

# News Release

## Preparing for Emergencies: A Guide for Older Californians

*California Department of Aging encourages emergency planning during National Preparedness Month*

**WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT:** There's no longer a single natural disaster season – a wildfire, earthquake, or flood can strike at any time and may result in an evacuation or shelter-in-place order. It's especially important for older Californians, who may have specific needs, to have a plan and emergency supplies ready for these situations.

**Sacramento** – The California Department of Aging (CDA) reminds older adults, people with disabilities, and family caregivers to prepare for an emergency or natural disaster this National Preparedness Month. CDA released a new [Emergency Preparedness Guide](#) to help people plan and prepare to meet their specific needs during an emergency.

“This is a good time to equip yourself and start conversations with loved ones about emergency plans and how you can help,” said **CDA Director Susan DeMarois**. “Older adults and people with disabilities often have unique needs. It's important to plan for considerations like wheelchair-accessible transportation, extra eyeglasses and hearing aids, and how to keep medication cool during a power outage. Taking these steps now can help ensure safety and peace of mind when emergencies happen.”

The Emergency Preparedness Guide can help direct the discussion and offers checklists to make the process simple. Experts recommend everyone have a go bag and a stay box. These should include nonperishable food, copies of important documents, prescription medication, and more. You can also talk about updating or creating an emergency plan that includes:

- Signing up for emergency alerts through [Cal Alerts](#).
- A list of contact information for family, friends, neighbors, and anyone else you might need to contact in an emergency.
- At least two exit routes in case of evacuation.
- How you'll leave during an evacuation. Will a household member, neighbor, or friend give you a ride? Include a few potential drivers in your plan.
- A backup power source for medical equipment, if needed.
- How to secure food if you rely on congregate or delivered meals.
- A seven-day supply of medications and prescriptions.
- A plan for pets.

“Being prepared for an emergency can make all the difference,” said **Nancy Ward, Director, California Governor’s Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES)**. “Having a plan, a go-bag, and a stay box are essential first steps. It’s also crucial to consider specific needs, such as accessible transportation and backup power for medical devices. The Emergency Preparedness Guide provides older adults with the tools and information they need to be ready when disaster strikes.”

Emergency preparedness is part of the Master Plan for Aging (MPA) Goal 1, Housing for All Ages & Stages. The MPA highlights the need to improve technologies and communications that address access and functional needs to improve emergency preparedness and response for the growing population of older adults and adults with disabilities.

“I wanted to be prepared for an emergency and have things around the house to just be ready, like having my medications and a battery pack for my cell phone so I’m not out of touch,” said **Pamela Fontaine Lee**, an older adult in Sacramento actively preparing for emergencies. “I feel more ready for an emergency.”

Preparing now can make all the difference in ensuring safety and well-being during a disaster. Don’t wait—take steps today to protect yourself and your loved ones. For more information on emergency preparedness and to learn about valuable resources for older Californians, visit the California Department of Aging’s website at [aging.ca.gov](https://aging.ca.gov).

**ABOUT THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF AGING:** Under the umbrella of the California Health and Human Services Agency, the California Department of Aging (CDA) administers programs that serve older adults, adults with disabilities, family caregivers, and residents in long-term care facilities throughout the state. CDA actively collaborates with many State departments and other entities to deliver services and promote the Department’s goal of every Californian having the opportunity to enjoy wellness, longevity, and quality of life in strong healthy communities. To learn more, visit [aging.ca.gov](https://aging.ca.gov).

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