

Finance and Debt Management during Natural Disasters

In the wake of the wildfires in California, every consumer needs to consider how they would best prepare themselves should a natural disaster occur. When a fire or other natural disaster heads their way, smart people consider whether they have food, water and safe shelter. Organized people pull out a ready-made disaster kit with first aid items, a flashlight and warm blankets. If you're smart and organized, you also reach for your financial emergency kit.

Richmond, VA ([PRWEB](#)) October 27, 2007 -- In the wake of the wildfires in California, every consumer needs to consider how they would best prepare themselves should a natural disaster occur. When a fire or other natural disaster heads their way, smart people consider whether they have food, water and safe shelter. Organized people pull out a ready-made disaster kit with first aid items, a flashlight and warm blankets. If you're smart and organized, you also reach for your financial emergency kit.

Professional [credit counselors](#) at [ClearPoint Credit Counseling Solutions](#) share the following tips that can help prepare your family for the financial stresses that can result from a devastating catastrophe.

- Create a financial disaster kit. Include cash (several hundred dollars), checks and copies of important personal and financial documents (driver's license, Social Security card, insurance policies, property deeds, and birth and marriage certificates). Put together a list of contact information for family members and write down your credit card account and bank account numbers, along with contact information for your financial institutions. Place these items in a portable, waterproof, locked box and store it in a discreet place that you can easily access, day or night. Having this information on-hand in the aftermath of a disaster may prove to be crucial to your family's financial condition.
- Talk to your employer. Before a natural disaster occurs, ask your employer about the company's disaster plan and find out what employees are expected to do in the event of an emergency. Will your job and benefits be protected if disaster strikes? If the business is evacuated, are there plans in place to permit you to do your job from another location? Knowing the answers to these questions can help you plan for a worst-case scenario.
- Check your insurance coverage. Make sure that your automobile and homeowners' insurance policies are up-to-date. Talk with your agent to find out which items or scenarios are covered, and which ones are not. Not all policies insure against flood or wind damage. Get copies of your policies and store them in your financial disaster kit. If you do not have insurance, now is the time to purchase it.
- Plan ahead. Get in the habit of being prepared. Always have extra cash on hand in a safe place. Keep your gas tank at least half-full at all times. Stock up on non-perishable food items and bottled water.
- Make an inventory. Create a home inventory of valuables (major appliances, electronic equipment, clothing, furniture, artwork, family heirlooms) and update it annually. Record brand names, model and serial numbers to make it easier to file an insurance claim to replace damaged items. Store the inventory, with photos and videotapes of the items, in your financial emergency kit.
- Have an evacuation plan. Have a destination and route in mind should your family have to evacuate. Prepare a checklist of items (such as your financial disaster kit and sentimental family items) to take with you. Recognize that ATM machines or credit card machines may not work in the wake of a natural catastrophe. Having cash on hand will help you cover gas, food, hotel room and other expenses that may arise if you have to evacuate.

Don't be caught unprepared. Contact [ClearPoint Credit Counseling Solutions](#) for help with putting together a personalized financial plan that will protect your financial resources in the event of a natural disaster.



[About ClearPoint Financial Solutions, Inc.](#)

ClearPoint Financial Solutions, Inc.TM is a national non-profit organization dedicated to helping consumers achieve financial wellness through counseling and education. Established in 1980, ClearPoint has helped over one million individuals achieve financial security. ClearPoint is currently the only non-profit System-wide member of the Better Business Bureau (BBB), and one of the largest members of the National Foundation for Credit Counseling (NFCC). Headquartered in Richmond, Virginia, ClearPoint manages branches across the country. Personalized and confidential consultations are available in person, by phone or online. Visit ClearPoint Financial Solutions at <http://www.ClearPointFinancialSolutions.org> or call 877-422-9044. Credit Counselors, CDC Consumer Debt Counseling, and Solutions, Inc. are all trade names of ClearPoint.

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