

Some of the things you can do to prepare for the unexpected, such as making an emergency supply kit and developing a family communications plan, are the same for both a natural or man-made emergency. However, there are important differences among natural disasters that will impact the decisions you make and the actions you take. Some natural disasters are easily predicted, others happen without warning. Planning what to do in advance is an important part of being prepared.

Find out what natural disasters are most common in your area. You may be aware of some of your community's risks: others may surprise you. Historically, **flooding** is the nation's single most common natural disaster. Flooding can happen in every U.S. state and territory. **Earthquakes** are often thought of as a West Coast phenomenon, yet 45 states and territories in the United States are at moderate to high risk from earthquakes and are located in every region of the country. Other disasters may be more common in certain areas. **Tornados** are nature's most violent storms and can happen anywhere. However, states located in "Tornado Alley," as well as areas in Pennsylvania, New York, Connecticut, and Florida are at the highest risk for tornado damage. **Hurricanes** are severe tropical storms that form in the southern Atlantic Ocean, Caribbean Sea, Gulf of Mexico, and in the eastern Pacific Ocean. Scientists can now predict hurricanes, but people who live in coastal communities should plan what they will do if they are told to evacuate.

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