

Emergency preparedness tips for seniors



especially so for seniors, many of whom live with mobility issues that can compromise their ability to escape the eye of oncoming storms.

In recognition of the potential problems seniors face when natural disasters strike, the American Red Cross offers the following tips to seniors and their families so aging men and women can make it through such situations safe and sound.

- Make arrangements to contact loved ones. Prior to an emergency, seniors and their support network should make arrangements to make immediate contact once a disaster strikes. Determine who will make initial contact and how that contact will be made (i.e., via phone, text message, social media, etc.), as well as who will be responsible for providing assistance if necessary. Such a plan lets everyone within the support network know their precise responsibilities, which limits confusion in the sometimes hectic hours and days after disaster strikes.

- Exchange keys. Make sure everyone in the support network has keys to seniors' homes. In so doing, support networks are increasing the chances that someone will be able to reach potentially vulnerable seniors if the primary contacts are incapable of doing so.

- Let others know where emergency supplies are kept. Everyone should have emergency supplies in their home. Seniors should not take it for granted that such supplies can be easily found if they become incapacitated during a storm. Make sure such information can be easily accessed during a storm by emailing it to your support network and/or posting the information in a convenient location in your home, such as on the refrigerator.

- Share your evacuation plans. In the wake of recent disasters, many communities that did not previously feel vulnerable to natural disasters have devised evacuation plans for residents. Seniors should share these plans with their support networks. Doing so makes it easier for relatives to find you if you must evacuate your home before help arrives.

- Share important medical information. Seniors should share medical information, such as healthcare providers and a list of the medications they're taking. This can make things easier for emergency responders to successfully treat people who become incapacitated during storms.

Emergency preparedness strategies save lives. More information about how seniors can prepare for emergencies is available at www.redcross.org.

Natural disasters can strike at any time, and when they do, the damage is often considerable. According to the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, between 2005 and 2014, natural disasters caused \$1.4 trillion in damage across the globe, affecting 1.7 billion people along the way.

Various preventive measures can protect people and their homes from the potentially devastating impact of natural disasters. For example, oceanfront communities may be able to decrease property damage by exacting certain measures, such as building homes on stilts.

Another way to prevent tragedy related to natural disasters is to develop an emergency preparedness plan before the next storm strikes. That's important for everyone, but

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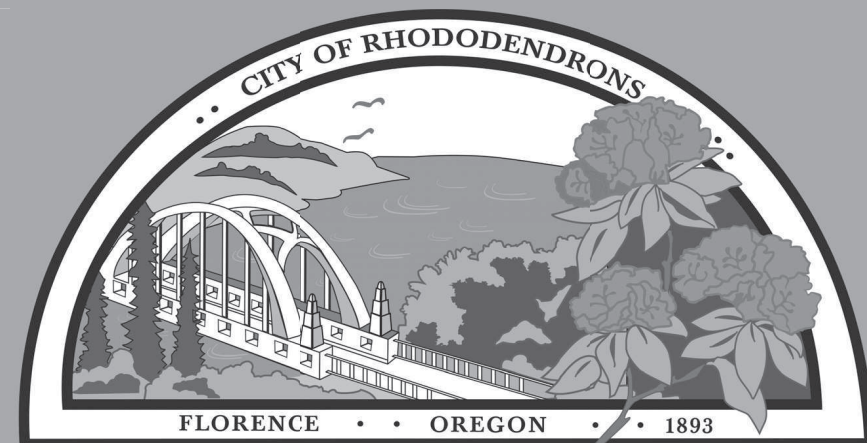
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