

Area Temporal Preparedness Guide: North America Northeast

WELFARE AND SELF-RELIANCE SERVICES

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Introduction

“For decades, the Lord’s prophets have urged us to store food, water, and financial reserves for a time of need. . . . I urge you to take steps to be temporally prepared.” —President Russell M. Nelson

Becoming more temporally prepared not only gives us a greater sense of security and stability, but it also allows us to better love our neighbor. When we are prepared, we are able to give of what we have to help others in times of need.

At times caring for our temporal needs may feel overwhelming. But remember that “by small and simple means are great things brought to pass” (Alma 37:6). When we act in faith and do our part to care for our temporal needs, God magnifies our small and simple efforts.

The following guidelines and activities can help you become more prepared.



Emergency
Planning



Home Storage
and Production



Financial
Preparedness



Emotional
Preparedness

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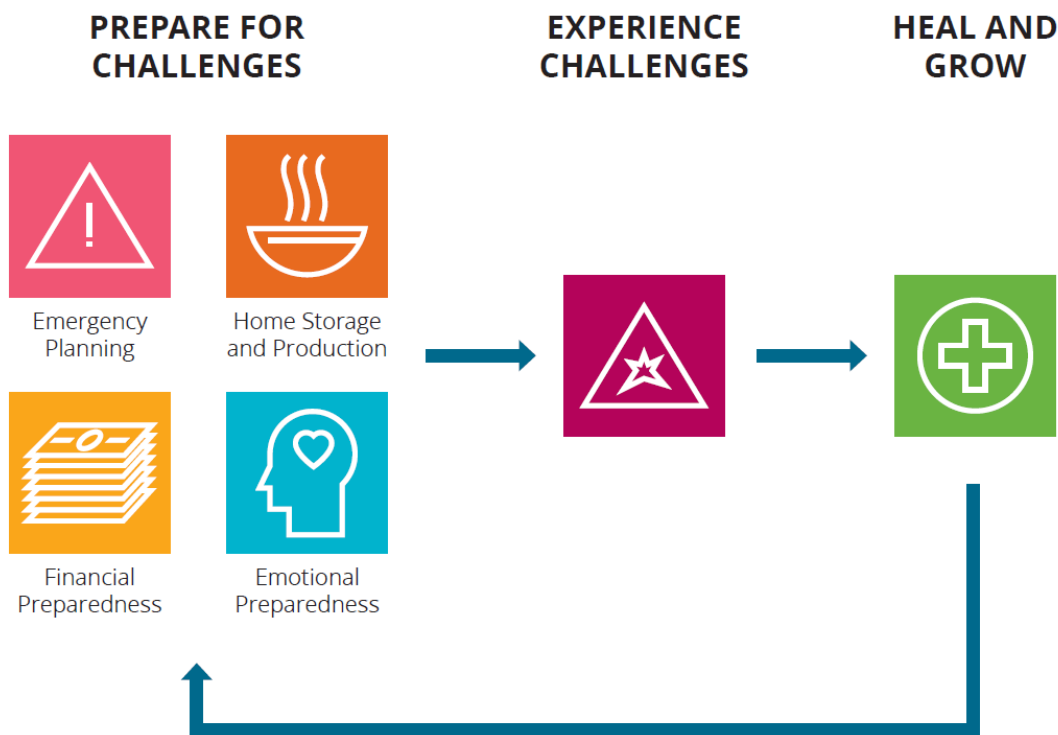
Emergency Planning Guidelines

Introduction

God has promised, "If ye are prepared ye shall not fear" (Doctrine and Covenants 38:30). When we have plans in place, we are more prepared for challenges. This includes:

- Emergency planning
- Home storage and production
- Financial preparedness
- Emotional preparedness.

Like spiritual learning, preparedness is best done "line upon line" (Isaiah 28:10). And when challenges occur, we can learn from



Elements of an Emergency Plan

Start by learning about the disasters that could happen where you live. Then prepare your home. Make an emergency kit. Create a plan for communicating and gathering during a disaster.



Preparing Your Home for Emergencies

General Preparation

There are many things you can do to prepare your home for potential emergencies. Consider the following.:

Utility Shut-off

Locate the shut-off valves and levers for utilities. Know how to turn off the water, electricity, and natural gas lines inside and outside your home.



Food, Water, and Non-food Essentials Home Storage

A store of food, water and non-food essentials can help when emergencies disrupt our daily lives. Consider storing the following: (additional detail can be found on pages 12-13).

- Store an emergency supply of non-perishable ready-to-eat foods as well as baby formula for those with infants or small children.
- Plan on one gallon of water per person per day for drinking, food preparation, and sanitation. Store enough water for three days.
- Store medical supplies, clothing, blankets, flashlights, extra batteries, sanitation supplies, and so on.

Cooking Solutions

An alternative cooking source allows you to prepare hot meals. Make sure to cook only in well-ventilated areas. Cooking sources can be:

- Canned heat or candle warmers (used under serving dishes).
- A wood-burning cook stove.
- A fireplace.
- Portable stoves (use outdoors only).

Emergency Kit

Create an emergency kit for your home, vehicle, and place of work (see page 6).

Preparing for Specific Disasters

Consider what disasters are common for your area and prepare for those specific emergencies. Here are some examples:

Common Disasters	Examples of How You Can Prepare
Flooding	Understand flood zones and keep debris clear of drainage areas.
Hurricanes	Plan how to protect home and property. Have reserve power and fuel supply ready. Understand evacuation routes and plan evacuation destination.
Extreme Storms, Tornadoes	Pre-determine safe shelter locations. Secure or get rid of outdoor items that could be picked up and thrown by the wind.



Preparing an Emergency Kit

An emergency kit can help you be prepared if you need to leave your home quickly or if you need to survive for a short period of time. Having a kit ready will help bring peace to your mind. When making a kit, consider:



Shelter:

Tents, blankets, and clothes.



Medical Supplies:

Prescriptions, medicines, first-aid items.



Food and Water:

Non-perishable ready-to-eat foods and clean water or a water filter.



Money:

Cash or valuables to trade for what you need.



Light:

Flashlight, batteries, candles, and matches.



Important Documents:

Identification, property, and vehicle records, financial and legal forms, medical information, insurance policies, and an emergency contact list.



Communication:

Battery-powered radio, phone with charger, backup battery.



Entertainment and Comfort Items:

Games, balls, puzzles, coloring books and crayons, books.

Additional Resources

Your local county and city are great sources of information on emergency planning. You can find more about this topic at the sites listed below:

- [ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov)
- [emergency.cdc.gov](https://www.emergency.cdc.gov)
- [fema.gov](https://www.fema.gov)
- [redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies.html](https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies.html)
- [savethechildren.org/us/what-we-do/us-programs/disaster-relief-in-america](https://www.savethechildren.org/us/what-we-do/us-programs/disaster-relief-in-america)



Disaster and Disruption Assessment Activity

“Let all things be prepared before you”
(Doctrine and Covenants 101:68).

Learn about Disasters

Answer the questions below to help you identify the most common disasters and disruptions where you live. This will help you know what to plan for.



What disasters are most likely where you live? List them below. (For example, tornadoes, floods, severe winter weather, and so on.)

What area of my life will they disrupt? Describe your answer below. (For example, a tornado could disrupt the power. I could be without heat and without the ability to use my stove and charge my phone.)

Refer to the “Planning for Disruptions” activity on page 8 to make a plan for these disruptions.



Planning for Disruptions Activity

Planning for Disruptions

Use this worksheet to plan for needs you could have after a disaster. Identify the things you can do or store to prepare for these disruptions.



Potential Disruption	Things you can do or store to prepare for these disruptions	
	Short-Term	Long-Term
Example: Clean water is unavailable	Keep an extra case of bottled water handy	Get and learn to properly use a water filter Have water stored in suitable container
Food is unavailable		
Need alternative cooking source		
Your shelter becomes damaged		
Need medical attention		
Need to communicate, but phones or internet are down		
Power sources don't work		
Heating or cooling doesn't work		
Need alternative transportation		
Feeling physically tired		
Feeling spiritually depleted		
Feeling emotionally worn-out		



Communication and Gathering Plan Activity

“Be thou prepared, and prepare for thyself, thou, and all thy company...”
(Ezekiel 38:7).



Communication Plan

Create a plan for contacting people in an emergency. You might:

- Make a list of emergency contacts. Include family members, friends, neighbors, Church leaders, and community resources.
- Memorize key phone numbers in case your contact list is unavailable.
- Plan other ways to make contact if you can't make a phone call. This might mean texting, instant messaging, or posting on social media.
- Choose a relative in another city to be an out-of-town contact. Plan for all family members to contact that person. They can tell their condition and location to the out-of-town contact. The out-of-town contact can pass information between family members.
- Update your information in the Church Member Tools App so leaders and others can reach you in an emergency.
- Complete the form below so you have this information handy in an emergency.

FAMILY CONTACTS	NEIGHBORS, CHURCH, WORK	MEDICAL, COMMUNITY, SCHOOL
Out-of-town contact:		

Gathering Plan

Pick a safe place where you and your family can find each other after an emergency. It is also a good idea to choose an alternate place. Gathering places may change depending on the disaster or where you are when the disaster happens. For example, if you're at school, you may not be able to go to the safe place near your home. Your gathering place should be somewhere where children can find a trusted adult.

Family gathering place:
Alternate family gathering place:
School or childcare gathering place:



Preparing for an Emergency Checklist

“And see that all these things are done in wisdom and order” (Mosiah 4:27).

Emergency Planning Checklist

This checklist can help you review what you need to do to become more prepared. Go through the list and check off the items you have. Then work to gather what you still need and write down things you need to do.

Once you have everything on your checklist, don't forget to check your emergency supplies regularly. Children grow out of clothes, food loses significant quality, and plans change. (Note: Most food is still good beyond the "Best If Used By" date. A non-perishable packaged food is not likely to become unsafe, but the quality will degrade over time. Pay attention to this as you cycle through supplies.) Revisit this list often and see what needs to be replaced or added. Add any action items below to help you complete your checklist.

Checklist:

Food and Water

- Supply of non-perishable food for ____ days
- ____ gallons of water per individual
- Cooking source
- _____ (Add your own)
- _____ (Add your own)

Emergency Kit

- Clothing
- Blankets
- Medical supplies
- Light source
- Critical documents (identification, financial, etc.)
- Communication method
- Communication and gathering plan
- _____ (Add your own)
- _____ (Add your own)

Home Preparation

- Knowledge of how to prevent home damage from basic services, such as gas, water, and electricity
- _____ (Add your own)



ACTION ITEMS



Local Resources for Emergency Planning



Home Storage and Production

Guidelines

Church leaders have counseled us to store a basic supply of food and water at home to prepare for times of need. In the Old Testament, Joseph interpreted Pharaoh's dream. Joseph said there would be seven years of plenty, followed by seven years of famine. Pharaoh asked Joseph to direct a food storage program to save Egypt from hunger. We, too, can plan ahead. When we have done all we can to prepare for times of need, we can live with peace of mind. "If ye are prepared, ye shall not fear". (Doctrine and Covenants 38:30) It can be easy to feel stressed about food storage. We all live in different circumstances, and some of us have limited finances or space in our homes. Bishop W. Christopher Waddell said, "God does not expect us to do more than we can do, but he does expect us to do what we can do, when we can do it" ("There Was Bread," Oct. 2020 general conference). We can start small and work "in wisdom and in order" (Mosiah 4:27.) See the categories of what to store below and details about each category on pages 13-14.



Short-term food supply

- Foods you normally eat.
- Canned and packaged foods that are fine unopened at room temperature.



Water

- 1 gallon (4 liters) of clean water for each person each day for at least 3 days, preferably 2 weeks or more.
- Filters or other ways to purify water if needed.



Longer-term food supply

- Basic staple foods such as grains and dry beans.
- Foods that can be stored for years, if packaged and stored properly (at 75°F/ 24°C or less).
- Foods that can sustain life.



Non-food essentials

- Basic supplies such as medications, flashlights, and sanitation supplies.



Storing Food and Necessities

Short-term Food Storage



Start by building a small supply with food that is part of your daily diet. Make a goal that is reasonable for your circumstances. It's OK to start with a small goal.

For example, start by having a one-week supply. Continue to build from there as you can. Think of foods you can use to make nutritious meals, even if you can't buy fresh items from the store. This storage would include canned and packaged items that don't spoil quickly.

Decide which foods and how much of each you want to keep on hand. As you prepare your regular meals, use this food in the order of oldest to newest. Then replace the items you have used by buying new ones.

Water



Water is crucial for life. Store at least 1 gallon (4 liters) for each person per day for 3 days. Where possible, store enough water for 2 weeks or more.

The need for water is greater in hot climates, or if one is preparing meals from dried foods.

If water comes directly from a good, pretreated source of drinking water, it doesn't need to be purified before storing. In case you need to use water that is impure, store a means of water purification, such as a water purification filter.

Use sturdy, leak-proof, break-resistant, food-grade containers. Never use plastic jugs that have been used for milk or items other than food.

Keep water containers away from heat sources and direct sunlight. Also avoid keeping water containers directly touching the ground or on cement. Store water where it would not cause damage if a container leaked.

For more information on water storage and purification, see the following resources:

- [ChurchofJesusChrist.org/topics/food-storage/drinking-water-guidelines](https://www.ChurchofJesusChrist.org/topics/food-storage/drinking-water-guidelines)

Longer-Term Food Storage



For longer-term needs, gradually build a storage of long-lasting foods that preserve life. Here is a list of basic foods that provide important components of a complete diet.

- Grains (such as white rice, wheat, corn, rolled oats, and pasta)
- Legumes (such as dry beans, peas, lentils, and soybeans)
- Sweeteners (sugar or honey)
- Non-fat dry milk
- Fats and oils (such as cooking oil)
- Salt and other seasonings
- Daily multivitamin supplement, vitamin C tablets, and dried fruits and vegetables
- For cooking: baking soda, baking powder, and yeast





Longer-term Food Storage, Continued

Many of these foods can last up to 30 years or more. But to last that long, they must:

- Be very dry foods that contain extremely low to no fat.
- Be stored at room temperature or below (75°F/ 24°C or less).
- Have packaging that keeps out moisture, oxygen, light, insects, and rodents.

Consider using Mylar bags or PET bottles with oxygen absorbers.

Collect recipes that use the long-lasting basics you store. Also, make sure to store any extra items you might need such as a can opener, or a grinder if you store whole grains.

For more details including information on amounts of food to store, shelf life, and packaging recommendations, see [ChurchofJesusChrist.org/topics/food-storage/longer-term-food-supply](https://www.ChurchofJesusChrist.org/topics/food-storage/longer-term-food-supply).

Non-Food Essentials



Store other necessities you would need for emergencies or in case they are not available to buy. Some essentials to store are:

- Candles, lanterns, or flashlights; matches; batteries
- Medications and first-aid supplies
- Hygiene supplies, such as soap, toilet paper, and feminine supplies
- Laundry supplies
- Basic cleaning supplies, including disinfectant wipes
- Diapers, baby formula, wipes for infants & small children
- Important documents (see page 6)
- Bedding
- Clothing, including some that young children can grow into
- A simple means of cooking without electricity
- A means of communicating with family
- Pet supplies: food, medication, extra collars/leashes



Food Storage FAQs



Where can I find room to keep food storage?

Store food in a clean, cool, dry place. It is best to store food at room temperature or below. Canned foods containing liquid should be protected from freezing. As a general rule, food storage containers should not be placed directly on concrete due to moisture concerns.

Here are a few storage ideas:

- On shelves or in cupboards
- In low boxes under beds
- On the floor or back wall of closets

You may find more space by:

- Removing unused items in your home.
- Reorganizing your cupboards.



What are some good ways to get started?

- Make a goal that fits your circumstances.
- Figure out what foods and what amounts you would like to store.
- Try one or more of the activities on pages 17 and 18.
- Visit [ChurchofJesusChrist.org/topics/food-storage/longer-term-food-supply](https://www.ChurchofJesusChrist.org/topics/food-storage/longer-term-food-supply).



How can I afford food storage?

Avoid debt or going to extremes with home storage. Work toward your goal gradually. Here are a few ideas:

- Buy one or two extra items during your regular shopping.
- Reduce some lower-priority expenses.
- Sell some possessions you don't need.
- Find ways to earn some extra money.



How can I regularly use and replenish my storage?

Use a system that works well for you. Here are a few ideas:

- When you use up a can or package, put it on your grocery list.
- Check frequently to make sure you still have your goal amount on hand.
- Organize items so you can tell which is oldest. Use the oldest first.



Food Production and Preservation

Producing and preserving your own food can help with your food supply. See tips below.

Gardening

Where land is available, you can plant a garden. Remember:

- To prepare the soil best for growing the foods you want to grow, you may need to add fertilizers and/or organic matter such as composted manure, leaves, etc.
- Plant foods that grow well in your local area.



You may also grow food in containers on a patio, balcony, or rooftop. Planting a vertical garden along a fence or wall can help you use unused space. Some food, such as herbs and microgreens can be grown indoors. For instructions on gardening, check local sources, such as government agencies. Also check out “Gardening” in Gospel Topics on the Church’s website.

Small-Animal Production

Raising small animals can provide you and your family or loved ones with a good protein source. Some animals best suited for raising at home are chickens, rabbits, and goats. If you decide to raise small animals, make sure that is allowed by your local laws and that space is available.



Preserving Food at Home

Preserving food at home can be a good option. Check to see how the cost, quality, and time involved compare with buying canned food.

Instructions for canning (bottling), dehydrating, or freezing food can be found online. For example:

- nchfp.uga.edu/how/can_home.html (canning)
- nchfp.uga.edu/how/dry.html (dehydrating)
- nchfp.uga.edu/how/freeze.html (freezing)





Planning Your Home Storage Activity

“Prepare ye for that which is to come...” (Doctrine & Covenants 1:12)

Plan to Build or Improve Your Food Storage

Fill out the chart below to help you plan your food storage. Then pick some activities from the next page to help you move forward. You could do these activities as a home evening or on your own.



Food Storage Assessment

What would you like your food storage goal to be?	
Which foods do you commonly eat that are shelf-stable (not requiring refrigeration before opening)	
Which meals could you make using only your stored foods?	
Where can you store food?	
How might you add to your food storage on a limited budget?	
What actions could you take next to build your food storage?	



Additional Activities for Individuals and Families

Family Goal

Make a food storage goal. For example:

- 1 week of food we regularly eat
- 1 extra bag of rice
- 3 gallons (12 liters) of water for each person

Let each family member choose a food item they would like to have in storage.

Water Storage

Do you have water that has been stored for a long time?

Empty the containers, and use the water to do cleaning, water plants, or another activity.

Replace the containers with fresh water. Mark the date on the container.

Non-Food Essentials Scavenger Hunt

Using the checklist on page 10, assign different family members to find different items. They can either write what they found and where they found it or take a photo. See how many items the family can find in 30 minutes. Afterward, write a list of what items you still need.

Meal Plans

Look at the canned or packaged foods you use regularly and make a few simple meal plans using only those foods. This helps you know what to buy for storage.

Creatively Fund Storage

Figure out ways to set aside money for food storage. For example, sell something you don't really need, or buy one extra item each week when shopping.

Food Storage Game

Make a game of listing the food you already have stored. Give each family member two to three food items to find. They can list the items and how many cans, boxes, or bags they find. Before starting, have family members guess what the numbers will be. See whose guess was closest.

Food Storage Meal-Making

Try making one or two meals a month using only items from your food storage.

Information Hunt

What questions do you have about food storage? Using the links in this guide or other sources, find the answers you need.

For example, look up facts about:

- Types of containers for storing water.
- Purifying water.
- Recipes using basic (long-term) storage foods.
- How to grow a certain vegetable.

Food Storage Space Hunt

As a family activity, explore your home looking for spaces where food could be stored. Is there unused space on shelves or in a closet? Is there space under a bed? Is an unneeded item taking up space? Take photos of the places you could make available for food storage.



Local Resources for Home Storage and Production



Financial Preparedness

Guidelines

Making wise choices with your money boosts your confidence and prepares you for life's ups and downs. Here are some guidelines to help you:

Avoid Debt

Debt can add up quickly, and paying interest adds to the cost. If you've gotten into debt, try to pay it as soon as possible. There are some reasons you may need to get a loan:

- Buying basic transportation if necessary.
- Getting an education that leads to better work.
- Buying an affordable home.

For other big purchases, save your money and buy it when you can afford to pay for it without going into debt.

Use a Budget

A budget helps you plan how to use your money each month. Committing to a budget will help you to build self-reliance. Resources can be found online (see the Personal Finances manual at [ChurchofJesusChrist.org/self-reliance/course-materials/personal-finances](https://www.ChurchofJesusChrist.org/self-reliance/course-materials/personal-finances)).

Financial Planning Tools

Use financial calculators to help you make wise money decisions. You can see how long it will take to pay off your debt, build an emergency fund, save for retirement, or save for a vacation.

(See [ChurchofJesusChrist.org/self-reliance](https://www.ChurchofJesusChrist.org/self-reliance).)





Build a One-Month Emergency Fund

Work to build a one-month emergency fund to protect you and your family from financial troubles. Like any goal, building up an emergency fund will take some time, and that is OK. You can start by putting any extra money you have toward your fund.

Save the money in a safe place, like a bank account. Do not use this money for anything other than emergencies. If you have an emergency and must use money from your emergency fund, begin putting money back into the fund as soon as possible.

Even if you have debt, make only the minimum required payment until you have built a one-month emergency fund. To reach your goal more quickly, you may want to find extra work or better work, sell some things you can live without, or get rid of unneeded costs.

Have Insurance

Insurance can help protect you financially. There are many types of insurance, but the four most common are:

- *Property insurance:* Examples are homeowner's, renter's, and auto insurance. This can help cover the cost to replace or repair property when there is serious damage, theft, or destruction, depending on the coverage you purchased.
- *Health insurance:* This insurance can help you cover the cost of healthcare. It may help you pay for checkups, medicine for sickness, or major medical events. Your need for health insurance may vary. Healthcare may also be a government service in your area.
- *Life insurance:* Life insurance provides a family with money if an insured family member dies. This can help a family stay safe if they lose their provider or if they need help covering costs associated with medical treatments or funeral.
- *Disability insurance:* This insurance guarantees that a part of the insured person's income will be paid if he or she becomes disabled and can't work for a long time. Employers will often provide this.



Put a Little Away

As you prepare for the future, save money where you can. You might also seek education and buy a home.

Seek Education

Consider certifications, trainings, and trade school, college, or university degrees that might enrich your mind and help you make a living.

“For members of the Church, education is not merely a good idea—it’s a commandment,” said President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, then of the First Presidency (“Two Principles for Any Economy,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2009, 58).

President Thomas S. Monson reminded us of the blessings of receiving an education: “Your talents will expand as you study and learn. You will be able to better assist your families in their learning, and you will have peace of mind in knowing that you have prepared yourself for the eventualities that you may encounter in life” (“Three Goals to Guide You,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2007, 119).

Consider Buying a Home

Owning a home is not for everyone, and renting can be a better option. If you are thinking about buying a house, remember these two principles:

- Buy a home only when and where it makes sense for you.
- Buy only what you can comfortably afford.

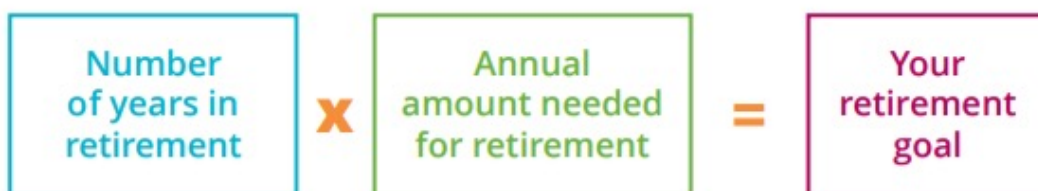
Your monthly mortgage payment should not be more than 25 percent of your monthly gross income. Use that number as a guide for what you can afford to pay rather than basing your decision on what a lender is willing to let you borrow.

Save for Retirement

President Ezra Taft Benson taught, “As you move through life toward retirement and the decades which follow, we invite all . . . to plan frugally for the years following full-time employment” (Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Ezra Taft Benson [2014], 208).

There may be government or social programs that can help you during retirement. You will probably also need to use money from your savings in retirement. Planning now can help you have enough money to be self-reliant after you retire.

Before you start saving, plan how much money you will need in retirement. The formula on this page can help you get started.





Financial Preparedness Activity

The first step to making wise financial decisions is to understand how you currently spend and save. Tracking your incomes and expenses can help you know where your money is being spent. Once you know that, you can make changes and plan where you want your money to go.

One-Month Emergency Fund

Creating a one-month emergency fund can help you be prepared for future financial challenges. Estimate the money you need for one month of living expenses. For the next one or two weeks, use this worksheet to track money received or spent. Common expenses are listed below as well as a space for your paycheck or income. Add other expenses as needed.

DATE	DESCRIPTION	INCOME	EXPENSE
	Paycheck		
	Tithes/Offerings		
	Rent/Mortgage		
	Utilities		
	Insurance		
	Groceries		

Ponder: Financial Goals

Besides having an emergency fund, what other financial goals do you feel inspired to make? Review the previous pages for ideas.



Local Resources for Financial Preparedness



Emotional Preparedness

Guidelines

President Russell M. Nelson stated: “I urge you to take steps to be temporally prepared. But I am even more concerned about your spiritual and emotional preparation . . . The more self-reliant we are—temporally, emotionally, and spiritually—the more prepared we are to thwart Satan’s relentless assaults.” (“Embrace the Future With Faith,” general conference, October 2020)

Disasters, distressing challenges, and losses can impact our emotional wellness. Though many recover from these situations using their own strengths and resources, others need help and support from outside resources to cope and heal.

Some common responses to crisis include fear, anxiety, a need to connect with others, a sense of being overwhelmed, and hopelessness. It is important to recognize that these responses are normal during difficult times.

Take time now to prepare emotionally for future life challenges, including emergency situations (natural disasters, pandemics, political turbulence, etc.) and personal crises (job loss, death of a loved one, etc.). As you do, consider and discuss the following principles:

Principles of Emotional Preparedness

1. Calming
2. Connectedness
3. Safety
4. Sources
5. Strengths
6. Hope



Emotional Preparedness

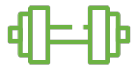
Guidelines continued

Calming: Learn calming skills.

A critical incident or disaster may cause overwhelming feelings of fear, anger, sadness, worry, and anxiety. Learn strategies for calming yourself during difficult times.

An Emotional First-Aid Kit

Create an emotional first-aid kit to use when you are feeling strong emotions. This kit may include:



Personal health reminders (reminders to take medications as prescribed, maintain good hygiene, eat healthy food, hydrate, exercise, get appropriate sleep)



Uplifting and comforting music



Comforting photos of family, loved ones, happy memories, nature, etc.



Inspirational quotes, books and journals



Comforting objects or materials (blankets, cloths, stress ball, modeling clay, other things you can touch that helps you feel calm)



Mints, gum, herbal or powder drink mixes, essential oils, scented lotion or candles, and other supportive items that fit your needs

Practicing Coping Skills

Practice a variety of healthy coping strategies to soothe emotional distress. Practicing skills to calm these emotions now can help you be prepared. Choose a few skills from the list below to practice:

- Spiritual practices like prayer, meditation, blessings, and helping others
- Talking with family and friends
- Mindfulness (paying attention to your emotions, thoughts, and body and acknowledging sensations and feelings without judgement)
- Stretching, yoga, exercise
- Deep breathing
- Writing a gratitude list
- Taking a nap
- Playing with a pet
- Listening to music
- Going for a walk

Keep in mind that some resources used for coping may not be available during an emergency. If medications are currently being used for mental or emotional health, talk with your doctor about ways to access them during an emergency.



Connectedness: Build relationships.

Healthy relationships and connections are vital for emotional well-being. Reach out and connect with others. You can start by strengthening marriage and family relationships.* When connections with family or loved ones are not possible, reach out to those who are nearby such as neighbors, work colleagues, faith groups, peers, and communities.

*(Consider studying the [Strengthening Marriages and Families](#) manuals found at [ChurchofJesusChrist.org/topics/family/strengthening-marriages-and-families](https://www.ChurchofJesusChrist.org/topics/family/strengthening-marriages-and-families). See also the [Gospel Library App/Life Help/Family](#).

Safety: Make plans around safety and communication.

In an emergency, it is common to feel worried about your own safety and the safety of loved ones, cherished pets, and community. Create an emergency communication plan with loved ones and determine how you will reach each other in a disaster. At times, some emergencies or disasters separate friends and family from each other. Consider creating a reunification plan. These preparations can help promote feelings of comfort and safety.

See the *Communication and Gathering Plan Activity* on page 9.

Sources: Identify trusted sources.

Identify trusted sources of information and plan to limit news and social media communications that are distressing or unreliable (see [General Handbook: Serving in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints 38.8.40](#)). Safe, supportive, and reliable information is essential when you are experiencing a personal, family, or community crisis.

Make plans for handling sources of information in distressing situations by thinking through the following questions:

- Where can you connect with sources of accurate and clear information?
- How can you plan to monitor distressing or unreliable reports and social messaging?

Strengths: Identify your strengths and how you can help.

After a critical loss or disaster, individuals may feel overwhelmed and vulnerable. Nevertheless, everyone has strengths that can be used. Some strengths may include resilience, adaptability, optimism, creativity, humor, responsibility, gratitude, staying present and future focused, leadership, hard work, helping others, and so on.

Journal about your strengths and how you might use them to help in a crisis. Consider specific skills you have that can help support individuals, families, Church members, and communities such as:

- Art/Hobbies/Crafts
- Music/Dance/Drama
- Physical Activities/Sports/Fitness
- Do It Yourself (DIY)/Home Skills

Hope: Remember to find hope.

Nurture realistic optimism and hope. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland taught that, “because the Restoration reaffirmed the foundational truth that God does work in this world, we *can* hope, we *should* hope, even when facing the most insurmountable odds” (“[A Perfect Brightness of Hope](#),” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2020, 83).

You can prepare by establishing a personal life purpose, learning to find meaning in adversity, strengthening moral and spiritual beliefs, learning how to tolerate uncertainties, expanding your vision to include an eternal perspective, and striving to express gratitude for the blessings and resources you have. When heavy adversity hits, it is common to feel that your world is falling apart. Prepare now by strengthening your hope.



Getting More Help When Needed

If you need urgent help, visit [ChurchofJesusChrist.org/study/manual/mental-health-general-principles/1-need-help-talk-now](https://www.ChurchofJesusChrist.org/study/manual/mental-health-general-principles/1-need-help-talk-now) as well as [Gospel Library App/Life Help/Suicide/Crisis Help Lines](#) for a list of urgent care support resources.

Support Groups

Groups are a great way to build emotional resilience. Check with a member of the ward council to see what is available in your area.

- “Finding Strength in the Lord” (a 12-week group using the *Emotional Resilience* manual)
- Addiction Recovery Program Group (in-person and online)
- Addiction Recovery Program Spouses and Family Support Group (in-person and online)



How to Know When Professional Help Is Needed

In general, professional help is needed when you are struggling with a continuing and distressing problem that you can't get any relief from. Here are other signs that you may need professional help:

- Considering harming self or others.
- Suffering from feelings of overwhelming anger, sadness, fear, emotional pain, or hopelessness that do not go away.
- Feeling weak physically.
- Change in appetite, sleep patterns, and other struggles that continue and do not lessen.
- Uncontrollable sense of worry and anxiety.
- Difficulty functioning day-to-day or doing daily tasks.

Counseling from Family Services

A bishop can refer a member to receive counseling from professionals through Family Services (see [FamilyServices.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://www.FamilyServices.ChurchofJesusChrist.org)).

Finding the Right Professional Help in the Community

In some places, Family Services has identified community professionals whose approach is compatible with Church beliefs. When you are looking for a professional, remember that you are a consumer of a service and have the right to ask questions. Consider looking for a professional who has these characteristics:

- Understands and respects your values and what you want to get out of therapy.
- Can explain their training and experience and how it relates to your needs. Look for qualified professionals such as licensed marriage and family therapists, licensed clinical social workers, psychiatrists, psychologists, professional counselors, and so on.
- Holds counseling sessions that are right for you in length, cost, and so on.
- Is willing to consult with your Church leader on your progress and work together to help you.



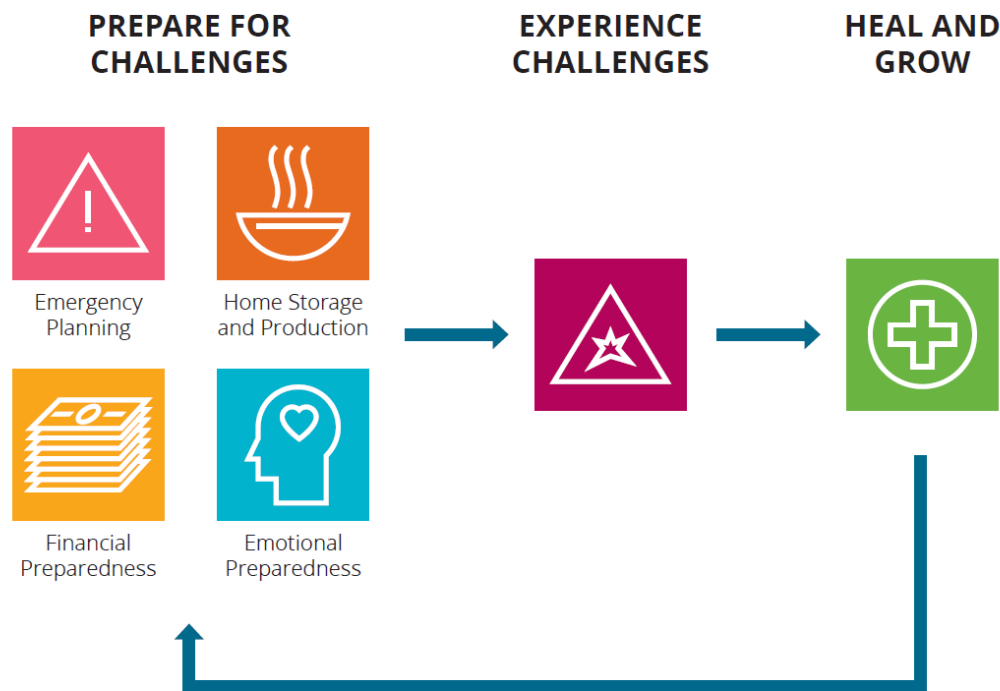
Local Resources for Emotional Support and Preparedness



Temporal Preparedness Guidelines for Councils

Guidelines for Stakes, Ward Councils, and Presidencies

Stake councils, ward councils, and presidencies assist units in working together to become more temporally prepared. Members have been counseled to work together to help one another build their temporal preparedness. As members do so, their hearts can be “knit together in unity and in love one towards another” (Mosiah 18:21).



Role of Councils

- Prepare a simple written plan to respond to emergencies. Ward plans should be coordinated with the stake’s emergency plan.
- Be an example of caring for those in need and helping them build self-reliance.
- Plan ways to teach members how to apply preparedness principles based on local needs.
- Provide opportunities to become prepared through lessons, activities, and ministering.
- Work together to identify and solve local preparedness challenges.
- Avoid invoking a spirit of fear or extremism.



Temporal Preparedness Activities for Councils

Members may counsel together to help one another build their temporal preparedness.



Activities

Review the following council activities and choose one to complete that would be most helpful for your council.

- Complete each of the individual or family activities for temporal preparedness. Your example and experiences with becoming more prepared will help those you are called to serve.
- Share one section of the temporal preparedness guidelines and an accompanying activity in a ward council or presidency meeting.
- Use all four sections of guidelines and activities for fifth-Sunday lessons for your unit.
- Work together to complete the [Stake and Ward Emergency Planning Guide activities](#) to create or update your unit emergency plan.
- Use the “[Discussion Guide: How Can I Minister to Others during a Crisis?](#)” to hold a fifth-Sunday, Relief Society, or elders quorum lesson for your unit.
- Choose a chapter from the [Emotional Resilience manual](#) to use as a fifth-Sunday, Relief Society, or elders quorum lesson for your unit.

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