

# Are you in Disaster Denial?

Have you ever postponed thinking about, or acting on, information that makes you nervous? If so, it's not your fault. Studies have shown that we are all inclined to be 'unrealistically optimistic'—we can be given a very clear assessment of the future and still feel "it will be fine." People can overcome this feeling by taking reasonable and realistic steps to reduce their chances of being hurt in a disaster.



## Signs of denial:

### If it's my time to go, there's nothing I can do.

People often use fate as an excuse to get out of taking action, but there is a flaw to this logic—it is very rare to be killed by a disaster. It really makes sense to take simple steps to reduce the likelihood of having your property ruined and being physically harmed. The odds are that a disaster will not be your 'time to go.' So you are going to need access to supplies and information after all. Following a few simple steps can help you get through a disaster with a reduced chance of injury, and can provide you with ways after a disaster to locate and communicate with the people in your life who mean the most to you.



### Planning for disasters will make them happen.

Forest fires, severe weather, wind storms, and tornados are all a part of our area. They happen regularly and with an almost predictable frequency. They are going to keep happening. Despite any negotiating you may have done, or private understanding you have, with the powers-that-be, these disasters are going to happen on their schedule, not yours. The ironic twist is that the people who have taken steps to plan often end up feeling like the experience was not such a big disaster. It is those people caught by surprise who endure the hardest experiences. Not planning is the element that leads to disaster.

### I choose not to live in fear.

Taking steps to reduce specific risks is logical and something you do every day. You do it every time you brush your teeth and any time you look both ways before you cross the street. Our region faces real severe weather hazards and other hazards. It is logic, not fear, that inspires us to take steps to reduce the impact of these natural processes.

### There's no way I can afford to store supplies.

The periods of your life when resources are very tight are times when it is even more important to spend time reducing risks and creating options for yourself and your family. Many people just live day to day. When resources are extremely tight, you still have ways you can increase the security of your family. Aside from careful planning, which is a vital first step, get in the habit of buying just one item per week or per month that you might need in your disaster supplies. That way, even for just a power outage, if not an outright disaster, you will have the resources you need to help you get through until services are restored. Slowly increase these back-up supplies over time as you can afford them.

### I don't need to prepare, my faith will see me through.

Our area is at risk for severe weather, forest fires, tornadoes, chemical spills with our major interstate running through our county, and even terrorist attacks. We have been given enough information to see what they are going to do, and to understand what can happen to the buildings and objects around us when these disasters occur. Choosing not to recognize this reality is the equivalent of insisting on a miracle on your behalf. Your faith can carry you through scary times, but it is a sign of caring and respect, for yourself, your family, and your community, to prepare for disastrous situations.

## SOLUTION:

None of us know when or where disaster will strike, but we can be ready, resilient and safe during

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1. *make a plan*
  2. *build a kit*
  3. *get involved*

emergencies by preparing in the following 3 ways.

1. **Make A Plan:** Know the hazards in your area, have an evacuation and communication plan with your family and practice it.
2. **Build A Kit:** A minimum 3 days survival kit at home, in each car, at work, and at each child's school or daycare, and remember your pets' needs as well.
3. **Get Involved:** Learn CPR and first aid, talk with your neighbors about responding to emergencies in your neighborhood.



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