

Evacuations: what to expect before, during and after guide



Resources for NDIS
Emergency and Disaster
Management

Sometimes during an emergency or disaster situation it may be necessary for people to evacuate their homes. In some cases there may be a day or two to prepare, but in other situations there may be the need for an immediate evacuation.

This brief guide will give you an idea of what to expect before an evacuation, during one and afterwards.

Before an Evacuation

- Make sure your individual Emergency Management Plan is up-to-date and includes information about how you will leave and where you will go if you are told to evacuate. Remember to list several places you could evacuate to, such as a family member or friend's home in another area, or a local community venue.
- For some people who are unable to evacuate independently, a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan may also be important to develop as part of their individual emergency planning. This may be useful for individuals who are blind or have low vision, individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, individuals with limited mobility or wheel-users, and individuals with psychosocial disabilities.
- Ensure you have a 'Go Bag' packed and ready. Use the checklist on this website to make sure you have everything you need.
- Be familiar with your local evacuation centre options. Not all centres may be accessible. Some centres may provide quiet spaces for individuals with sensory needs.
- Have a plan for your pets. Most evacuation centres do not allow pets, with the exception of service animals.
- If you have a car, keeping a full tank of petrol is a good idea in case of evacuation. Keeping a portable emergency kit in the car is also advisable.
- If you rely on taxis or public transport, plan alternative transport options should you need to evacuate.
- Be familiar with alternative ways to leave your area.

You can find links to simple Go Bag checklists on the R4NED website by following this link and scrolling to *Put a Go Bag together*: [Make a plan – R4NED](#)

The Ready website from the United States has great tips for what to include in a Go Bag for people with specific needs - e.g. if you have a sensory disability, specific mobility needs or an intellectual disability. Scroll to the middle of the webpage once you have clicked on the link below, [Go Bag tips](#)

During an Evacuation

- Make sure you're wearing long or protective clothing and sturdy, closed-toe shoes.
- Keep up-to-date online and via local radio stations about local evacuation centres available during an emergency or disaster.
- Have a battery-operated radio close by (from your Go Bag) and stay tuned for local evacuation instructions.
- Follow instructions from Emergency Services personnel and leave when you are told to. Evacuating too late can be dangerous and potentially life-threatening.
- Keep in regular contact with your support people. Make sure you tell them where you are evacuating to.
- If you are unable to evacuate yourself independently, make sure you follow your Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan steps and keep in regular communication with your support people. If you have limited mobility or use a wheelchair, prepare yourself for being physically assisted out of your home. If you are in a building with flights of stairs and no lift, it is likely you will have to be carried out.
- Take your emergency plans and Go Bag with you.
- Take your pets with you if you're evacuating to a venue that allows them. Otherwise, make provisions for them in your home.
- If you have time, secure your home by making sure all windows and doors are closed and locked. But make sure you're still able to leave your house easily once it's time to go. You may also unplug small electrical equipment.
- Remember to stay calm. Keeping your breathing steady is a good way to avoid panic.

After an Evacuation

- Check with local Emergency Services or local officials (via radio and tv broadcasts) to make sure it is safe to return home before you leave your alternative accommodation.
- If you are returning to an area affected by natural disaster, be prepared for disruption to your usual activities.
- Prepare for ongoing power outages once you return home.
- Keep in regular contact with your supporters and ask for assistance if you need it.