



# BE PREPARED FOR A FINANCIAL EMERGENCY



**FEMA**

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You've worked hard to care for your home and save for the future, but disasters can lead to financial emergencies. A financial emergency is any expense or loss of income you do not plan for, like a missed paycheck, a damaged roof, a flat tire, or medical bill.

Financial emergencies may include car damage, unemployment, medical treatment, property damage, or family emergencies.



6 out of 10 households in America experience at least one financial emergency in a year.



About 1/3 of American families do not have any savings.



Almost half of Americans would struggle to come up with \$400 to help cover an emergency.

## TAKE ACTION TO PROTECT YOURSELF IN THE EVENT OF A FINANCIAL EMERGENCY

Start an emergency savings account to prepare for unexpected financial emergencies or disasters.



Review insurance policies regularly. Ensure you have the right types and amounts of coverage.

Protect important records and document your possessions.



Create and update your emergency plan.

After a disaster, contact your insurance company as soon as possible.



Look into assistance options after the disaster by logging on to [DisasterAssistance.gov](http://DisasterAssistance.gov), visiting a Disaster Recovery Center in your community, or dialing 211 for a referral for community-based resources.

# HOW TO PREPARE FOR A FINANCIAL EMERGENCY

## NOW

**Start an emergency savings account.** Saving even small amounts like \$5 or \$10 a week is a good place to start. Make a budget to estimate monthly income and expenses. Reduce debt by making regular payments of at least the minimum due and pay your bills on time to maintain a good credit rating.

**Review your insurance coverage** including flood, health, and homeowners or renters insurance. Remember, flood insurance typically takes 30 days to go into effect. You'll want to renew your insurance every year.

**Create and update your emergency plan.** Consider using the Emergency Financial First Aid Kit (EFFAK) as a guide. By having a plan in place, you will be better prepared in case of an emergency.

**Keep important records safe** and save important receipts. Store them digitally and in a waterproof, fireproof container.

**Protect your property** by taking photos and videos of household items in case you need to repair, replace, or rebuild after a disaster.

**Keep cash in a secure place** so that you are able to access it in case of an emergency and Automatic Teller Machines (ATMs) are not available.

**Contact a qualified financial counselor or coach.** Contact local organizations and non-profits that employ qualified and nationally certified counselors or coaches to receive guidance on how to organize your finances before and after an emergency.

## DURING

**Use emergency savings** for purchasing essentials like food, gas, and temporary lodging.

**Contact credit card companies and lenders** to learn about payment options to avoid late penalties, interest charges, and damages to your credit.

**List current expenses** and negotiate with lenders for extensions.

**Reach out for assistance** by logging on to [DisasterAssistance.gov](https://www.DisasterAssistance.gov), visiting a Disaster Recovery Center in your community, or dialing 211 for a referral for community-based resources.

**Contact community organizations,** like food banks and faith-based organizations, for assistance to help cover daily essentials and to connect you with additional resources.

## AFTER

**Log onto [DisasterAssistance.gov](https://www.DisasterAssistance.gov)** to find out if you qualify for financial disaster relief. Visit a Disaster Recovery Center in your community for important resources for relief by FEMA and community and faith-based organizations.

**Make a list of all property damage** and contact your insurance company as soon as you can.

**File a flood insurance claim** and work with your insurance adjuster and insurance agent to receive guidance through the process.

**Be cautious of scams** after disasters. Don't give out your personal identification numbers.

**Prioritize your spending** and take inventory of your credit cards. Create a list to get all of your information in one place, understand your spending needs, and protect your credit.

**Research tax breaks** you might qualify for based on your situation.

**Turn off utilities** to save on expenses if you are unable to live in your home.



**FEMA**

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## Take an Active Role in Your Safety

Go to [Ready.gov/financial-preparedness](https://www.Ready.gov/financial-preparedness) to receive more information on how to prepare for a financial emergency.