



ASPEN

COUNSELING & WELLNESS



DISASTER READINESS **GUIDE FOR TEXANS**

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ASPEN COUNSELING AND WELLNESS

Overview

• Introduction	3
• General Preparedness Tips	4
• Disaster-Specific Preparedness	7
• Emergency and Non- Emergency Contacts	13
• Important Numbers	14
• Final Thoughts	16

Introduction

When disaster strikes, being prepared can make all the difference. At Aspen Counseling and Wellness, we understand how overwhelming it can be to face a natural disaster. That's why we've created this guide to help you stay safe and informed during emergencies.

Why Preparedness Matters

- Safety First: Knowing what to do can protect you and your loved ones.
- Peace of Mind: Preparation reduces stress and anxiety.
- Quicker Recovery: Being prepared helps you get back to normal faster.

Purpose of This Guide

- This guide is designed to provide you with:
- Practical Tips: Easy-to-follow advice for different types of disasters.
- Resource Lists: Important contacts and services.
- Checklists: Handy lists to make sure you have everything you need.

At Aspen Counseling and Wellness, we are here to support you, not just during times of crisis but every day. Let's get started with preparing for the unexpected so you can feel more secure and ready for whatever comes your way.



General Preparedness Tips

Emergency Kit Essentials

Put together a basic emergency kit that includes:

- **Water:** At least one gallon per person per day for at least three days.
- **Food:** Non-perishable items like canned goods and granola bars.
- **First Aid Kit:** Bandages, antiseptic, medications, and any personal prescriptions.
- **Flashlight and Batteries:** To see in the dark if the power goes out.
- **Radio:** A battery-powered or hand-crank radio to stay informed.
- **Personal Hygiene Items:** Soap, hand sanitizer, and personal hygiene products.
- **Important Documents:** Copies of identification, insurance policies, and medical records.



General Preparedness Tips

Family Communication Plan

Make sure everyone in your family knows what to do and how to stay in touch during a disaster:

- **Contact Information:** Write down phone numbers and addresses of all family members.
- **Meeting Points:** Decide on two places to meet - one near your home and one outside your neighborhood.
- **Emergency Contacts:** Choose an out-of-town contact everyone can check in with.

Important Documents

Keep copies of critical documents in a safe place:

- **Identification:** Birth certificates, driver's licenses, passports.
- **Insurance:** Home, health, and vehicle insurance policies.
- **Medical Records:** Prescriptions, medical histories, and important health information.



General Preparedness Tips

Home Safety Measures

Make your home as safe as possible:

- **Secure Heavy Items:** Fasten shelves, bookcases, and other heavy objects to walls.
- **Fire Safety:** Install smoke detectors and have fire extinguishers on hand.
- **Carbon Monoxide:** Install carbon monoxide detectors and check the batteries regularly.
- **Utility Shutoff:** Know how to turn off gas, water, and electricity in case of an emergency

Pet Safety

Don't forget about your furry friends:

- **Pet Kit:** Include food, water, medications, and a leash or carrier.
- **Identification:** Make sure your pets have collars with updated tags.
- **Evacuation Plan:** Know which shelters or hotels accept pets.

Disaster-Specific Preparedness

Different types of natural disasters require different preparation and response strategies. Here's what you need to know for each type of disaster.

We will provide preparedness and response tips for the following disasters:

- Hurricanes
- Tornadoes
- Freezes
- Flooding
- Extreme Heat

Remember to always consult your local city, state, or county for current preparedness and response guidelines.



Disaster-Specific Preparedness

Hurricanes

Preparation Before Hurricane Season:

- Know Your Evacuation Zone: Find out if you live in a hurricane evacuation area.
- Emergency Kit: Ensure your emergency kit is stocked and ready.
- Home Protection: Install storm shutters or board up windows and doors.
- Plan Ahead: Know the location of nearby shelters and plan your evacuation route.

During the Hurricane:

- Stay Indoors: Remain inside and away from windows.
- Monitor Updates: Keep a battery-powered radio handy for updates.
- Emergency Contacts: Stay in touch with family and friends, and let them know you are safe.

After the Hurricane:

- Safety First: Avoid floodwaters and downed power lines.
- Inspect Damage: Check your home for structural damage before entering.
- Report Issues: Contact authorities to report any hazards or issues.

Disaster-Specific Preparedness

Tornadoes

Recognizing Tornado Warnings:

- Watch vs. Warning: Know the difference—a watch means conditions are favorable, a warning means a tornado has been spotted.
- Alert Systems: Sign up for local alert systems to receive warnings.

Safe Places and Shelters:

- Designate a Safe Room: Identify a small, windowless room on the lowest level of your home.
- Community Shelters: Know the location of nearby tornado shelters.

During the Tornado:

- Seek Shelter: Immediately go to your designated safe place.
- Cover Up: Protect your head and neck with your arms and put on sturdy shoes.

After the Tornado:

- Stay Alert: Continue to listen to updates in case of additional tornadoes.
- Help Others: Check on neighbors and offer help if it is safe to do so.

Disaster-Specific Preparedness

Freezes

Preparing Your Home:

- **Insulate Pipes:** Prevent pipes from freezing by insulating them.
- **Weatherproofing:** Seal windows and doors to keep the cold out.
- **Heat Sources:** Ensure you have safe, alternative heat sources if needed.

Staying Warm Safely:

- **Layer Clothing:** Wear several layers of clothing to stay warm.
- **Use Heaters Safely:** Follow safety guidelines for space heaters and fireplaces.

After the Freeze:

- **Check Pipes:** Inspect for any burst pipes and address immediately.
- **Avoid Driving:** Stay off icy roads until conditions improve.

Disaster-Specific Preparedness

Flooding

Floodproofing Your Home:

- Elevate Items: Move valuable items to higher levels of your home.
- Install Backflow Valves: Prevent water from backing up into your home.

Evacuation Routes:

- Plan Ahead: Know your evacuation routes and have a plan in place.

During a Flood:

- Move to Higher Ground: If flooding begins, move to higher ground immediately.
- Avoid Floodwaters: Never walk or drive through floodwaters.

After a Flood:

- Inspect for Damage: Check your home for water damage and mold.
- Stay Informed: Listen to local news for safety updates.



Disaster-Specific Preparedness

Extreme Heat

Staying Cool:

- Stay Indoors: Remain in air-conditioned spaces as much as possible.
- Hydrate: Drink plenty of water to stay hydrated.
- Limit Outdoor Activities: Avoid strenuous activities during peak heat.

Recognizing Heat-Related Illnesses:

- Symptoms: Know the signs of heat exhaustion and heat stroke (e.g., heavy sweating, dizziness, nausea).
- Action: Seek immediate medical attention if someone shows symptoms of heat stroke.

Helping Vulnerable Populations:

- Check on Neighbors: Ensure elderly and vulnerable individuals are safe and cool.
- Community Resources: Know where cooling centers are located in your area.



Emergency and Non-Emergency Contacts

911

For immediate emergencies police, fire, or medical assistance. This number is for urgent, life-threatening situations where immediate response is crucial.

211

For health and human services, including housing, food resources, healthcare, and mental health support.

311

Use 311 for non-emergency city services such as reporting potholes or broken streetlights. It's also useful for obtaining information about public services, and local government programs.

988

For immediate mental health crises, including suicidal thoughts, severe depression, or anxiety.



Important Numbers



Major Cities in Texas

Here are specific non-emergency contact numbers for some major Texas cities:

Houston

- Non-Emergency Police: 713-884-3131

Dallas

- Non-Emergency Police: 214-744-4444

Austin

- Non-Emergency Police: 512-974-5000

San Antonio

- Non-Emergency Police: 210-207-7273

Fort Worth

- Non-Emergency Police: 817-392-4222

El Paso

- Non-Emergency Police: 915-832-4400



Important Numbers



Statewide Emergency Resources

- Texas Division of Emergency Management:
512-424-2208

National Emergency Contacts

- Federal Emergency Management Agency
(FEMA): 1-800-621-3362
- American Red Cross: 1-800-733-2767

Non-Emergency Support Services

- Texas Health and Human Services: 1-877-541-
7905

Mental Health Resources

- Aspen Counseling and Wellness: 713-581-4527
- Mental Health Texas:
<https://mentalhealthtx.org/>

Final Thoughts

We hope this guide has provided you with valuable information and practical tips to help you face any emergency with confidence.

Keep your emergency kit stocked, stay informed about potential hazards, and have a plan in place. Don't forget to regularly update your information and practice your emergency plans with your family.

Stay Connected

For the most up-to-date information and alerts:

- Sign Up for Local Alerts: Visit your local city or county website to sign up for emergency notifications and updates.
- Stay Informed: Follow local news, weather updates, and trusted social media accounts for real-time information.

Stay safe, and stay prepared.