

Tips to keep your home safe this National Preparedness Month

“Expect the unexpected” is a common mantra when preparing for emergencies. However, with severe weather becoming more frequent in recent years, nearly everyone can expect to encounter a natural disaster within their lifetime. This uptick means storm-related property damage costs have also been on the rise, with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) [reporting](#) more than \$145 billion in damages from weather-related disasters in 2021 alone.

Home emergencies, unfortunately, are not only caused by the weather. The National Fire Protection Association [reported](#) that roughly 346,800 home fires occur per year, most often from everyday activities like cooking, resulting in \$7.3 billion in total property damage. Knowing how vulnerable many homes are to catastrophe, it’s now more important than ever to plan ahead and invest in dependable solutions.

In recognition of National Preparedness Month, The Master Lock Company, a trusted name in security and safety for over 100 years, is partnering with the [American Red Cross of Wisconsin](#) by donating 1,000 SentrySafe Fire Bags to at-risk communities in its home state as part of the nonprofit’s Home Fire Campaign. The security company is also sharing advice on preparing for emergencies to help safeguard everything worth protecting.

- 1. Know the types of disasters in your area.** Different types of severe weather require different types of preparation, making it imperative to find out which disasters you are most at-risk for and plan accordingly. For example, earthquakes can happen in all states at any time of year, while wildfires are more concentrated in forested areas with low rainfall, such as Southern California.
- 2. Prep your home – and those who live in it.** If you know a storm is coming, store lawn furniture or other loose items in a secure location and check if nearby trees should be trimmed to reduce post-storm debris. For added security, consider locking sheds using Master Lock’s Weather Resistant Padlocks and installing hurricane windows if you live in a vulnerable coastal region.

To prepare for non-weather emergencies like house fires, check that your home contains the right number of smoke alarms and that the batteries function properly. Ensure all household members – especially children – know what a smoke alarm sounds like, what to do when they hear it, how to escape from every room and where the family meeting spot is once outside.

- 3. Pack a “go kit” and secure hard-to-replace items.** In case you need to leave your home in a hurry, prepare an emergency “go kit” containing medical supplies, food, water and other essentials. For personal documents and valuables like passports, birth certificates, photos and jewelry, consider storing them in a portable fire and water-resistant container like the [SentrySafe Fire Bag](#). For a more permanent solution to withstand fires and floods, consider a fire and water-protected safe like the [SentrySafe Combination Fire/Water Safe](#).

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- 4. Invest in reliable security.** Though smart home security systems are now the norm, it's recommended to keep traditional solutions as backup options. For a compact, portable solution, the [Master Lock Folding Door Bar](#) is strong enough to prevent forced entry on hinged, patio and sliding doors, but can also be folded to fit inside your go kit. Lock boxes are also helpful, should friends or family require access into the home to check on a loved one. Consider battery-powered options like the Master Lock Portable Bluetooth® Lock Box, which can function via smartphone or personal code.

Though there's much uncertainty when emergencies arise, these precautions are the first steps toward peace of mind. No matter the crisis, households can depend on The Master Lock Company for durable, reliable solutions to protect both the people and the belongings that mean the most to you. For more information, visit insights.masterlock.com.

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