

Epilepsy, Climate Emergencies & Disasters

Disasters and unexpected or severe weather can happen anytime, in any part of the country. From earthquakes, bushfires, storm damage or floods, we all may be in the path of a nature-related emergency at some time. Thinking and planning ahead can lessen the damage and even save lives.

If you or a loved one lives with epilepsy or any chronic health condition, here are some things to think about, beyond food and shelter, to help you stay safe.

Have a Plan for Emergencies

Your family may not be together if a disaster strikes, so work out how you'll contact one another and reconnect if separated. If appropriate, establish a family meeting place that's familiar and easy to find. Depending on the type of weather emergency you are expected to experience, it is important to plan whether you are going to stay or leave.

How will you receive early emergency alerts and warnings? Find out local services or Apps (such as Country Fire Service) for your area and connect with them to be contacted with alerts.

Consider specific needs in your household.

As you prepare your plan tailor your plans and supplies to your specific daily living needs and responsibilities. Keep in mind some these factors when developing your plan:

- Different ages of people within your household – are there children at school or childcare?
- Responsibilities for helping others
- Locations frequently visited
- Medical needs including prescriptions and equipment
- Disabilities or access and functional needs including devices and equipment
- Pets or service animals

Medication supplies

Always keep enough medication or have back up of medication, especially in seasons and locations where you are more likely to endure an emergency such as a cyclone or bushfire. If you are aware of an impending storm or natural event and you are running out of medication, don't wait. Contact your doctor or pharmacy to stock up.



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NATIONAL EPILEPSY LINE

Answers for all your epilepsy related questions

1300 37 45 37

Call: 1300 37 45 37

Book Online: [Click here](#) to book a telehealth or phone appointment with an epilepsy nurse

Available Australia-wide



Have an emergency kit ready

Keep important documents, including your medication scripts and your [seizure management plan](#), current and accessible so you can grab it in an emergency.

A [seizure first aid poster](#) may also be a good idea. Make sure you have a list of your medications, important documents, and, if possible, a supply of medication with you at all times in a water-tight bag or container.

Keep your battery-operated radio and torch in this kit as well and have a store of an emergency supply of non-perishable food and water.

There are a number of online emergency plan checklists available in your state. Have a look at the [Red Cross checklist](#).

Charge phones and devices

Keep your phone and any electronic devices charged that you may need for reminders and contact with family and emergency response. Think about purchasing a mobile power bank (portable phone charger) for extra charge when the power is out.



Communication – include others

Talk about your plan to family, neighbours and friends. Discuss:

- potential emergencies with all household residents. For example, bushfires, severe storms, flooding
- how you plan to respond to each potential disaster
- what to do during power outages and if a personal injury occurs
- household roles during each emergency situation

Have flexibility in your plan as things don't always go as planned. Check in with family or friends on a regular basis. If you are alone, consider staying with someone temporarily or use a shelter.



Stay informed

Check radio, website, social media and news updates. Listen to the weather stations and know your total fire bans. Make sure you have a battery-operated radio if there is a power blackout. Subscribe to any local warning apps or calls.



Where to access warnings

There are many ways for you to access warning information. The Bureau of Meteorology often give warnings well in advance:

- Internet – [Bureau of Meteorology](#) website
- Radio – tune into your local station
- Television – watch out for televised weather updates and news reports if you have power
- [BOM's telephone weather service](#)
- Geoscience Australia [Earthquakes@GA](#)

Know when to leave and where to go.

Know what to do and where to go to stay safe. Make sure you know local evacuation routes and check with your local emergency preparedness authorities or shelters about their policies for pets and animals.

Before you evacuate, remind your family or other household members of your central contact point in case you get separated.

Make sure each household member has important phone numbers with them.

You must have a plan B if it becomes too dangerous to leave or you are unable to drive. Expect the unexpected and be prepared for several possibilities.

Services to contact if you are affected

Life threatening emergencies (Police/Fire/Ambulance) – 000 (mobiles 000 and 112)

State Emergency Services (SES) – 132 500

[Red Cross Register](#). Find. Reunite. system – once you have registered, it will help your friends and family locate you. The system can be accessed during a disaster by:

- visiting the Australian [Red Cross website](#)
- phoning the Australian Red Cross on **1800 100 188**
- visiting an evacuation centre.

