A CAREGIVER’S GUIDE TO DISASTER PREPARATION

Emergency Planning and Caring for Those with Alzheimer’s Disease and Other Related Dementias
This planning guide is offered to caregivers of those with Alzheimer’s disease and other related dementia for guided support before and during times of disasters. It is one of several resources that are needed to help families plan for emergencies, care for their loved ones, and return safely to their homes in the Charleston, Dorchester, and Berkeley Counties of South Carolina.

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“We often think about hurricanes in the tri-county area, but actually, tornados, earthquakes, and fires can strike at any time.”
– Red Cross Shelter Leader

Whether you are new to caregiving or a seasoned helper, caring for someone with Alzheimer’s disease or a related dementia (ADRD) during a natural disaster is not an easy task.

Which emergency actions are needed will depend on several factors:

1) Are other family members of the age and ability to provide assistance?

2) At what stage of dependency and health is the person with ADRD?

3) What type of natural disaster is forecast (hurricane, tornado, flood, fire, earthquake)?

Be prepared! Have your action plan and family evacuation kit up-to-date and readily accessible at all times. Have a back-up plan for when you’re not home.

Register loved ones at www.alz.org Safe Return; acquire a wearable MedicAlert ID.

Purchase property insurance. Once a tropical storm or hurricane watch is issued, insurance companies will not write new or additional insurance coverage policies, which may not take effect for 30 days.

Be effective! The best way to care for someone else is to take care of yourself. Stay nourished, hydrated, cool/warm, focused, and calm.

Action Plan For Hurricanes
And Other Disasters

- Talk to your care-receiver and other family members, as well as paid caregivers or home health personnel, about storm preparation and develop an action plan

- If you live in a flood zone or an area prone to severe weather, review and practice your plan every six months

- Collect and assemble an emergency evacuation kit for all members

- Know your evacuation route; download the S.C. Emergency Manager Mobile App

- Keep your car or vehicle trip-ready: serviced, maintained, fueled, or charged

- Keep enough cash on hand to travel for three days

- Keep emergency numbers and shelter locations up-to-date

- Keep weather radio operable and handy. Recharge often

- Take First Aid, CPR, and AED classes at a local American Red Cross chapter

- Develop a “Remember To” checklist and assign duties to all members

- Prepare to be self-sufficient for at least 3 days (water, food, clothing, and other supplies)

- Know where and how to shut-off utility valves and switches

- If asked to evacuate, GO IMMEDIATELY
**Emergency Contacts**

Keep emergency contact information inside a protective sleeve in a safe place and copy it to your cell phone for a quick reference. Give a copy, as well, to persons identified as emergency contacts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relative’s Name</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Email</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friend’s Name</td>
<td>Phone</td>
<td>Email</td>
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**Utility Companies**

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<tr>
<th>Electric</th>
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<th>Website</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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**Other Important Numbers**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employer</th>
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<th>Website</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<th>House of Worship</th>
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<td>Phone</td>
<td>Website</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pharmacy</td>
<td>Phone</td>
<td>Email</td>
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<tr>
<td>Insurance Agency</td>
<td>Phone</td>
<td>Website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEMA—Federal Emergency Management Agency</td>
<td>Phone 1 (800) 621-3362</td>
<td>Website FEMA.gov</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Out-of-state Contacts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Website/email</th>
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Other Numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other Important Numbers</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Website/email</th>
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Emergency Alert Systems

The following radio/television stations are key participants in the Emergency Alert System and ETV Radio Network, which broadcasts emergency information throughout the state. Visit nws.noaa.gov/nwr/outages/outages.php for outage information.

**Radio**
- WIWF 96.9 FM
- WEZL 103.5 FM

**NOAA Weather Radio**
- Charleston 162.550 and 162.450
- Berkeley 162.550 and 162.475
- Dorchester 162.550, 162.525, 162.475, 162.450

**Websites You May Need**—The websites below may be useful, although not all are official government sites and may not be completely up-to-date or accurate.

**Situation Reports and News**
- S.C. Emergency Management Division (EMD) scemd.org
- Charleston Co. EMD charlestoncounty.org
- Dorchester Co. EMD dorchestercounty.net
- Berkeley Co. EMD berkeleycountysc.gov

**Other Useful Sites**
- National Hurricane Ctr. nhc.noaa.gov
- Traffic Information Dept. of Public Safety sctraffic.org
- Amer. Red Cross Safe & Well redcross.org/safeandwell
- S.C. Salvation Army doingthemostgood.org

**Other Useful Sites**
- S.C. Ed. TV/Radio scetv.org and etvradio.org
- Federal Emergency Management Agency fema.gov
- S.C. Insurance Association scinsurance.net
- S.C. Commission For Minority Affairs -cma.sc.gov.

**Free Service to Contact Family and Friends**

Phone lines and computers can fail during storms. **Before you evacuate, register online at The American Red Cross Safe and Well website (redcross.org /safeandwell)** to let family and friends know your status and plan. The free, easy-to-use tool is always available during large disasters and promoted in the national media.

People who search the site see only the registrant’s name, registration time, and a standard message—no personal information is given, and your privacy is maintained. Likewise, persons concerned about your safety can contact their local Red Cross to initiate an Emergency Welfare Information Request. Red Cross volunteers search for individuals, render aid, and facilitate communication with worried loved ones.
Have on hand

- **Emergency Kit** — packed with personal and survival items and up-to-date medical records and insurance papers
- **Cash** for three days — if required to evacuate, banks will close and *ATM and credit card machines will not operate without power*
- **Car Supplies** — first aid kit, blankets, nonperishable food, water, jumper cables, flashlight, pillows, music, chargers for cell phones/tablets
- **NOAA weather radio**
- **Evacuation route** information and maps

Call, email, and register

- **Contact an out-of-area relative** or friend and tell them your plan. Have both in-town and out-of-town support available. Register at the Red Cross website: redcross.org/safeandwell
- **Contact paid caregivers and home health personnel.** Tell them your plan, ask for their evacuation schedule, and set a date and ways to communicate after the storm

Secure house or apartment

- **Sanitize bathtub and fill** with water to use upon return if needed
- **Turn off your water** at the utility meter before you evacuate. After the storm, turn it back on and flush pipes for 3 minutes before drinking any water from the tap
- **Leave on** your gas and electric utilities, including your air-conditioning unit
- **Close shutters and secure windows/doors;** move valuables to high shelves
- **Update insurance policies.** If your house is damaged and unsafe, you may need to pay both mortgage and rent for six months or more
- **Make arrangements for pets;** they are **NOT allowed** in disaster shelters. If they travel with you, bring pet supplies, medical records, pet ID, picture with owner

Evacuate early

- **Leave when evacuations are advised** for hurricanes or immediately when told for floods or fire
- **Fuel up days** before you go — area gas stations will run out of gas
**Storm Emergency Kit**

**Emergency Kit with ID Tag.** Choose a sturdy, easy-to-carry bag or backpack with lots of compartments for quick accessibility. Once filled, the luggage may weigh over 15 pounds. Bags with rollers or shoulder straps can assist with transport and allow for a free hand to guide the person with ADRD.
- First aid kit/manual—bandages, pain meds, tweezers, antidiarrheal medicine, soap, sunscreen, latex gloves, ointment, lubricant, safety pins, tape
- Cell phone—extra battery, charger
- Battery-powered radio/TV—extra batteries
- Flashlights/light sticks, batteries, bug repellant
- Whistle and flag to call for help
- Cash (no ATM/credit cards without power)
- Roadmaps, extra car keys, cables, get gas
- Health masks, incontinence and hygiene items (toothbrush/paste, moist towelettes/hand sanitizer, soap, towels, toilet paper)
- 3-day supply of nonperishable food
- Plates, bowls, disposable cups, eating/cooking utensils, manual can opener
- Garbage bags and ties; paper towels, baggies
- 3-day supply of water—one gallon of water per person, per day. No glass containers
- Wrench, screwdrivers, grill lighter, matches in waterproof container, duct tape
- Medical alert tags or bracelets; photo ID
- Special items for all family members, e.g., prescription meds and list of meds, eye glasses, contact lens and solutions, hearing aid and batteries, thermometer
- Extra clothing, rain gear, sturdy shoes
- Recent photo of evacuees with family member; photo with pets
- Paper/pens; books, music, cards, and games
- Pillows, sheets, sleeping bags, blanket
- Unique family needs—safety deposit box key
Medications
Plan for a possible 3- to 14-day disruption in your ability to get prescriptions refilled.

Ask your doctors which of your medications are critical and which you can do without for a few days. Ask how you can get an emergency supply of medications. If you can’t get an extra supply, ask if you can go without one dose periodically so you have enough for an emergency.

Get extra copies of prescriptions and add them to your emergency documents in all kits.

Rotate your medications. Take older ones out of your supply kit and use them before the expiration date. Then replace them with a fresh supply.

Ask the pharmacist if your medications are heat or cold sensitive and the best way to store them.
If you receive medications or treatments (methadone, dialysis, infusion, chemo or radiation therapy, etc.) from a clinic or hospital, ask your doctor what to do in case of an emergency.
If you’re a smoker, know that smoking isn’t allowed in shelters. Put nicotine gum or patches in your evacuation kit; getting to an outside smoking area might be difficult.

Life in cramped, unheated shelters can increase the chances of pneumonia, influenza, and colds; stock kit with masks, vitamins/medications, hand sanitizers, etc. to guard against illness.

Emergency Food
Choose emergency food that:

Is ready-to-eat and has a long shelf life (does not need to be kept cold, prepared, or cooked).
Bring canned items (meats, fruits, vegetables, juices, milk), fruit bars, dry cereal/granola, peanut butter, crackers, nuts, dried fruit.

You are able to open (no breakable containers; take a manual can opener).

Is in containers that you are able to pick up and drink from (not too heavy).

For poststorm cooking, bring camping stove or charcoal grill (briquettes, matches, extra propane tanks and backup generator).

Emergency Documents
Scan items, such as driver’s licenses, SC ID card, military IDs, birth certificates, passports, and insurance policies to a web-based device or store them in plastic freezer bags to keep dry.

Copies of prescriptions. Carry emergency health information to provide directions to rescuers if you are unconscious or unable to speak. Include data about all family medications, equipment, allergies, communication limitations, preferred treatment, medical providers, power of attorney, living wills, wills, and important contact information.

Contact lists (page 3); Register for an Alzheimer’s Association Safe Return/MedicAlert program and bring a recent photo of ADRD person with family member.

Photograph items and list model/serial numbers for equipment (pacemaker, hearing aids, wheelchair, phone, tablets, etc.).
Transportation options are usually limited to driving or flying. Most tri-county area trains and buses do not operate during mandatory evacuations.

**Ready your car or vehicle during hurricane season.**

- Keep gas tanks above half full
- Have car serviced, tires checked, and oil changed
- Buy new windshield wipers
- Contact inland friends/family early on or make hotel reservations as storm approaches

**Local officials will issue orders based on evacuation zones below. Download the S.C. Emergency Manager Mobile App from the App Store or Google Play.**

- Take your storm emergency kit, keepsakes, and camping gear (stove, tent, bedding)
- Fuel up before you go. Leave as early as possible; roads will be congested/slow moving
- Plan to be in the car for several hours; often sitting in stalled traffic
- Many area gas stations, restaurants, and campgrounds will be closed
USE A SHELTER ONLY AS A LAST RESORT. During a disaster, the S.C. Department of Social Services (dss.sc.gov) is the lead agency for coordinating care operations. It partners with the American Red Cross to operate all tri-county area public shelters. In addition, DSS works with the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC), which manages the Special Medical Needs Shelters.

All shelters require one caregiver to accompany an ADRD evacuee. No pets allowed. No smoking or alcohol allowed. Take medications, medical supplies, medical equipment, sleeping bags, personal items, flashlights, phones and chargers with you to the shelter.

**American Red Cross Lowcountry (Shelters)**

Phone          (843) 764-2323
Website Facebook.com/LowcountryRedCross

**Charleston County**

Charleston County Emergency Citizen’s Information Line

(open only during emergencies for transportation to shelters) Phone             (843) 746-3900
Website charlestoncounty.org—choose Emergency Info tab

**DHEC Special Medical Needs Shelters (SMNS)**

DHEC shelters are only for ADRD persons (and others) with medical needs that require electricity for life-supporting equipment or oxygen therapy. ADRD persons with strictly functional needs, including all types/stages of dementia, must use the American Red Cross general population shelters noted above.

**During an event, DHEC will post a statewide toll-free triage number.** Call this phone number to determine the best shelter location for you and your family member.

For more information and eligibility requirements, visit DHEC Lowcountry Public Health Region’s website at scdhec.gov/HomeAndEnvironment/DisasterPreparedness.
Caring For Loved Ones

During an evacuation, a person with ADRD may not understand the chaotic happenings taking place, or how to react in a disaster. Changes in routine, travel, and environments may trigger agitation, pacing, wandering, sleep disturbance, delusions, or hallucinations.

It’s Best To

- Talk (or present a card) to the staff in a restaurant, hotel, shelter, or on an airplane and state that your loved one has dementia and may not understand what is happening
- Never leave a person with dementia alone; he or she may wander away and get lost
- Stay calm. The person with dementia will respond to the emotional tone you set

Minimize Agitation

- Reassure the person. Hold hands or put your arm on his or her shoulder. Say things are going to be fine and you need their help to stay calm
- Find outlets for anxious energy. Take a walk together or engage the person in simple tasks
- Redirect the person’s attention if he/she becomes upset. Sing a favorite song. Look at pictures
- Move the person to a safer or quieter place, if possible. Limit stimulation
- Make sure the person takes medications as scheduled
- Maintain routines for regular meals and sleep
- Avoid detailed explanations; patiently repeat answers as needed
- Provide additional assistance with all activities of daily living, as the person may be disoriented
- Pay attention to cues that the person may be overwhelmed (fidgeting, pacing, incontinent)
- Remind the person that he or she is in the right place and are safe

During Agitation Episodes

- If you’re traveling by car, pull off the road
- Approach the person from the front and use his or her name
- Reassure the person, using positive statements and a soft voice
- Respond to the emotions being expressed rather than the content of the words. For example, say, “It’s ok. I’m right here with you. We’ll go home when the storm is over, but for now, you can look at your photo album or listen to music while I drive”
- Provide a soft, cuddly stuffed animal for them to hold
- If you’re in a shelter, don’t argue with the person. Instead, try to divert their attention by singing a favorite song or assigning them a simple task such as sorting playing cards or folding clothes. A shelter can house over 500 people in one room and is not always a stable environment during a three-day stay

Take Care of Yourself

- Stay nourished, hydrated, cool/warm, focused, and calm
- Disasters are extremely stressful times that may last for days or weeks if the storm does extensive damage to your home
- Ask for help as you need it

Tornadoes

KNOW THE DIFFERENCE

Tornado Watch—watch and wait; listen to radio or TV for updates

Tornado WARNING—take action IMMEDIATELY

At Home

Stay away from windows, doors, and exterior walls. Go to interior rooms, closets, stairwells, or bathrooms on lower levels. Get in a bathtub and cover it with a sheet of plywood, mattress, blanket, sleeping bag. Use a bike helmet or even your hands to protect your head.

Get under something sturdy such as a heavy table or workbench.

Stay inside. Wait to hear an official message that the storm is over. Weather can get calm in the middle of a storm but then worsen again quickly.

In a Mobile Home

DO NOT STAY IN A MOBILE HOME DURING A TORNADO.

Go to a nearby building preferably one with a basement. If there is no shelter nearby, lie flat in the nearest ditch, shield your head with your hands.

On the Road

NEVER TRY TO OUTRUN A TORNADO IN YOUR CAR. If you see a tornado, stop your vehicle in an open area, not under an overpass.

NEVER get under your vehicle or hide under an overpass. Get as far away from your car as you can and avoid areas with many trees.

Enter a nearby building if possible and find cover.

Lie flat in a ditch and protect your head with an object or with your arms.
Make copies of important documents (mortgage, passports, power of attorney, living wills, wills, etc.) and take pictures of valued possessions

Have records of family members’ last tetanus shots, usually good for 10 years

Unplug electrical appliances

Sanitize sinks and bathtubs using bleach, then rinse and fill them with clean water

Bring inside: lawn furniture, grills and trash cans or tie them down securely

Outfit all family members with rubber boots, sturdy shoes, and waterproof jackets/gloves and wear insect repellent

Take your emergency kit and evacuate immediately when water starts to rise

If your vehicle stalls, abandon it, and move to higher ground

Don't walk through flooded areas. Just 6" of moving water can knock you off your feet

**Turn Around, Don’t Drown.** Just 2 feet of water can carry away a car

Be aware that flood waters often carry snakes and other wildlife

Listen to state and local officials for instructions on how to handle water for cooking, drinking, or cleaning after the storm
The U.S. Geologic Survey last updated this National Seismic Hazard Map in 2014. It reflects the most current understanding of where future earthquakes will occur, how often they will occur, and how hard the ground will likely shake as a result. In the last several years, data has not shown a significant change in the tri-county area’s status and the Lowcountry remains the highest risk on the East Coast.

During An Earthquake

**If you are inside a building:**
- Stay where you are until the shaking stops. **DO NOT RUN OUTSIDE**
- **Drop** down on your hands and knees; crawl for additional cover under a sturdy desk or table
- **Cover** your head and neck with your arms
- Stay away from glass, windows, outside doors and walls, and anything that could fall, such as light fixtures or furniture
- **Hold** on to any sturdy covering so you can move with it until the shaking stops
- Stay where you are until the shaking stops
- If you are in bed, stay there and cover your head and neck with a pillow

**If you are outside:**
- Move away from buildings, streetlights, and utility wires. Once in the open, “**Drop, Cover, and Hold On.**” If in a city, you may need to go inside a building to avoid falling debris.
A fire can double in size every 30 seconds and can burn down a two-story building in five minutes. Install smoke and carbon monoxide alarms, and fire extinguishers; and keep important papers in a waterproof fire safe.

If the fire is nearby (in your building) but not in your home or office:

- Stay inside, call 911. Then use the back of your hand to feel your door and doorknob for heat
- If HOT don’t open it. If they are not hot, open door slightly and check for smoke, heat, or fire
- If the hallway or stairwell is not safe because of smoke, heat, or fire, seal the doors with wet towels or sheets, and seal air ducts or other areas so smoke can’t enter
- Turn off air conditioners, fans, and/or heaters
- Open windows a few inches at top/bottom unless flames/smoke are coming from below doors
- Do not break any windows
- In life-threatening conditions, open a window and wave a towel or sheet to attract attention of firefighters or volunteers
- If smoke conditions worsen before help arrives, get down on the floor and take short breaths through your nose
- Cover nose and mouth with wet towel or cloth

If the fire is in your home and too large to extinguish:

- Get out quickly and stay low. Use the stairs; NEVER USE THE ELEVATOR
- Close but do not lock your doors
- When you reach a safe location, call 911
- If you have to navigate through smoke, stay close to the ground (smoke rises)

HOME SAFETY

Appliances:

- Heat-producing appliances such as toasters, irons, coffee makers, and curling irons should always be unplugged when not in use

Kitchen Safety:

Grease fires are extremely dangerous. To put out the fire quickly:

- Cover the pan with a flame-resistant cover large enough to fit the entire pan
- Pour enough baking soda (not baking powder!) over the fire to extinguish
- Keep on hand an ABC dry chemical fire extinguisher; know how to use it; check the recharge gauge and expiration date frequently
- If the fire is in the oven, turn off the oven and keep the door closed

You must smother any fire completely, and if you’re unable to do so, leave your home quickly, making sure to close your door, and call 911.
Caring For Pets

Be Prepared and Have a Plan

Microchip Your Pet

Microchips offer lifetime pet protection and a link to a permanent listing in a national lost pet database. This means anytime/anywhere pet recovery service—no matter how far your lost pet has traveled. Ask your veterinarian which area facilities can microchip your pet.

Get a Rescue Alert Sticker From the ASPCA

This easy-to-use sticker will let people know that pets are inside your home. Make sure it is visible to rescue workers, and that it includes 1) the types and number of pets in your household; 2) the name of your veterinarian; and 3) your veterinarian's phone number. If you must evacuate with your pets, write "EVACUATED" across the stickers.

Gather Documentation

Compile pet’s medical information.

Photograph pets with family members for identification with names.

Arrange a Safe Haven

Shelters do not accept pets. Determine your options and gather your pet supplies ahead of time. Contact your veterinarian for a list of preferred boarding kennels and facilities. Identify hotels or motels outside of your immediate area that accept pets. Ask friends and relatives outside your immediate area if they will take in your pet.

Pet Friendly Evacuation Shelter

The Charleston County Sheriff’s Office manages this shelter and will determine and announce its location at the time of the event on the S.C. Emergency Manager Mobile App and at scemd.org.

Please note: This shelter is designated for pets, not people. Only one person per pet allowed; you must bring all pet supplies.

DO NOT LEAVE YOUR PETS BEHIND
Emergency Supplies and Traveling Kits

Keep an Evac-Pack and supplies handy for your pets and include the following:

- Pet first-aid kit and guide book (ask your veterinarian what to include, or buy online at ASPCA)
- 3-7 days of treats, canned (pop-top) or dry food (be sure to rotate every two months)
  * Disposable litter trays (aluminum roasting pans are perfect)
  * Litter or paper towels for transport liners
- Liquid dish soap and disinfectant
- Disposable garbage bags for clean-up
- Pet feeding dishes
- Extra collar or harness as well as an extra leash
- Photocopies of medical records and waterproof container with 2-week supply of required medications (Change the kit’s food and medications often to prevent spoilage.)
  * Bottled water, at least a 3-day supply (3 gallons per person plus enough for each pet)
  * A travel bag, crate, or sturdy carrier, ideally one for each pet
- Blanket (for scooping up a fearful pet)
- Recent photos of you with your pets (in case you are separated and need to make "Lost" posters)
- Especially for cats: pillowcase or EvackSack, toys, treats, scoopable litter
- Especially for dogs: extra leash, toys, chews, and treats, a week's worth of cage liner
- Birds should be transported in a secure travel cage or carrier
- A snake may be transported in a pillowcase, but you should have permanent and secure housing for him when you reach a safe place
- For reptiles/amphibians, take a durable container large enough for your pet to soak in. Also bring a heating pad or other warming device, such as a hot water bottle for use as needed
- Lizards can be transported like birds (see above)
- Small animals, such as hamsters, gerbils, mice and guinea pigs, should be transported in secure carriers with bedding materials, food, and food bowls
Celebrating 22+ years of excellent service
to the Lowcountry of South Carolina

The ARK of SC’s mission is to provide hope and relief to families living with Alzheimer's disease or related dementias through support services such as respite care, support groups, education, caregiver consultations, resource referrals, and community development.

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