



Preparing a Family Disaster Plan

Disaster preparedness begins in the home. Local officials and relief workers may not arrive at once. Families must be able to cope with disaster by preparing and working as a team.

Following the suggested steps below will help you create your family's plan. Knowing what to do is the best protection. It is also your responsibility.

1. Know the threats to your community. Contact your local emergency management or civil defense office or the American Red Cross.

- 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.
- Ask about animal care after a disaster. Animals may not be allowed inside emergency shelters due to health regulations.
- Find out how to help elderly or disabled persons, if needed.
- Find out about the disaster plans at your workplace, your children's school or daycare center and other places where your family spends time.

2. Create a disaster plan.

- Discuss the need to prepare with your family. Explain to children the danger of fire, severe weather and earthquakes. 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:
 1. Right outside your home in case of a sudden emergency, such as a fire.
 2. Outside the neighborhood in case you can't return home. Everyone must know the address and phone number.
- Ask an out-of-state relative or friend to be your "family contact." After a disaster, it's often easier to call long distance than locally. 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 the event of an evacuation. Plan how to take care of your pets.



Family Disaster Plan Checklist

1. Post emergency telephone numbers by all phones in the house (fire, police, ambulance, etc.).
2. Teach children how and when to call 911 or other local Emergency Medical Services number for emergency help.
3. Teach each family member how and when to turn off the water, gas and electricity at the main switches.
4. Make sure you have adequate insurance coverage.
5. Teach each family member how to use the fire extinguisher (ABC type), and show them where it is kept.
6. Install smoke detectors on each level of your home, especially near bedrooms.
7. Conduct a hunt for hazards in the home. During a disaster, ordinary objects in your home can cause injury or damage. Anything that can move, fall, break or cause a fire is a home hazard. For example, a hot water heater or a bookshelf can fall. Inspect your home at least once a year and fix potential hazards. Contact your local fire department to learn about home fire hazards.
8. Stock emergency supplies and assemble a Disaster Supplies Kit. Keep enough supplies in your home to meet your needs for at least three days.
9. Assemble a Disaster Supplies Kit with items you may need in an evacuation.
10. Store these supplied in sturdy, easy-to-carry containers, such as backpacks, duffle bags or covered trash containers.
11. Take First Aid and CPR classes.
12. Determine the best escape routes from your home. Find two ways out of each room.
13. Find the safe spots in your home for each type of disaster.
14. Practice and maintain your disaster plan.

Maintaining the Family Disaster Plan

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



6. Check and maintain supplies needed:

- 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 infants, elderly or disabled family members.
- An extra pair of glasses.
- Important family documents in a waterproof container.

Considerations for a Disaster Plan

Utilities—Locate the main electric fuse/ breaker 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. Turn off utilities only if you suspect damage to the lines or if you are instructed to do so. If you turn the gas off, you will need a professional to turn it back on.

Neighbors helping neighbors—Working with neighbors can save lives and property. Meet with your neighbors to plan how the neighborhood could work together after a disaster until help arrives. If you are a member of a neighborhood organization, introduce disaster preparedness as a new activity. Know your neighbors' special skills (e.g., medical, technical) and consider how you could help neighbors who have special needs, such as disabled and elderly persons. Make plans for childcare in case parents cannot get home.

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.
- 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 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 pets.

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 other damaged utilities.
- Clean up spilled medicines, bleaches, gasoline and other flammable liquids immediately.
- Confine or secure your pet.
- 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.

BASIC DISASTER SURVIVAL KIT

These items are readily available at most local discount stores or sporting goods stores in the camping and health/beauty sections. The approximate cost for supplies per bag is under \$10.



BASIC CONTENTS:

Warmth & Shelter: Emergency Space Blankets, Emergency Rain/Wind Poncho

Heating & Light:

1 – 4” Wax Candle, 1 Box of Waterproof Matches, 2 Instant 12 hour Snap lights

Food & Water Items: (Enough for 3 days)

12 purified drinking water pouches, 6 sealed packets of high-energy foods

Personal Hygiene Items: 2 – Individual Tissue Packs, 9 wet-wipe towelettes, 1 sanitation refuse bag (small red color), 1 trash bag (13 gal size white)

Spiritual Care Items: 1 pocket sized Bible

Additional Items: Survival Whistle, Flashlight with extra batteries, hand-crank AM/FM Radio, First Aid Kit, hand-operated can opener, change of clothing, prescription drugs, N-95 Dust mask, wrench/pliers for utilities, local maps. Include family specific items as identified