



Electronic Devices: Prepare for a Disaster

Introduction

Packing the right electronics, keeping them powered, and using them wisely can make a big difference in staying safe and connected in a disaster. Following these digital tips from Consumer Reports can provide peace of mind. For more info, click on:

<https://www.consumerreports.org/emergency-preparedness/how-to-prepare-your-electronic-devices-for-a-natural-disaster/>

Pack the Right Gear

- The primary device to bring with you is your smartphone
- Laptops and tablets are also useful if you are going to be away for long periods
 - ⇒ make sure you know your passwords
- Consider downloading a couple of movies or television episodes that everyone likes from iTunes or Amazon
- If your computer has a DVD drive, toss a couple of your favorite DVDs into your bag
- If you have a battery-powered radio—or even better, one that’s powered by hand-cranking—be sure to throw that in the bag as well

Charge All Your Devices

- Fully charge all your devices well ahead of an emergency event
- Then remember to put all your chargers in your go bag
- Ahead of time, purchase spare batteries or portable chargers and be sure to charge them, too
- Remember, your devices are survival tools, providing the batteries are charged!

Bring Your Car Charger

- Bring a car charger, or buy one if you don’t have one
- It's a useful way to top off your phone if you lose power
- No need to worry about draining your car’s battery when charging your phone

Stash a Power Strip

- In a crisis, the right \$10 gadget can improve your life immeasurably
- You can use a power strip to charge 6 devices at once, instead of taking turns plugging and unplugging

Conserve Your Phone's Power

- Most phones have a battery-saver mode, which disables automatic updates and notifications
- Reduce your phone's display brightness
- Turn off the auto brightness feature
- Turn off WiFi if you're on the road and away from a WiFi network
- Abstain from using power-hungry apps unless they're totally necessary
- If you're really concerned about conserving the charge in your battery, you shouldn't be streaming video, shooting video, or even taking pictures

Back Up to the Cloud

- You should be backing up the hard drive of your computer and any other devices
- If you're using a physical hard drive to do that, you should consider backing up to the cloud as well so that your data will be safe even if your regular backup drive gets damaged
- Cloud backup is either free or quite inexpensive
- Keep in mind that backing up any device to the cloud for the first time can take hours if you have a lot of data
- It's best to prepare in advance if you can, and if that's not possible, prioritize critical files first

Make a Digital Meet Up Plan

- It's a good idea to agree on a social media meeting place in advance of a natural disaster
- The first order of business is to agree on a platform, such as Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram
- Then make sure whatever platform you use is installed on everyone's devices
- Also designate an out-of-town contact who'll know to expect your check-ins

- If possible, try to agree on a check-in time to eliminate unnecessary worrying

Set Up Your Emergency Contacts

- It's helpful to set up contacts by their relationship to you
- For example:
 - ⇒ ICE: (in case of Emergency)
 - ⇒ Spouse:
 - ⇒ Sibling:
- iPhone owners can use the Medical ID function in the device's Health App to set up emergency contacts
 - ⇒ even if the phone is locked, first responders will have access to these critical contacts through the emergency function on the lock screen
- On Android phones, the options for setting up emergency contacts vary by model, but you might try
 - ⇒ the My Information sub menu
 - ⇒ or apps such as the Red Cross' Emergency or ICE (free, but with in-app purchases)
- Note that on most smartphones, the emergency mode will also allow you to make a 911 call when the phone is locked

