



Your Family Disaster Plan

4 STEPS TO SAFETY

1. Get Informed

Contact your local emergency management office and American Red Cross chapter--be prepared to take notes:

- Ask what types of disasters are most likely to happen. Request information on how to prepare for each.
- Learn about your community's warning signals: what they sound like and what you should do when you hear them.
- Methods of getting your attention vary from community to community. One common method is to broadcast via emergency radio and TV broadcasts. You might hear a special siren, or get a telephone call, or emergency workers may go door-to-door.
- Ask about animal care after disaster. Animals may not be allowed inside emergency shelters due to health regulations.
- Find out how to help elderly or disabled persons, if needed.

2. Plan

Meet with your family and discuss why you need to prepare for disaster. Explain the dangers of fire, severe weather and earthquakes to children. Plan to share responsibilities and work together as a team.

- Discuss the types of disasters that are most likely to happen. Explain what to do in each case.
- Pick two places to meet:
 - Right outside your home in case of a sudden emergency, like a fire.
 - Outside your neighborhood in case you can't return home. Everyone must know the address and phone number.
- Ask an out-of-state friend to be your "family contact." After a disaster, it's often easier to call long distance. Other family members should call this person and tell them where they are. Everyone must know your contact's phone number.
- Discuss what to do in an evacuation. Plan how to take care of your pets.
- You may also want to inquire about emergency plans at places where your family spends time: work, daycare and school. If no plans exist, consider volunteering to help create one.

Disaster can strike quickly and without warning. It can force you to evacuate your neighborhood or confine you to your home. Local officials and relief workers will be on the scene after a disaster, but they cannot reach everyone right away.

Families can--and do--cope with disaster by preparing in advance and working together as a team. Follow the steps listed in this brochure to create your family's disaster plan. Knowing what to do is your best protection and your responsibility.

EMERGENCY SUPPLIES

Keep enough supplies in your home to meet your needs for at least three days.

Assemble a Disaster Supplies Kit with items you may need in an evacuation. Store these supplies in sturdy, easy-to-carry containers such as backpacks, duffle bags or covered trash containers.

- A three-day supply of water (one gallon per person per day) and food that won't spoil.
- One change of clothing and footwear per person, and one blanket or sleeping bag per person.
- A first aid kit that includes your family's prescription medications.
- Emergency tools including a battery-powered radio, flashlight and plenty of extra batteries.
- An extra set of car keys and a credit card, cash or traveler's checks.
- Sanitation supplies.
- Special items for infant, elderly or disabled family members.
- An extra pair of glasses.
- Important family documents in a portable, waterproof container.
- Mess kits, paper cups, plates and plastic utensils, paper towels
- Paper and pencil
- Books, games, puzzles or other activities for children.
- Infant formula and diapers
- Pet food and extra water

3. Assemble Supplies

- Post emergency telephone numbers by phones
- Teach children how and when to call 911 or your local Emergency Medical Services number for emergency help.
- Instruct each family member on how and when to turn off the water, gas and electricity at the main switches.
- Make sure you have adequate insurance coverage.
- Teach each family member how to use the fire extinguisher (ABC type), and show them where it's kept.
- Install smoke detectors on each level of your home, especially near bedrooms.
- Conduct a home hazard hunt.
- Stock emergency supplies and assemble a Disaster Supplies Kit.
- Determine the best escape routes from your home. Find two ways out of each room.
- Find the safe spots in your home for each type of disaster.

4. Practice Your Plan

- Quiz your kids every six months so they remember what to do.
- Conduct fire and emergency evacuation drills.
- Replace stored water every three months and stored food every six months.
- Test and recharge your fire extinguisher(s) according to manufacturer's instructions.
- Test your smoke detectors monthly and change the batteries at least once a year.

IF DISASTER STRIKES

If disaster strikes, remain calm and patient. Put your plan into action. Check for injuries. Give first aid and get help for seriously injured people. Listen to your battery powered radio for news and instructions. Evacuate, if advised to do so. Wear protective clothing and sturdy shoes.

Check for damage in your home:

- Use flashlights--do not light matches or turn on electrical switches, if you suspect damage.
- Check for fires, fire hazards and other household hazards.
- Sniff for gas leaks, starting at the water heater. If you smell gas or suspect a leak, turn off the main gas valve, open windows, and get everyone outside quickly.
- Shut off any damaged utilities.
- Clean up spilled medicines, bleaches, gasoline and other flammable liquids immediately.

Remember to:

- Confine or secure your pets.
- Call your family contact--do not use the telephone again unless it is a life-threatening emergency.
- Check on your neighbors, especially elderly or disabled persons.
- Make sure you have an adequate water supply in case service is cut off.
- Stay away from downed power lines.

UTILITIES

Locate the main electric fuse box, water service main and natural gas main. Learn how and when to turn these utilities off. Teach all responsible family members. Keep necessary tools near gas and water shut-off valves.

Remember to turn off the utilities only if you suspect the lines are damaged or if you are instructed to do so. If you turn the gas off, you will need a professional to turn it back on.

EVACUATION

- Evacuate immediately if told to do so. Listen to your battery-powered radio and follow the instructions of local emergency officials. Wear protective clothing and sturdy shoes.
- If you do not have a car, plan how you will leave if you have to.
- Take your family disaster supplies kit
- Lock your home.
- Use travel routes specified by local authorities--don't use shortcuts because certain areas may be impassable or dangerous.
- If you're sure you have time:
 - Shut off water, gas and electricity before leaving, if instructed to do so.
 - Post a note telling others when you left and where you are going.
 - Make arrangements for your pets.