

Prepare for the Unexpected: Four Steps to Protect Your Finances in a Disaster

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CHICAGO – April is [National Financial Capability Month](#) and an opportunity to take action to improve your financial future while considering the financial resources you may need to rebuild in case of a disaster or other emergency.

"Disasters can be unpredictable and often create financial challenges to fully recover. Everyone must have a financial plan to face emergencies, big or small," said Thomas C. Sivak, regional administrator, FEMA Region 5. "Financial plans provide essential recovery tools for individuals and families and help to create more prepared communities and a more ready nation."

1. **Set aside enough cash to get you and your family through multiple days after an emergency.** This is especially important if ATMs, banks and credit card machines aren't functioning due to an extended power outage. Include smaller bills as well, in case stores can't make change. If putting aside that much money isn't an immediate option, consider saving in smaller increments to eventually save the amount you may need.
2. **Gather financial and critical personal, household and medical information.** Have extra originals or copies of passports, driver's licenses, birth and marriage certificates, adoption decrees, Social Security cards and military records stored in a safe, easily accessible location—such as a safe deposit box, external hard drive or the cloud—to avoid any issues.
3. **Implement multi-factor authentication on your accounts and think before you click.** By implementing a second layer of identification, like a confirmation text message or email, a code from an authentication app, a fingerprint or Face ID, or best yet, a [FIDO key](#), you're giving your bank or any other site you're logging into the confidence that it really is you. And remember: if you're sent a link you don't recognize, trust your instincts, and think before you click. These simple steps can help protect your personal information every day, but especially after a disaster, when scam artists and other criminals often attempt to take advantage of disaster survivors. Learn



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more about ways to keep yourself secure online by visiting www.cisa.gov/shields-up.

4. **Obtain property insurance.** Talk to your insurance agent about the coverage your home may need. Review existing policies and ensure the amount and extent are adequate to cover losses from any possible hazard. With the increased flood risk in warmer spring months, keep in mind that homeowner's insurance doesn't typically cover flooding, so you may need to purchase flood insurance from the National Flood Insurance Program. Learn more about your flood insurance options by visiting www.FloodSmart.gov.

An easy way to start preparing your finances for an emergency is by completing an [Emergency Financial First Aid Kit](#). This important document offers guidance on organizing and securing important documents, provides important advice on managing finances, and describes what to expect should a disaster strike your community. For even more information on how to financially prepare for an unexpected emergency or disaster, visit www.ready.gov/financial-preparedness.

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FEMA's mission is helping people before, during, and after disasters.

