Emergency Planning

In many parts of the country, summer brings an increased risk of natural disasters. Whether you live in an area that is prone to wildfires, tornadoes, or hurricanes, these steps may help you prepare:

▸ **Plan ahead.** Questions to consider include:
  - If I had to evacuate my home on short notice, what items would I need to take?
  - If I had to evacuate my town or region, where would I go?
  - Where is the safest place in my home to shelter during severe weather?
  - Do I have enough food and other supplies on hand to shelter in place for at least a few days?
  - If I am responsible for a child, elderly person, or pet, what supplies would be needed to maintain their care for several days?

▸ **Create a "go" bag.** Pack a bag with clothes and other items that you would need if you had to evacuate quickly. Include copies of important documents. Make a list of other items that you would take with you if time or vehicle space allowed.

▸ **Gather supplies.** Take an inventory of items that would be useful in various emergencies. Restock key items as needed. If your budget is tight, consider purchasing one item per shopping trip or watch for sales.

▸ **Create a disaster plan.** Make sure everyone who lives in your home knows where emergency supplies are located. Have periodic disaster rehearsals for fires, weather emergencies, or evacuations. (If you have young children, consider making these rehearsals into a game.) Create backup plans and designate meetup points for if a disaster happens when family members are away from home.

Preparing for catastrophic events will make emergencies easier to manage. It may also alleviate stress during times of increased risk for natural disasters. For more help with developing an emergency plan, call LifeMatters.

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