



Quick Start Guide Tips for the first 24 hours after a Disaster

Use this guide after a disaster to help with key decisions during your recovery:

Immediately after a disaster:

- Immediately seek medical care if necessary.
- Locate all family members and notify authorities if anyone is missing.

Be aware of safety concerns:

- Do not re-enter a damaged home or building unless authorities say it is safe.
- Check for structural damage from a safe distance. Upon entering the building, look for any structural damage that may be subject to collapse. If safe, remove insurance information, valuables and/ or other salvageable items from the home.
- Allow the proper authorities to reconnect any disconnected utilities. DO NOT attempt to reconnect them yourself.
- To avoid electrocution, stay away from downed power lines.

Flood precautions:

- Do not eat or drink medicines, food products or beverages that have been exposed to heat, smoke, soot, chemicals or flood waters.
 - Listen for news reports to learn whether the community's water supply is safe to drink.
 - Avoid contact with floodwaters; water may be contaminated by chemicals, raw sewage, or other hazardous contaminants.
 - Avoid driving vehicles that have been submerged (even partially) as they may be unsafe to operate.
 - NEVER drive through floodwaters or on flooded roads. If your vehicle stalls, leave it immediately and seek higher ground. Water only two feet deep can float away most automobiles.
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Be aware of health and welfare concerns:

- Ensure that your immediate health and welfare needs are met; including food, clothing and shelter. This may include contacting your local chapter of the American Red Cross for assistance.
- Contact your family to let them know of your loss and your condition. Your family and friends are a critical part of your internal support group. If multiple residences are involved in the disaster, register with the American Red Cross "Safe and Well" website at: <https://safeandwell.communityos.org> . You can also contact family members by texting or through social media like Facebook or Twitter.
- Make sure you stay hydrated. If the water supply has been compromised and is unclean, sources of clean water can include bottled water, water from your water heater tank, ice cube trays, and even water from the tank of your toilet (NOT from the bowl).
- Contact your doctor's office to request replacement prescriptions, if necessary.

Begin plans to rebuild your home and replace your losses.

- Take your time and thoroughly investigate any company you are considering contracting with for debris removal, board ups, repairs or adjusting services. Beware of high pressure sales tactics.
- Do not provide any personal or financial information to strangers. This includes your social security number, driver's license, banking or mortgage information, insurance policy documents, or any other personally sensitive information. Prior to signing any contracts for construction, clean up, restoration, public adjusting services, etc. be sure to thoroughly research the company and/or solicitor offering services. Obtain information from the state agency that governs and licenses contractors and/or public insurance adjusters.
- If you have insurance, contact your insurance company about the loss and request to have the house secured, if necessary. Do not discard any items until an inventory has been made. Ask for their assistance in identifying qualified contractors and vendors.
- Start an inventory of lost or damaged belongings, room by room for your insurance company. To assist you with your inventory, visit www.theredguidetorecovery.com and download the free "Personal Property Memory Jogger" database and template. Note: When creating your loss inventory, be careful not to inflate or exaggerate your losses. If an insurance company determines any part of your claim is fraudulent, it is possible they will deny your entire claim.

If there has been a Presidential Disaster Declaration for your location contact the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for possible assistance and resources.

Find comprehensive and detailed information concerning Disaster Recovery in the "The Red Guide to Recovery – Resource Handbook for Disaster Survivors" available online at www.theredguidetorecovery.com