The Basics of Getting Through Disasters

1. **Sign-up to get the emergency alerts for the area you’re in**, whether you’re at home, or traveling.
2. **Make sure the alert can be heard even during the night**.
3. **Here are several disaster alert apps, find one you like:** https://www.weather.gov/
4. **If you have a disability or are with someone with a disability, think about leaving ahead of others if it looks like an evacuation may be necessary**.
5. **Always have a grab-and-go bag** so that should disaster strike, you’ve got essentials all in one place. What’s in the grab-and-go bags varies, if you’ve got medical issues, you’ll want to have at least a week’s supply of your prescription medications. You’ll want the kind of things you’d take on a weekend trip away from home. You’ll want to have a waterproof bag with perhaps thumb drives of important documents. You’ll definitely want your cellphone and charger. It’ll be the way you’ll keep up to date on new hazards, resources for evacuees, family members, etc. If you have kids, you’ll want things for them. Even though the weather may be hot, take some warm things with you if you can.
6. **Take water**, it’s good for cleaning scrapes, washing your hands, and staying hydrated.
7. **If there are specific evacuation routes, try and follow** **them** because it may be that there are hazards like collapsed bridges, washed-out roads, downed trees, and live powerlines in other places.
8. **Once you’re somewhere safe, let others know you’re safe**, until then do what you can to get safe.
9. **There are apps to help people communicate even when cell service goes down**, one is Zello, it turns your cell phone into more of a walkie-talkie.
10. **If there are people in your home or community that you know are unaccounted for, let the first law enforcement or first responders you see know their names and addresses.**
11. **Crime can be part of disasters.** People have exploited the chaos and distress of disasters for things like identity theft, theft from homes, etc. Tempers are short. Keep aware.
12. **Once you’re safe, your job is to stay that way.**
13. **Links to Redcross shelters:** <https://www.redcross.org/get-help/disaster-relief-and-recovery-services/find-an-open-shelter.html>
14. **Link to understanding emotional recovery from disasters for adults & children from the Redcross**: <https://www.redcross.org/get-help/disaster-relief-and-recovery-services/recovering-emotionally.html>
15. **Disasters can expose people to contaminated water, insect-borne diseases, smoke inhalation, worsening mental health, flare-ups of existing medical issues, problems from sudden discontinuation of medications, etc**. If you don’t feel well, get medical help as soon as you’re able and tell your doctor what you went through, and how you feel.
16. **Know that recovery from the event will take time**