need help responding to emergencies and getting to a shelter.

People with dementia - Should be registered in the Alzheimer's Association Safe Return Program

If you have special needs: Find out about special assistance that may be available in New Canaan by calling Human Services at Vine Cottage at .

Check for Hazards in the Home

During and right after a disaster, ordinary items in the home can cause injury or damage. Anything that can move, fall, break or cause fire is a home hazard. Check for items such as bookcases, hanging pictures, or overhead lights that could fall in an earthquake or a flood and block an escape path.

Be Ready To Evacuate

Have a plan for getting out of your home or building (ask your family or friends for assistance, if necessary). Also, plan two evacuation routes because some roads may be closed or blocked in a disaster.

Create a network of neighbors, relatives, friends, and coworkers to aid you in an emergency. Discuss your needs and make sure everyone knows how to operate necessary equipment.

Discuss your needs with your employer.

If you are mobility impaired and live or work in a high-rise building, have an escape chair.

If you live in an apartment building, ask the management to mark accessible exits clearly and to make arrangements to help you leave the

building.

Keep specialized items ready, including extra wheelchair batteries, oxygen, catheters, medication, prescriptions, food for service animals, and any other items you might need.

Be sure to make provisions for medications that require refrigeration.

Keep a list of the type and model numbers of the medical devices you require.

Wear medical alert tags or bracelets to identify your disability.

Know the location and availability of more than one facility if you are dependent on a dialysis machine or other life-sustaining equipment or treatment.

Additional Resources

Preparing for Disaster for People with Disabilities and other Special Needs (FEMA 476)

([PDF](#) 732 KB) Available in Spanish ([PDF](#) 601 KB)

Emergency preparedness information from [DisabilityInfo.gov](https://www.disabilityinfo.gov)