

News Release

For Immediate Release

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Natural Disaster Evacuation Preparedness

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) would like to encourage residents to plan ahead to stay healthy and avoid injuries during emergencies, including natural disasters. Depending on the type of emergency, residents can prepare to either take shelter at home or leave the area in an evacuation. Being prepared can be especially important for older adults or people with disabilities because they may have additional needs to consider, including medical issues, accessibility, transportation, and more.

Conditions may change rapidly during an emergency and having a plan not only keeps you safe, but it also helps keep your loved one's minds at ease as well. You can ensure that you are prepared for emergency situations by creating an evacuation plan, reviewing it often, and developing an emergency go kit.

Create an Evacuation Plan

- Involve your neighbors, friends, and family in creating a plan that fits your needs.
- Create a network of contacts that will check on you during a disaster. Develop a form of communication to be used (i.e., telephone, text, or something as simple as turning on a porch light). Have your contacts on a list in your kit or by your phone.
- Plan out several evacuation routes. Do not assume that your everyday travel route will be available. In an emergency your evacuation route may be changed due to the disaster.
- If you have special transportation needs, be sure to know what you will need in order to leave the area quickly.
- Consider what you will do with your pets if they are able to attend a shelter with you or if the shelter does not allow pets.
- Link into your community's social medial platforms to find those willing to help out with animal/pet care.

Have an Emergency Go Kit

- Make sure you are prepared with your own supply of food, water, medications, and other items you will need for your daily care to last for at least 72 hours.
- Put copies of any important documents that you may need to take with you in a waterproof bag.

- If you use supplemental oxygen, invest in a portable tank to have on hand.
- Pack an extra pair of glasses or plenty of contact lenses.
- Make a go bag for each of your pets with a leash, food, water, and a lightweight carrier.

It is important to review and practice evacuation plans regularly. The planned routes may not be accessible, contact information for your network may have changed, or your transportation needs may be a bit different than they were when you first made your plan.

For more information on evacuation preparedness and a list of other basic items to include in your go kit, visit [Ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov) or call SWNPHD at 308-345-4223. Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins, and Red Willow counties. You can follow us on Facebook and Instagram, visit www.swhealth.ne.gov, or stop by the office at 404 West 10th Street in McCook.

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